

Huyck Preserve



Myosotis Messenger

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In January, the Hamlet of Rensselaerville made statewide news when it was named one of New York's "Seven to Save" historic locations by the Preservation League of New York State. This is a great honor in that it recognizes the unique value of the structures in the village as well the importance of maintaining a vibrant community that will care for this special place for generations to come. The Preserve is proud to share in this honor.

The late William Waldron also honored the Preserve by leaving a generous gift that will ensure that the Preserve will continue to protect the lands surrounding the hamlet so it can be enjoyed by many far into the future. Mr. Waldron, who passed away in April 2009 at the age of 95, was a lifelong supporter of the Huyck Preserve, a trustee of the E.N. Huyck Foundation, and special advisor to Preserve founder Jessie Huyck. (See articles on pages 4-6.) Mr. Waldron had always hoped there could be an overlook built at the top of the Rensselaerville Falls, so thanks to donations previously made by him and to the new Fund, the construction of such an overlook will be completed by this summer. The platform will be dedicated to the Waldrons on June 19, 2010, as part of the Annual Membership Meeting weekend. The overlook was designed by architect, and friend of the Preserve, Gus Dudley and will subtly sit off to the side of the falls out of view from below. I hope that you will join us for the dedication and ribbon cutting.

In other news, the Huyck Preserve has been successful with a number of grant applications that will benefit members. The Preserve received support from New York State Parks for support of environmental education and interpretation of the natural landscape. We also received funding from the New York Department of Environmental Conservation and the Land Trust Alliance for surveying portions of and posting all 24 miles of the Preserve's property boundary. And, we are working on finalizing the route of the new six-mile trail that will reach into the northern 1,200 acres of the Preserve supported by a grant from the Federal Highway Administration. The trail should begin to be built in the late summer with the help of Student Conservation Association trail crews as well as volunteer trail building events. All ages and abilities welcome to these fun community events.

A detailed description of programs and activities for this spring, summer and fall will be posted on our website calendar and available in a program catalog to be mailed in the coming weeks. Regular updates by e-mail and Facebook will resume shortly, so please sign up for them on our website if you have not already done so. (This helps our efforts to reduce our environmental footprint and costs.) I would like to mention a few programs at the field station for the teenage group that we're excited about. We will run a five-day middle school program July 5<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> again this year which will have a natural history, introduction to research and nature illustration focus. We will also offer a rigorous and innovative three-week residential course at the field station for current high school sophomores, juniors and seniors called *Fundamentals of Field Ecology*.

While a record snowstorm is delivering snow outside my window right now (60 inches and counting!), I know that the spring peepers will be singing their chorus around Lincoln Pond in no time. I look forward to seeing you soon at the Preserve.



  
Chad Jemison



## Conservation Efforts Gain Momentum

*By Chad Jemison*

**T**he Huyck Preserve has had conservation at the heart of its mission since its inception in the early 1930s. To the Huyck family, conservation did not mean locking up the land solely for preservation. In fact they felt moved to create the Preserve so that the beautiful waterfalls, lake, pond and woods would be available for everyone to enjoy. What's more, the land was to be stewarded to protect the animals, plants, the fragile watershed and to provide relatively pristine habitats for conducting cutting-edge biological research and education.

The conservation movement has evolved in the nearly 80 years since the Preserve was established. Farmers, loggers, fishermen and hunters are now widely viewed as leaders in the effort to steward land and waters. The shortage of clean drinking water is recognized as one of the major global challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. And fragmentation of habitat, expanding urban centers (such as Albany), along with anticipated climate changes will put additional pressure on the health of the land. Rensselaerville's recent recognition by the New York Preservation League as one of New York's "Seven to Save" historic entities highlights yet another focus of conservation.

The Huyck Preserve has matured to address many of these challenges. The Preserve has grown from its initial 500 acres around the falls, Lake Myosotis and Lincoln Pond, to nearly 2,000 acres within the Lake Myosotis watershed and the northern portion of Ten Mile Creek near the hamlet of Rensselaerville. The Preserve abuts New York State's 5,000-acre Partridge Run Wildlife Management Area and is a short distance from the 4,000 acre Rensselaerville State Forest. All told, more than 10,000 acres of land will be preserved in perpetuity in the area.

The conservation movement has become increasingly effective by developing tools that can be used to protect the land. In December 2009, conservation easements were placed on four properties in the region, protecting almost 350 acres: two important properties along Ten Mile Creek south of the village of Rensselaerville, and two properties located next to Partridge Run. The conservation easements are held by a sister organization to the Huyck Preserve, the

Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy (MHLC), one of the more than 80 active land trusts in New York State. With conservation easements the land remains privately owned and the landowners still pay property taxes. The easement places legal restrictions on the future development of the land. For foregoing these development rights, the landowner receives federal and state tax benefits. Please visit MHLC's website [www.mhlc.org](http://www.mhlc.org), or call the Huyck Preserve if you would like more information on the process and potential tax benefits of putting a conservation easement on your land.

The Huyck Preserve is looking at ways to improve how we steward and protect our land, including maintaining habitat diversity, managing invasive species, and strengthening the legal protection to ensure that the land of the Preserve is securely conserved in perpetuity. We will work with our neighbors who own property bordering on or near the Huyck Preserve in the Lake Myosotis Watershed or along Ten Mile Creek to provide a buffer of well-stewarded land around the Preserve. And we will work with other groups like the Catskill Creek Watershed Advisory Committee that are interested in addressing water quality issues for the entire region. Ten Mile Creek flows into Catskill Creek, which flows directly into the Hudson.

Conservation and stewardship of the Preserve and surrounding lands are foundational to the public enjoyment, innovative field-based education, and success of our internationally renowned biological research station. Your support through membership, the annual benefit, and annual fund donations are so important for us to be able to do this work along with partners such as MHLC, the Land Trust Alliance, Open Space Institute and grants from New York's Environmental Protection Fund (which is proposed to be cut by 33% in the 2010-2011 New York State executive budget's wildly disproportionate cut in funding compared to most other departments which are taking 5-8% cuts).

We are proud to be the stewards of this beautiful land that is located in a hamlet rich in history. We will be sure that the Preserve will be enjoyed by generations upon generations to come.

## William Waldron and the Preserve: A Lifelong Relationship

By Laura Stephenson Carter

Our dear friend William Waldron passed away in April 2009 at his home in Haverford, Pa. The following article is based on 2001 and 2004 interviews with him and the Rensselaerville Historical Society's 1965 recorded interview with his father, Charles Waldron.

The son of Union College (Schenectady, N.Y.) history professor Charles Waldron and Jessie Huyck's niece Dorothy Waterman Waldron, Bill Waldron spent idyllic summers at Beech Knoll Cottage on Lake Myosotis.

"Uncle Ted was always very interested in trying to keep the village of Rensselaerville vibrant with young people," said Bill. "He and Aunt Jess together invited Father and Mother to come to Beech Knoll," which was owned by other Huyck relatives. "So they came with my brother [Van] and me—two little boys. We lived there every summer." Almost every summer, that is. Sometimes they stayed at a farmhouse on Pond Hill Road or at Lincoln Pond Cottage.

The Waldrons enjoyed the Huyck lands that would one day become the Preserve. They picnicked near the Falls and hiked the trails through the woods and around the lake. They fished on Lincoln Pond. (Yes, fishing was allowed there then.) And they sailed, dove off a three-tiered diving board, and swam in Lake Myosotis. "The ultimate swimming test was to be able to swim from Beech Knoll to the [Huyck] boathouse," which was diagonally across the lake, Bill said. "If one was really brave and fairly proficient, one could swim from the boathouse right across the lake to the cottages. That was considered quite an accomplishment."

He recalled with fondness the Sunday night picnics at Lincoln Pond. After supper, everyone would "go back to Aunt Jess's and Uncle Ted's and sing hymns." Some of the men, like Bill's father and Colonel Stewart Greene, who owned Bullfrog Camp on Lincoln Pond, would "be out on the lawn smoking their cigars and not participating in the hymn sing," Bill said. "I used to hang around and listen to the old men talk."

Although Ted and Jessie were generous in sharing what they had with friends and family, Ted Huyck once

confided to Bill's father that it bothered him to own so much beautiful land. "I remember walking around the lake with him," said Charles Waldron in a 1965 interview for



Beech Knoll Cottage, on Lake Myosotis, is where Bill Waldron spent summers as a child.

the Rensselaerville Historical Society's book *People Made It Happen Here*. "He stopped and said, 'You know, no one person should own all this beauty. Many should enjoy it.'"

After Ted Huyck died in 1930, Jessie set

out to honor her husband's wishes. She turned 500 acres of the property she'd inherited—the part that contained the Falls, Lake Myosotis and Lincoln Pond, and the surrounding forests—into a nature preserve and named it for him.

Bill Waldron was only 17 and still a high school student at the Taft School in Connecticut when Ted Huyck died. He recalled that "Aunt Jess had various people advising her" as she created the Preserve. As Bill grew older and started his law career, Jessie came to rely on him as one of her trusted advisors, too. "I admired her immensely. She was a very capable person, a natural executive," Bill said. But, he added, "she was very shy, really, and it took a great deal of effort for her to become the quasi-public figure that she did become in her widowhood."

Bill encouraged his great aunt to follow her instincts when she wanted to explore ways to ensure that the Preserve would live on in perpetuity as more than a recreational paradise. She consulted with William Vogt, who worked for the National Association of Audubon Societies and was Editor-in-Chief of *Bird-Lore*. He helped her see the educational possibilities for the Preserve. Vogt put Jessie in touch with Cornell zoologist William Hamilton. Hamilton,

at Jessie Huyck's and the Board's direction, did an assessment of the Preserve and determined it would be an ideal place to conduct a rigorous scientific research program. So in 1938, the Board decided to designate part of the Preserve as a biological field station. It was—and



To the best of our knowledge, this photo depicts Bill Waldron (foreground) and his brother Van playing with their friends near the Beech Knoll boathouse (right) on Lake Myosotis. The Huyck boathouse is in the distance.

## William Waldron's Generous Gift

The Board of Directors of the Edmund Niles Huyck Preserve is deeply touched by the generosity of longtime supporter William Augustus Waldron who passed away at the age of 95, on April 29, 2009. As per his wishes, the corpus of his charitable remainder unitrust, more than \$500,000, was donated to the Huyck Preserve in late 2009. This is the largest single gift the Preserve has ever received.

Mr. Waldron had great love for and strong family ties to Rensselaerville and the Preserve. He was Preserve Founder Jessie Van Antwerp Huyck's great nephew and advised her in Preserve matters for many years. And for nearly 40 years he was a trustee of the E.N. Huyck Foundation, which was established after Jessie Huyck's death in 1959 to help fund Preserve operations.

At its January 2010 meeting, the Preserve's Board of Directors voted to use Mr. Waldron's gift to create a fund in honor of him and his late wife and name it the William and Sybil Jay Waldron Fund. Mr. Waldron had expressed the hope that such a fund would reinforce the Preserve and its mission, help protect its land and property, strengthen its ties to the community, and ensure that the Preserve would be enjoyed by all for perpetuity. The Board intends to maintain most of the fund's capital to help insulate the Preserve from future economic downturns and financial emergencies. In addition a portion of the fund's income will be used to support Preserve-related community activities as well as

special preservation and scientifically based stewardship projects.

One undertaking will be the construction of a viewing platform near the top of the Rensselaerville Falls. Architect Gus Dudley, who designed the renovated Mill House Visitor Center a few years ago, is designing an attractive and safe platform that will be situated so as to not interfere with the view of the Falls from the lower bridge. The project, which is expected to be completed by June 2010, is made possible with the support of a donation Mr. Waldron made during his lifetime as well as the William and Sybil Jay Waldron Fund.

The announcements and related materials pertaining to this and other fund-supported activities will acknowledge the William and Sybil Jay Waldron Fund. The Preserve extends its deep appreciation to the Waldron family members who have so kindly facilitated the arrangement of this gift.



William and Sybil Jay Waldron

still is—one of the few independent field stations in the United States. Most are affiliated with universities or museums.

Aunt Jess “was interested in making the Preserve significant to the community,” Bill said. “And she was interested in preserving the natural beauty of the whole setting. The science evolved because of influence from Bill Hamilton and the Cornell people.” Soon a parade of young, but soon-to-be distinguished scientists—like Donald Griffin whose discovery of bat echolocation led to significant advances in sonar, and Eugene Odum, who became the grandfather of ecosystems ecology—were coming to the Preserve to carry out important research projects. “She didn’t want to emphasize science to the neglect of recreation,” Bill was careful to point out. “But she felt that if a respectable scientific component could be established it would add distinction to the Preserve.” She also grew quite fond of the scientists and enjoyed entertaining them in her home and hearing them talk about their work.

During his college years, Bill helped to keep the Preserve property in shape. One summer, when he was still a student at Union College, he worked on a crew that reinforced the Lake Myosotis dam with heavy rocks. The crew also helped improve the water quality by getting rid of algae. Other summers he volunteered to clear trails. Bill went on to earn degrees in political economy and law from Harvard University. During World War II, he served in the

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt Administration on the National War Labor Board. He moved to Cambridge, Mass., after the war to practice law. In 1953 he became executive director of the Massachusetts Special Commission on the Structure of State Government.

In the meantime he continued to advise Jessie and after she died in 1959, he became one of three trustees for the Edmund Niles Huyck Foundation that was established according to her will. He represented the Van Antwerp side of the family. Lewis Eldridge represented the Huyck side. And the corporate trustee was Hanover Bank, which is now J.P. Morgan Chase in New York City. The Foundation began to provide some of the funding for the Preserve's operations and programs. Bill maintained an active interest in the Preserve, even while serving as Massachusetts Governor Endicott Peabody's commissioner of administration and as special assistant attorney general. From 1975 until his retirement in 1981, he was general counsel for Massachusetts General Hospital.

As a Huyck Foundation trustee, Bill played an important role for the Preserve, offering advice and guidance, and approving budgets as the Preserve applied for grants each year from the Foundation. He saw the hiring of a resident biologist in 1965—Robert Dalglish—who later became executive director. Bill watched proudly as the Preserve's educational, scientific, recreational, and community programs grew. He was pleased that the Preserve was able to protect more of the

Lake Myosotis watershed by expanding its land holdings from the original 500 acres to 2,000 acres, mostly through the donation of property. He grew concerned, however, when the Preserve's attempts to engage in income-producing activities in the 1970s, including timbering and maple sugaring, failed to yield the expected income. Those activities were subsequently discontinued.

In the late 1970s, when Bill suspected that the research program was faltering, he asked bat expert and former Preserve research scientist Donald Griffin to head a committee of distinguished scientists to evaluate the Preserve's research activities. The resulting Griffin Report recommendations helped to reinvigorate the program. Changes came swiftly over the next few years. In 1981, the Preserve celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary with some of the early researchers who had become renowned in their fields returning to participate in the festivities and give presentations on their work. In 1982, Bob Dalgleish resigned. In 1986 Richard Wyman came on board as the new resident manager (his title was changed to executive director a few years later). Wyman's research on salamanders, the decomposer food web, and their links to global warming brought the Preserve international recognition. The Preserve received grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to fund Wyman's work, and from the National Science Foundation to improve the Eldridge Research Center and Bullfrog Camp. In the 1980s, the Lake Myosotis dam was reconditioned and strengthened to comply with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

requirements. Meanwhile the Preserve's education and nature study programs were going strong and recreational activities—like swimming, fishing, and hiking—continued to be popular.

Bill retired as trustee in 1996, after 37 years, and the Van Antwerp relative who took his spot was former Board member Peter McChesney. (The Huyck trustee position had been filled long before by Roswell Eldridge.) Even though Bill Waldron no longer had a formal role with the Foundation, he continued to have a lively interest in the Preserve and was generous in his support. He even donated his trustee papers to the Preserve.

And Bill watched a new chapter in the Preserve's history unfold: the changing of the guard as executive director Rick Wyman retired in 2006 and new executive director Chad Jemison took the helm in 2008.

Sadly Bill Waldron passed away in April 2009. He is survived by his son, Arthur Waldron, of Bryn Mawr, Pa.; his daughter, Dorothy Waldron, of Wellesley, Mass.; two stepdaughters, Sybil Baldwin of Rhinecliff, N.Y., and May Houghton of Corning, N.Y.; a sister, Jessica Spacil of Seattle; and two grandsons. And like Jessie Huyck he left a gift that will enable the Preserve to continue its important work far into the future: protecting the lands in the Lake Myosotis watershed for all to enjoy, educating young and old to love and appreciate nature, and engaging in scientific research that will enhance our understanding of the natural world. Jessie established the Huyck Foundation as her legacy. Bill has left a generous gift to the Preserve as his.

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## Remembering Randy Heath

The Huyck Preserve was deeply saddened by the passing of Randy Health this past December. The Preserve was fortunate to be counted among Randy's loves. He regularly walked our trails and was among our most frequent visitors. He loved the trail loop near Lake Myosotis, where he could be seen with his walking stick and dog. Barbara and Randy often attended our Membership meetings, lectures and symposiums. Although there were certainly times when they were busy or had other things to do, they regularly came to show their support. In lieu of flowers, donations were directed to the Preserve, which has left us with a profound sense of gratitude to Randy and the Heath family. We are so grateful for having known Randy, and know that his spirit is carried on among Barbara, his family, his wonderful children and grandchildren. If you hike the trail loop on the east side of Lake Myosotis, imagine Randy there; allow yourself to be inspired by his goodness and selflessness, and enjoy the beauty of nature that he helped to preserve.

*Susan R. Kessler*





## Weeklong Programs for Youth at the Huyck Preserve

**Middle School Natural History:**  
Introduction to research methods  
and observation through illustration  
for Grades 6-8

July 5-9, 2010  
9 am - 4 pm

Nature Study for Grades 3-5

July 12-16, 2010  
1 - 4 pm

Nature Study for Grades K-2

July 19-23, 2010  
2 - 4 pm



## New High School Research Program to Launch in Summer 2010

**Summer Research Immersion Program: Fundamentals of Field Ecology: July 18 - August 7, 2010**

The Huyck Preserve is offering a three week residential immersion program for high school students—Fundamentals of Field Ecology (FFE). This program introduces students to the basics of ecology. FFE will provide the opportunity to work on a project directed by a professional field researcher and conduct a rigorous small group research project. It aims to provide a significant life experience that will help students prepare for college level biology classes and research.

The Basic outline for the program is as follows:

**Week 1** The first week includes an introduction to principles of ecology and field research methods. While learning about the insects, fungus, plants, birds and mammals that live in the different habitats found on the Huyck Preserve, students will gain experience with various field research methods. FFE participants will use field journals for data collection as well as field sketches to capture their experiences.

**Week 2** During the second week, students will act as research assistants to senior scientists conducting long-term research at the Huyck Preserve. Working side-by-side with researchers, students will learn professional field research techniques, science literacy, and skills that will help them excel in the college environment. Opportunities

for students to earn 24 hours of community service are part of week 2. Community service projects include training on invasive plant identification/removal and trail building.

**Week 3** The FFE course will culminate with students using the knowledge gained over the prior two weeks to conduct a group field research project. On the last night, they will make oral presentations on their projects and results.

Instructors for FFE will include: Susan Beatty, Ph.D., Associate Dean for Natural Sciences and Professor of Geography at the University of Colorado at Boulder; George Robinson, Ph.D., Co-Director of the Graduate program in Biodiversity, Conservation, and Public Policy, Co-Director of Campus Natural Areas Studies; and Associate Professor at University at Albany; Clifford Siegfried, Ph.D., Assistant Commissioner for Museums and Director of the New York State Museum; John Haines, Ph.D., former New York State Mycologist and Curator Emeritus of Mycology at the New York State Museum; and Sandra Orris, M.S. in Botany, and M.A. Ed. Sci.

The deadline for applications is April 19, 2010. The program fee is \$2,940 and includes room, board, and tuition. Application information and more details are available at our website: [www.huyckpreserve.org](http://www.huyckpreserve.org).

## Studying Slave-maker Ants at the Preserve

by Christine Johnson, American Museum of Natural History



I have been working on slave-maker ants for about 11 years. Slave-maker ants are specialized social parasites that have the unique behavior of raiding colonies of other species to acquire their young. The kidnapped young, which are typically pupae and

larvae, mature in the slave-maker nest and, as adults, carry out all the normal functions necessary for the colony to survive, whereas the slave-maker specializes on raiding.

I began my research on slave-maker ants in graduate school after completing an undergraduate degree in psychology and realizing that I wanted a job where I could work outdoors and with insects. Admittedly, my first love was flies, but the only faculty member in the biopsychology graduate program at Hunter College who was working on insects was Howard Topoff, and his specialty was ants. So every summer, I trekked off to southeastern Arizona to work on the chemical and behavioral ecology of the slave-maker ant *Polergus breviceps*. Unlike many ant species, young, newly-mated *Polyergus* queens are unable to establish their own nest alone. Instead, they take over an entire colony of their host species in the genus *Formica*. This is no easy feat because adult ants typically don't accept adult ants (and sometimes juveniles) of other species. However, as a true parasite, *Polyergus* queens have found another way to worm their way into the colony and be adopted by the host workers. The *Polyergus* queen kills the queen of an established host species nest, and this process seems to change the chemistry of her surface or cuticle so that the cuticular chemical profile almost matches that of the killed host queen. The host workers respond to this chemical change by treating her as though she were their natal queen.

After finishing, rather almost finishing as there are *always* more questions to answer in any research program, my Ph.D. research, I took a hiatus from slave-maker ants and worked on Finno-Scandinavian wood ants at the University of Helsinki, Finland and then on facultatively queenless ants from Malaysia and Costa Rica at the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium. Once I found myself back on U.S. soil, I went back to slave-maker ants at The Ohio State University with Dr. Joan Herbers. My work in central Ohio eventually led to my work on slave-makers at the Huyck Preserve.

The slave-makers at Huyck occur throughout the northeastern U.S. and Canada and are quite different from the *Polyergus* slave-makers. Although they also raid colonies of other species for their brood, the raiding behavior has evolved independently from *Polyergus*. These slave-makers belong to the acorn-ant group in the tribe Formicoxenini. As their name suggests, entire colonies are housed in acorn and hickory nuts and small twigs.

There are several species of acorn ant slave-makers, and my work focuses on how variation in community makeup of slave-makers and their hosts changes how each slave-maker and host species interacts. As a parasite, slave-makers affect their host negatively and the proportion of offspring that reach the next generation is lower than it would be if the host was not parasitized. Hence, slave-makers and their hosts undergo reciprocal evolution. In other words, slave-maker exploitation of the host puts pressure on (selects for) the host to evolve certain defenses. The newly evolved host defenses in turn put pressure on the slave-maker to evolve new means of exploiting the host. Understanding these dynamics in single slave-maker, single host species systems, is relatively straightforward. However, the community make-up of slave-makers and hosts vary across the geographical landscape both in the species present in an area and in the number of species that are interacting. In some populations, there may be one slave-maker species and two host species, whereas in another population there may be two slave-maker species and one host species. The addition of a second slave-maker species or the presence of more than one host changes the entire co-evolutionary dynamics.

At the Huyck Preserve, I have been carrying out experiments with the slave-maker *Protomognathus*



Enclosures used in the forest to establish the “neighborhoods” studied by Christine Johnson.



*americanus* and its host *Temnothorax longispinosus* to understand how the interactions between parasite and host differ from central Ohio, where *P. americanus* has to compete with another more virulent slave-maker *Temnothorax duloticus* for access to a shared host. In 2008, I followed the dynamics of small enclosed neighborhoods of the host only, and of the host and one or two slave-maker colonies that I set up on Huyck Preserve grounds. In the summer of 2009, I set up these same neighborhoods in the laboratory so that I could observe them daily.

In Ohio, my results indicate that when *P. americanus* has to compete with the other virulent slave-maker, *P. americanus* becomes a more prudent parasite. Furthermore, the host also is more tolerant of this slave-maker parasite, *P. americanus*, than of the virulent competitor *T. duloticus*. In the Huyck Preserve population, the results indicate that *P. americanus* is more forceful in exploiting its host and more aggressive towards conspecific (other *P. americanus*) colonies than in Ohio. The host in the Huyck population also appears to be more aggressive toward and less tolerant

of *P. americanus*. This may be due to the higher pressure exerted by a more aggressive slave-maker or may be a host species characteristic selected for by some other ecological pressure. This is a future step towards understanding these dynamics.

I have been back in the New York area for three years and I feel incredibly fortunate to have access to a place that provides me an opportunity to study an organism I love. Furthermore, the Huyck Preserve is just beautiful in general. At the end of each research visit, I always walk the loop around Lincoln Pond and enjoy the incredibly diverse habitats of this area.

With our ever-shrinking wildlife patches, places such as the Huyck Preserve become just that much more valuable. These areas allow us to carry out research that will help us to understand the impact of our ever growing populations on the environment and other ecosystems. I also have to extend a hearty thanks to the Huyck Preserve for providing me funding, without which, my research would not have been possible.

## From Munich to the Huyck Preserve – A Journey to America's Countryside

By Sebastian Pohl, University of Munich, Germany

In 2007, I started my Ph.D. project on slave-making ants at the University of Munich in Germany. Thanks to a Huyck Research Grant, I was able to come to the United States to collect ant colonies. When I came to the Huyck Preserve for the first time, I was very curious to see this place. My supervisor, Professor Susanne Foitzik, had been at the Huyck Preserve a couple of times before and spoke enthusiastically about it to Annette Leingärtner, a master's student, and me. We arrived at Lincoln Pond Cottage in the night, and the next morning I couldn't wait to see Lincoln Pond and the town of Rensselaerville. I was overwhelmed by the beauty of this small lake sparkling in the light of the morning sun. It was the morning of my birthday, and we first visited the Grist Mill—where we got a great tour guided by Mrs. Janet Haseley—and the Rensselaerville Falls. We then started collecting the ants on the shores of Lake Myosotis. I enjoyed having the opportunity to work at such a nice place. It was a wonderful birthday!

For the next three weeks, we collected colonies of the slave-making ant *Protomognathus americanus* and its *Temnothorax* hosts, which live in hollow acorns on the forest floor, at various sites at the Huyck Preserve. They are extraordinarily abundant at this place, and we have invaluable long-term data thanks to previous studies at the Preserve. Both make it the ideal study site for our research. Unlike in other ants, the *P. americanus* worker ants neither forage nor care for the brood, but they are specialized in raiding colonies of their closely related host species. They search for host nests, attack them, and steal their pupae which they bring back to their mother colony. When these pupae grow up, they accept the slave-maker colony as their own and perform all ordinary colony tasks. During my Ph.D. project, I studied the raiding behavior and the host nest choice of the slave-making ants. I wanted to find out whether they prefer smaller or larger host nests, which differ in the potential risk by defending host workers and the

potential benefit in terms of pupae that can be raided. I wanted to answer this question by means of choice trials back in the lab in Munich.

I was happy to return to the Huyck Preserve in 2008 as an enthusiastic admirer of this lovely place. Annette and I stayed again at Lincoln Pond Cottage, and Matthias Konrad, a new master's student, also took this place to his heart in no time. But how could one resist the charm of a warm summer evening, sitting on the porch, with the beaver swimming by and the hummingbirds fluttering around? Not to mention the warm welcome Audrey Kropp and the rest of the staff gave us, making us almost feel like we were home again. Besides our daily work in the forest, in the company of chipmunks, red efts, toads and an occasional turkey, we enjoyed the opportunity to talk to other Ph.D. students and senior researchers, from the United States and from Europe. I left after three weeks, already looking forward to my next stay.

In 2009, I was accompanied by Sofia Lizon à l'Allemand and Christoph von Beeren, two Ph.D. students in our lab, who were curious to see the famous Huyck Preserve. This time we stayed at Bird House, having our own private residence. Even my parents stopped by and helped me collect, using the last opportunity to see the place of which I told them so many stories. Staying at the Catalpa House in Rensselaerville, they enjoyed the scenic beauty of upstate New York and the enchanted atmosphere of the town. I had the chance to participate in the 2009 National Trail Day activities, which meant clearing the trails of fallen trees. It was impressive to feel the pioneer spirit that powered the volunteers on this warm summer day. A barbecue at Eldridge Research Center rounded out this unique, all-American experience.

These were unforgettable days, and I was sad to leave this beautiful place. But I promise to return one day to the Huyck Preserve!

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## 2010 Huyck Preserve Schedule Of Activities (partial list\*)

April 17	Earth Day Event: Volunteer Trail Day	9 am-1 pm
April 25- May 2	Wilderness Medicine First Responder Course	
May 1	New Membership Year Begins	
May 22	Bird Festival	9 am-1 pm
June 5	National Trail Day: Volunteer Trail Building	9 am-1 pm
June 12	Lake Myosotis Beach Opens	
June 19	79th Annual Membership Meeting Rensselaerville Falls Overlook Platform Dedication	1:30-3 pm 4 pm
June 26	Membership Potluck Dinner at Lake Myosotis	5-7 pm
July 5-9	Middle School Natural History Gr. 6-8	9 am-4 pm
July 5-16	Swim Lessons: Session 1 (M,W,F)	11 am- 12:30 pm
July 12-16	Nature Study: Gr. 3-5	1-4 pm
July 19-23	Nature Study: Gr. K-2	2-4 pm
July 18- August 7	High School Research Course: Fundamentals of Field Ecology	
July 19-30	Swim Lessons: Session 2 (M,W,F)	11 am- 12:30 pm
July 31	Community Fishing Tournament: Off the Hook at the Huyck Preserve	9 am-noon
August 14	Science Symposium	1 pm
August 16-17	GIS Training Course: Arc-GIS Desktop I	
August 18-20	GIS Training Course: Arc-GIS Desktop II	
August 28	Annual Benefit at Lincoln Pond	5-8 pm
September 10-17	Wilderness Medicine First Responder Course	

\* A full listing of activities at the Preserve will be included in the calendar sent with the membership mailing.



For more information about upcoming events, activities, and courses call (518) 797-3440  
Or check our website at [www.huyckpreserve.org](http://www.huyckpreserve.org)

# Huyck Preserve

& Biological Research Station

## 2010-2011 Membership Form

Membership year is May 1, 2010 - April 30, 2011



### Membership Levels

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