



THE EDMUND NILES HUYCK PRESERVE

Connecting people to nature through education, recreation, conservation, and research

Celebrating 90 years of biological research and conservation!



FALL 2021



Conservation
Excellence

Myosotis Messenger

LETTER TO OUR MEMBERS

From Anne Rhoads, Ph.D., Executive Director

As we settle into fall, the word progress comes to mind. The last year has been challenging, but we've made steady progress on resuming and continuing many programs and projects important to the Preserve and its members.

This summer saw the return of our K-12 summer education program. Run outside and under a tent, Nature Study brought the sounds of happy elementary school students learning through play on the shore of Lincoln Pond. Teachers Jaime Winans-Solis and Kate Martin lead hikes, instructed crafts, and facilitated fun games with students like Oh Deer! and the Thicket Game as ways of exploring topics like habitat dynamics and wildlife survival. Middle school students came to the Preserve for two events that brought new and returning families over a shared interest in nature exploration. High school students spent a week with plant ecologist Jon Titus, Ph.D. and me as we walked the land and remeasured long-term forest plots to add to our dataset on forest change all while learning about the plants, trees, and general ecology of the Preserve. Happily, Jon will be back next summer for the return of the Odum Internship in Field Ecology. In October, we hosted our first school field trips since Fall 2019—the joy that students, teachers, and our staff felt being back in the woods together was palpable. We're not yet back to normal, but we're getting there!

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We thank Michaela Fisher, former
Membership and Outreach Coordinator, for
this, her last issue of the *Myosotis Messenger*.

Stewardship Coordinator Garrett Chisholm and his seasonal crew continued to chip away at invasive species management and were assisted for one week by the inaugural group of high school Stewardship Interns. Although hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) continues to have the upper hand at the Preserve, we hired a contractor to perform our second HWA treatment, this time at the beautiful, old, well-studied, and ecologically important stand at Lincoln Pond. Again, progress!

Our research program also regained some normalcy this summer. Although held outside and missing the all-important potluck, seeing the community come together to learn about science and natural history from our Thursday Night Lecture speakers felt good! A team from Vassar College was in residence working on a project to safeguard our herbarium and make it accessible to the world (see p. 4). Huyck Research Grant recipients and independent researchers also returned for their field seasons. Senior researchers and graduate students were thrilled to be back on-site collecting the data they needed for long-term datasets and dissertation projects (see p. 5 and 6).

Lake Myosotis was open for swimming and boating for the full season, and our trails welcomed regular and new visitors. Speaking of trails, we are moving along with our Master Plan for Recreational Improvements project and have designs in-hand for repairs to the Lower Falls Trail and the Lake Myosotis Boat Launch area. We are working to identify funds to execute the plans.

I am optimistic that in the year ahead we will continue to build on these accomplishments. We thank you for your continued support through gifts and volunteerism—our shared love for the Preserve keeps us energized and moving forward.

A MESSAGE FROM HUYCK BOARD PRESIDENT

Alexandra van Horne

It brought me joy to see the Eldridge Research Center back in action this summer with Nature Study for the K to 5 grade students, outdoor discovery projects for the older students, summer public research lectures and having the Center reopened to visiting researchers. But the COVID -19 pandemic still limited our activities, and we are longing

to offer again next year the full range of our summer educational programs, and most importantly having an in-person gala which was so much fun in past years. Thank you for supporting the Preserve in this transitional year that will—we hope—bring us to better days in 2022.

REMEMBERING ROSWELL ELDRIDGE, M.D.

By Geoffrey Carter, Board of Directors

With sadness, the Huyck Preserve recognizes the recent passing of Roswell Eldridge. In his role as a longtime trustee of the Huyck Foundation, which partially funds the Preserve, he was indispensable to our efforts to succeed in our mission set out by our founder Jessie Van Antwerp Huyck.

Roswell was our dear friend. He attended most of our Board meetings to stay informed and understand the challenges we faced.

In challenging times, he encouraged us and was always there to help in any way he possibly could. His advice was thoughtful and valuable and his kindness was perpetual.

He was also the inspiration behind the successful Audubon Conference that took place during the Preserve's 75th Anniversary Celebration in 2006. The Conference brought Audubon scholars to the Preserve, included discussions about preserving Audubon's octavos, and featured the world premiere of the PBS American Masters documentary film—*John James Audubon: Drawn From Nature*. The weekend was a “smash hit” and brought the Preserve to the attention of a new audience, just as he hoped it would.

Roswell loved the Huyck Preserve and inspired us in many ways. We will always be grateful for his presence here.

We will miss our friend and colleague.



Roswell Eldridge, M.D. in front of the Preserve's Visitors' Center (top) and at home (bottom)

ENJOY A TRAILSIDE STAY!

Now you can stay at the Huyck Preserve for an extended visit of hiking, use of the lake, and pure relaxation surrounded by nature! Come soon for the gorgeous colors of fall, gather family together for the holidays, enjoy snowshoeing and all winter has to offer, or save your spot for a spring or summer getaway! Ordway House, a large historic home with a lake view, is perfectly situated with trails at its doorstep. Bring your family and friends to enjoy all the Preserve has to offer!

Find us on AirBnB: tinyurl.com/4we4ceyz!



HUYCK'S HERBARIUM GOES DIGITAL, WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM VASSAR

By Mark Schlessman, Ph.D.



Taylor and Garrett barcoding and updating nomenclature of herbarium specimens

Over more than 80 years, researchers at the Huyck Preserve have collected and preserved specimens of a wide variety of organisms that they studied. Among these is an herbarium—a collection of pressed, dried and documented plant specimens. For three days this past June, our traveling herbarium digitization team from Vassar College came to the Huyck Preserve and affixed barcodes, updated genus, species and family names, and took digital images of 930 herbarium specimens. Why did we do that?

Our goal was to make images of Huyck's herbarium specimens and the data associated with them available to anyone over the internet. Herbaria are windows into the past, telling us what plants existed, where those plants were, and when they leafed out, flowered, bore fruit, etc. In recent years, scientists have realized that data from herbaria can be used to determine how climate change is affecting the geographical distributions of plants and the timing of their life history events (what scientists call phenology). Using computer models built with data from herbaria, we can predict the effects of future climate change and use those projections to make decisions about how to manage our nature preserves.

But how do we get at data from herbarium specimens? In the past, this almost always required visiting the herbarium itself. Herbaria did loan specimens for short periods of time, but the privilege of borrowing specimens was, and still is, largely restricted to botanical specialists. Today, digital photography allows us to make virtual herbaria, with images of the specimens and associated data available to anyone with an internet connection. Digitizing herbaria has made large scale regional and even global studies of plant biodiversity possible.

Recognizing the importance of digitizing herbaria and other natural history collections, the National Science Foundation (NSF) established a program called Advancing Digitization of Biological Collections (ADBC). In 2020, Vassar College was awarded NSF ADBC funding to digitize the herbaria of six members of the Hudson Valley Environmental Monitoring and Management Alliance, including the Huyck Preserve, the Calder Center of Fordham University, Highstead Arboretum, the Mohonk Preserve, Pace University, and Vassar College Farm and Ecological Preserve.

This summer, the Huyck Preserve was the first stop for our traveling digitization team, which consisted of two Vassar undergrads, Alison Carranza '23 and Garrett Goodrich '23, Vassar Plant Biology Technician Taylor Conte, and myself. Coming to the Huyck Preserve was a wonderful way to start our summer. Alison and Garrett were able to stay overnight at the Preserve's Bullfrog Camp and get a taste of the field station experience. They enjoyed walking the trail around Lincoln Pond and stumbling upon snapping turtles laying eggs, porcupines, deer, beavers, woodchucks, and an adorable gaggle of goslings. I was glad to become reacquainted with Anne Rhoads, who's a Vassar biology alumna. We'd like to thank Anne, Garrett Chisholm, and Adam Caprio for their warm welcome and assistance.

After Huyck, we continued on to the Mohonk Preserve, the Calder Center, and the Highstead Arboretum. Now, Vassar students are in the process of entering data from the specimen labels into spreadsheets. The next step, to be carried out by Vassar's digital librarians, will be to put the images and label data online. Keep an eye on the *Myosotis Messenger* to find out when this happens!

See Alison and Garrett's blog post about working at the Huyck Preserve

here: <https://vcherbarium.vassarspaces.net/digitizing-the-edmund-niles-huyck-preserve-herbarium/>

Mark Schlessman, Ph.D. is an evolutionary biologist who has taught at Vassar College since 1980. His research focuses on the ways that angiosperms distribute stamens and pistils among their flowers. Mark is also working on a survey of flora of the Vassar College Ecological Preserve. Photo credit: Vassar College



HUYCK'S HERBARIUM GOES DIGITAL, WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM VASSAR

Cont'd



Top: Scanned image of lady's slipper collected on June 29, 1894 ©Vassar College
Bottom: Indian pipe collected in Rensselaerville on July 8, 1894



Scanned image of common sundew collected near the Huyck Preserve on July 4, 1949 ©Vassar College



Top: Garrett and Taylor scan specimens.
Bottom: Mark Schlessman, Ph.D. is surprised to find specimens collected in 1894!



JOIN US FOR AN EVENT TO WELCOME WINTER!
STAY TUNED FOR OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS.

The Wonders of Winter
with Garrett Chisholm, Stewardship Coordinator

As we approach the change in seasons, follow Garrett on a guided hike to discover how nature prepares for winter. Participants will observe the ways in which plants and animals have adapted to the winter conditions in the Northeast during this casual walk around Lincoln Pond.

December 11th, 10am
Meet at the Eldridge Research Center, 284 Pond Hill Road, Rensselaerville, NY 12147

Dress for the weather and wear sturdy shoes. No bathrooms will be available; please plan accordingly.

Registration is required; event is capped at 15 people
<https://www.huyckpreserve.org/upcoming-events-and-programs.html>
Suggested donation \$5; Preserve members and children under 12 free

MACROPIS NUDA — A RARE AND FASCINATING “OIL BEE”

By Bryan Danforth, Ph.D.

In July 2021, members of the Danforth lab from Cornell University conducted research on a rare and fascinating bee at the Huyck Preserve. *Macropis nuda* (family Melittidae) is one of three species of the genus *Macropis* in New York. *Macropis* bees are “oil bees” which require floral oils from specific host plants to line and provision their brood cells. In the case of *Macropis*, these oils are collected exclusively from plants in the genus *Lysimachia* (fringed loosestrife and relatives; family Primulaceae), which grow abundantly in humid, saturated soils in the eastern U.S. The flowers of *Lysimachia ciliata* have specialized oil-producing glands located at the center of the flower. Female *Macropis* have specialized mops and sponges located on their fore-, mid-, and hind-legs for rupturing the plants' oil glands and transporting these floral oils back to the nest. Female *Macropis* nest along the banks of streams, ponds and lakes in relatively wet soils, and the floral oils serve to waterproof their below-ground brood cells. The oils are also mixed into their pollen provisions as food for the larvae.

Macropis, including *Macropis nuda*, are exceptionally rare bees known from just a handful of sites in New York and across the Northeast. The nest site at the Huyck Preserve has been present for at least 40 years and has been the focus of previous studies by entomologists at the American Museum of Natural History and Cornell (Rozen and Jacobson 1980, Cane et al. 1983).



Female *Macropis nuda* resting on a flower with a load of pollen and oil. ©Bryan Danforth

Our studies, funded by the National Science Foundation, focus on understanding what role microbes (including bacteria and fungi) play in the biology of these fascinating bees. A diverse microbial community in the pollen/nectar provisions of many solitary bees is thought to play an important role in larval nutrition as well as in preservation of the pollen provisions. We suspect that a unique set of bacteria and fungi may be associated with the uniquely oily provisions of *Macropis*.

We collected samples of pollen provisions, adult bees, larvae, and host plant flowers for microbial amplicon sequencing—a gene sequencing technique that is commonly used to characterize microbial diversity. We were cautious to sample just a portion of the known nests at the Huyck Preserve in order to preserve these bees and their nesting site for the future. Rachel Fordyce, Nathalia Flores, Mark Buckner, Jordan Kueneman, Joe Giulian, and Bryan Danforth were all present at the Huyck Preserve for at least part of July. Our samples are now being sequenced at the Host Microbe Systems Biology Core at UC Davis, and we are looking forward to examining the results.

At the same time as we conducted our field research on *Macropis nuda* at the Huyck Preserve, graduate student Mark Buckner was surveying additional sites across New York and the Northeast for other *Macropis* localities. Based on a predictive model built on previous collection records for *Macropis nuda*, Mark identified regions of the Northeast with high habitat suitability for *Lysimachia* and *Macropis*. Mark spent weeks camping out in the rain, but his soggy travels both verified his predictive model and uncovered additional localities where the three *Macropis* species occur. He also identified records of *Macropis patellata*, the rarest of the three *Macropis* species, and *Macropis ciliata*.

The studies we conducted this summer will help provide a better understanding of the biology of *Macropis* “oil bees” and will hopefully lead to a better assessment of their conservation status. We are grateful to the staff at the Huyck Preserve for facilitating our research.

Bryan Danforth, Ph.D. has taught at Cornell University since 1995. His work on solitary bees began in graduate school at the University of Kansas while working at the Southwestern Research Station in Portal, AZ. For more information on solitary bees, have a look at Bryan’s 2019 book, *The Solitary Bees: Biology, Evolution, Conservation*.

Photo: Bryan Danforth, Ph.D. (right) at the Huyck Preserve with Matthew Schlesinger, Ph.D. (left) of the NY Natural Heritage Program and Huyck Preserve Scientific Advisory Board



ANT RESEARCH AT THE HUYCK PRESERVE

By Susanne Foitzik, Ph.D., Marcel Caminer, and Erwann Collin

We were very happy when we finally arrived at the Huyck Preserve in mid-August of this year. Our field work, funded by two Huyck Research Grants, was originally planned for May 2020, but then the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Marcel Caminer and Erwann Collin are both doctoral students in the lab of Susanne Foitzik. Susanne began her research on ant behavior at the Preserve as a postdoc in Joan Herbers' lab in 1998. As graduate students working on tight timelines, the pandemic shut-down was devastating. This was especially true for Erwann's project, which focuses on the footprint of



Members of the research team collect ant colonies at the Huyck Preserve.

selection exerted by the socially parasitic slavemaking ants on their hosts. That study required a fresh collection of host and slavemaking ant colonies of the species *Temnothorax longispinosus* and *T. americanus* from the Huyck Preserve and other sites. Because travel to the U.S. was impossible in 2020, Erwann worked on smaller projects last year, hoping that this year the Foitzik lab team would be able to travel from its home base of Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany. Indeed, after receiving a green light from the Huyck Preserve in late June, we obtained an official United States permit to enter the country fully vaccinated, so we booked our flights.

We spent four short stays at the Preserve, while also traveling to nine other sites from Maine to West Virginia, and from Massachusetts to Ohio, covering the full range of these ants. We used the Huyck Preserve as our home base, due to its central location and the fact that we could keep our collected ants in the incubator at the Eldridge Research

Center. On each field day, we went to different areas within the forest to open acorns or maple sticks with knives to search for ants. An entire colony fits into one acorn or one stick! When we found a colony of the right species, we transferred the ants and the nest site into a Ziploc bag and added provisions to keep them alive. After seven weeks of collection, we can say with certainty that over the entire range of *T. americanus* slavemaking ants, no other site shows the same high frequency and large colony size as the Huyck Preserve! We are looking forward to our genomic results, which will tell us what genes and traits are under selection in host-parasite coevolution at the Preserve. Previous results indicate an escalated “evolutionary arms race” is at play in the Preserve's woods.

Marcel's project focuses on how ant workers divide the work within an ant colony and has revealed that gene activity in the antennae of foragers and brood care workers is vastly different, more so than in the ant brain. This indicates that the ants taking over different tasks perceive the world very differently, since ants mainly use the sense of smell to navigate and understand their surroundings.



T. americanus & *T. longispinosus*
©Susanne Foitzik

We enjoyed our fieldwork at the Huyck Preserve including meeting the beavers in Lincoln Pond, whom Susanne knows from past visits. More importantly, we are looking forward to gaining insights into the behavior and its genomic basis of the *Temnothorax* ants from the Huyck Preserve. These data will be the basis of the doctoral degrees of Erwann and Marcel.

Susanne Foitzik is Chair for Behavioral Ecology and Social Evolution at the Johannes Gutenberg University (JGU) Mainz, Germany. She works on the behavior, ecology and evolution of ants, with a special focus on the coevolution between social parasites and their hosts. Marcel Caminer is a Ph.D. student at the JGU Mainz Germany. His work focuses on the molecular regulation of division of labor in *Temnothorax* ants. Erwann Collin is a Ph.D. student at the JGU Mainz, Germany who works on the coevolution between the slavemaking ant *Temnothorax* ants.



UPDATES FROM THE LAND

By Garrett Chisholm, Stewardship Coordinator

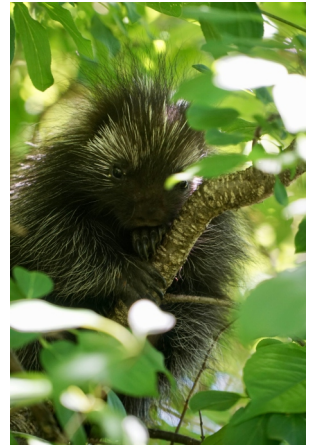
Invasive species management at the Preserve has been more visible this year than ever before. Walking our trails, one might come across the remnants of a multiflora rose that had been treated with fire (using a new weed torch system – look for the video we posted on our Facebook page for more on that) or an autumn olive that has been solarized with black plastic. Perhaps the most visible management effort we have undertaken during the 2021 field season is a research project on Japanese knotweed management at Lake Myosotis that uses hardware cloth. You have likely spotted the mats of metal mesh on the knotweed stand near the boat racks that my crew rolled out like carpet on a living room floor. But unlike carpeting, hardware cloth is made of galvanized steel wire with half-inch by half-inch mesh.

This work is part of a project funded by Capital Region PRISM to help determine best management practices for the species. Knotweed grows rapidly and spreads easily from underground rhizomes, eventually dominating a site and causing severe ecological change. This project, which will monitor stem growth and eradication success over the next several years in the experimental plot and a nearby control plot, tests the hypothesis that the knotweed growing through the half-inch squares in the wire mesh will self-girdle and die back without further management by our crew. The control plot will continue to be managed as usual, with an initial cutting to the ground at the beginning of the field season followed by subsequent hand pulling of resprouts.



I am particularly excited about the potential results of this initiative. With this new and experimental technique, we are hoping to see a reduction in not only the quantity of resprouts each year, but also a reduction in the time that staff will have to spend working on knotweed management. This will be crucial as it will allow for more time spent monitoring the Preserve's land for emerging invasive species that threaten its ecosystems. If knotweed is controlled and ultimately eliminated using hardware cloth, this will support the use of this technique as an effective, non-chemical treatment of knotweed.

Going into the 2021 field season, I knew that our knotweed project would be an exciting addition to our management of invasive species, but I did not know it would provide an equally exciting face-to-face encounter. While working among the knotweed, Invasive Species Assistants Gavin Berdan and Sean McAneny discovered a porcupette (a baby porcupine) resting in a sapling behind a stack that they had just pulled. We were surprised that it appeared so unbothered by us, and observed as it kept dozing off. This may have been an ideal nap spot for the little fellow, but it did create an obstacle to finishing our work that day. We doubled back later after the porcupette had moved on.



Top and above ©Gavin Berdan

This has not been my only sighting of porcupines here at the Preserve. The vast landscape of the Preserve has brought me to numerous porcupine dens (each smelling more potent than the last) that are easy to identify through telltale signs – scat that seemingly overflows from the base of a tree and tiny quills scattered around. Though porcupines live solitary lives, they will hibernate together in a group (called a “prickle”) in winter. Because these creatures use their dens year after year, the pile of scat outside can get quite large! If you are lucky enough, there's a chance you may see a porcupine waddling adjacent to the Ten-Mile Creek or in our coniferous forests during a walk at the Preserve.

To learn more about the experimental invasive species management techniques we are utilizing, or to volunteer (which increases your chances of seeing a porcupine) contact Stewardship Coordinator Garrett Chisholm at garrett@huyckpreserve.org.

WINTER READING LIST

The scientists, staff, and Board of Directors of the Huyck Preserve recommend their favorite reads for the coldest season.

***Finding the Mother Tree: Discovering the Wisdom of the Forest* by Suzanne Simard**

"She is a forest ecology professor at the University of British Columbia. I love her personal and scientific journey toward understanding forests. That old saying 'Can't see the forest for the trees' is nonsense because the trees ARE the forest, one and the same. Everything is connected." -Sue Beatty, Ph.D., Board of Directors

***The Rise of the American Conservation Movement: Power, Privilege, and Environmental Protection* by Doreceta E. Taylor**

"This book draws attention to the intricacies of the environment through a lens of race, class, and gender. Taylor utilizes her background in environmental justice to examine complex social issues throughout history, and their direct correlation to the conservation movement of the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries." -Garrett Chisholm, Stewardship Coordinator

***Hemlock: A Forest Giant on the Edge* Edited by David Foster**

"This book offers a look at the importance of eastern hemlock, the impacts of hemlock woolly adelgid, and insights into forest dynamics. It helps you to appreciate the natural balance and the influence of people and pests."

-Nicholas Dietschler, Research Support Specialist from the NYS Hemlock Initiative at Cornell University



***The Creation: An Appeal To Save Life on Earth* by E.O. Wilson**

"A unique appeal by Dr. Wilson in the format of a letter to a Southern Baptist pastor. Addresses the need for religion and science to work together to protect and save biodiversity. In doing so, Dr. Wilson provides not only the pastor but all readers with an excellent summary of the threats and issues facing our environment and more important what we should do about them today." -Tom Lyons, Board of Directors

***Becoming Earth* by Eva Saulitis**

"I don't like cancer memoirs but this one is different. A beautifully written meditation on the earth, on being a wild being, on returning to the earth. A poem in the book about salmon going upstream to mate as they die is one of the most stunningly beautiful works of writing I have ever read. This book is not a depressing read—it is a glorious read. Enjoy!"

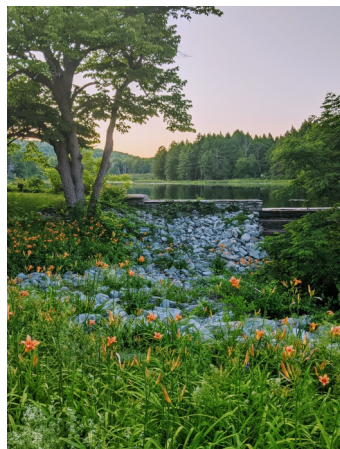
Jon Titus, Ph.D., SUNY Fredonia, 2021 Visiting Researcher/Educator

***Never Home Alone: From Microbes to Millipedes, Camel Crickets, and Honeybees, the Natural History of Where We Live* by Rob Dunn**

"Shines a light on a hidden world and the importance of biodiversity, even in your home, in a fun and entertaining way."

-Alexandra van Horne, Board of Directors President

SPRING AND SUMMER 2021



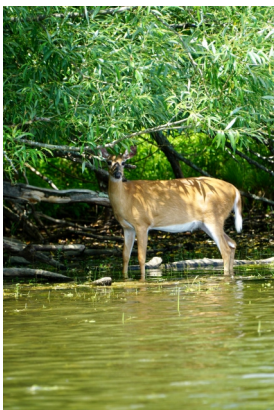
Lincoln Pond
©Lynsey Ackert



Lake Myosotis at sunset
©Scott Keating



Above: Lower Falls
©Tim Brown



Left: A deer on the bank of
Lake Myosotis



Fungi growing by the trail
©Lynsey Ackert



Left: Indian pipe by the
Phenology Trail



A fawn hides in
the underbrush.

Right: A pair of Eastern tiger
swallowtails



Left: A tree frog among
the leaves

Right: The Racetrack Trail
on a summer day



Painted turtle
©Sarah Nelson

SPRING AND SUMMER 2021



Field trips returned this fall! Here, students returned from the woods to process data on decomposers.

Right: Our bittersweet cutting event was a success!



Above: Students in the high school Forest Ecology Research Program prepare to measure the diameter of trees with George Robinson, Ph.D. and Jon Titus, Ph.D.

Left: Middle school students study macroinvertebrates by Ten-Mile Creek.

Right: Participants listen to Bill Logan's Thursday Night Lecture.



Huyck staff consider exciting improvements along the Lower Falls Trail.

Right: Last spring, Greenville students learned what's in their school pond!



Left: Children at Nature Study learn about our deer exclosures from teacher Kate Martin.



Left: Executive Director Anne Rhoads preps Lake Myosotis for another wonderful beach season.

Right: Lake Myosotis lifeguard and gate keeper wrap-up another terrific summer.



People of all ages enjoy our trails.
©Justin Heinbunch

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

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 Dennis Martin in honor of
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