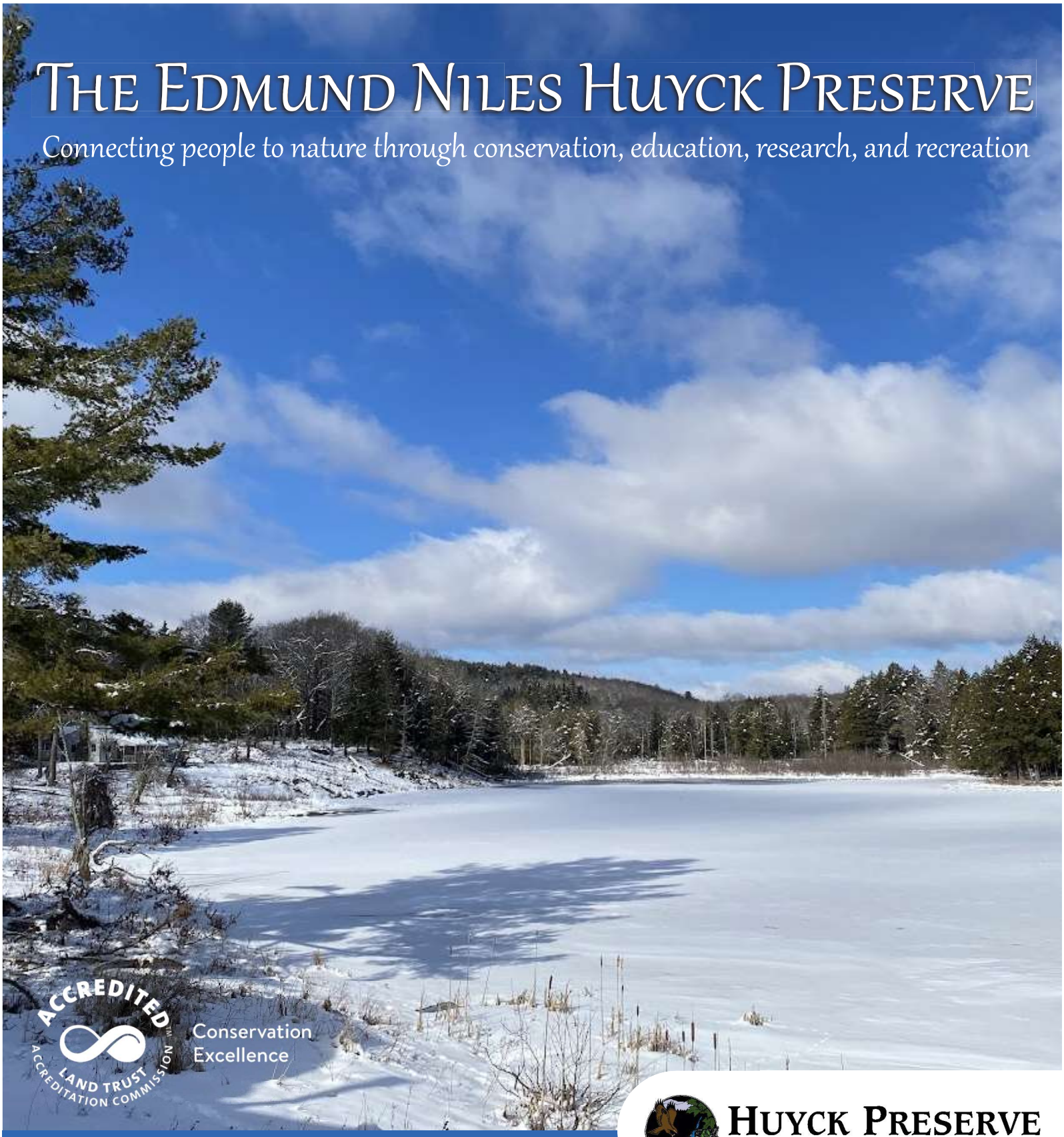
The Edmund Niles Huyck Preserve

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



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Huyck Preserve and Biological Research Station

Spring 2024

Myosotis Messenger

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A Message to Our Members

From the Board President

Dear Members,

As the first signs of spring are appearing, we at the Huyck Preserve are working hard to put together an exciting season of activities. I was reminded recently how important our area is from a geological standpoint. The BBC ran an article on February 29th with the headline "The surprising US region that's home to the world's oldest forests." Remarkably, the world's oldest forest, dating back to the Devonian period roughly 400 million years ago when animals moved from the sea onto land, is in our backyard—in neighboring Greene County. This year, we are planning several geology events to help us all learn more about the deep past of the Huyck Preserve and the region. You'll also not want to miss the return of our Read+Hike program. I had a first glance at board member Lynn Love's impressive list of proposed books, and it includes one on bees, a topic of interest to many in our community. Turn to pp. 13-14 for our spring and summer calendar of events. Come and experience the Huyck Preserve this summer!

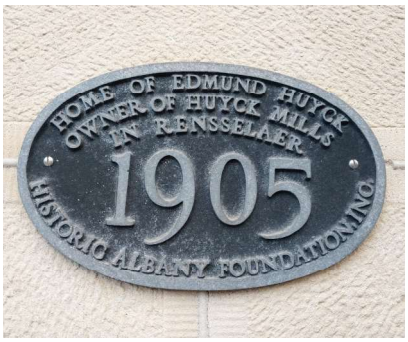
– Alexandra van Horne

Rensselaerville Falls gushing from winter rains

From the Executive Director

Dear Members,

Huyck Preserve staff visited the Huyck Felt Company in Rensselaer, NY (R) and the Albany home of Edmund and Jessie Van Antwerp Huyck (L).



In early March, the Huyck Preserve staff took a field trip related to the history of the Preserve's lands and its founders. We traveled to the Huyck Felt Company in Rensselaer, New York, the successor of the mill that from 1870-1878 produced paper-making felts powered by the Ten-Mile Creek (the ruin of which visitors pass when crossing over the Huyck Preserve's Lower Falls bridge). Francis C. Huyck moved the operation to Kenwood, a suburb of Albany, and ultimately to Rensselaer where his sons Edmund, Frances, and John joined the business. The Rensselaer mill closed in the 1980s, but the buildings are still used and standing—if you've been to the Rensselaer Amtrak station, you may have seen them to the southwest. We enjoyed walking around the exterior of the buildings, imagining life there in the first part of the 20th century when the Huyck family was active and when their employees frequently traveled to Rensselaerville to spend time at Lake Myosotis. After the mill visit, we headed to State Street in Albany to find two Huyck houses that were occupied by the families when they weren't in Rensselaerville. We found Frances Conkling Huyck's house and the house down the street that was built and occupied by his son Edmund Niles and Jessie Van Antwerp Huyck. As most of our readers likely know, Jessie Van Antwerp Huyck founded the Huyck Preserve in 1931 to honor her husband and protect the natural area that they both loved and that they enjoyed sharing with the community.

We returned to the Preserve office the day after our field trip energized for spring and summer at the Preserve. I began finalizing this spring's busy school field trip program and hiring for this summer's K-12 education program. I also started reviewing architectural plans for Davis Cottage, the small cottage along the eastern shore of Lake Myosotis that is being restored and converted into a trailside interpretive center with funding from a New York State Recreational Trails Program grant. We hope construction will start on the cottage as well as improvements to our Lower Falls Trail and Lake Myosotis boat launch by late summer. Garrett, our Stewardship Coordinator, began hiring seasonal Invasive Species Assistants and planning this coming season's invasive species management and monitoring work—thanks to our sixth year of funding from Capital District Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM). Buildings and Grounds Supervisor Adam got to work hiring this summer's Lake Myosotis lifeguards while planning important infrastructure repairs following heavy rains this past fall and winter.

Reflecting on our past while also planning ahead helps us do our best work to achieve the Huyck Preserve's mission. This year, we're also working with the Preserve's Board of Directors to update our strategic plan. That process has us reviewing our accomplishments since the completion of the 2011 Strategic Plan while creating ambitious goals for our next ten years, a period that will include our 100th anniversary in 2031! One of our most significant goals for the next ten years is to re-envision the Eldridge Research Center on Pond Hill Road to better meet the needs of our research and education programs while also providing an enhanced space for the public to come and learn through our science and conservation programs. We're excited to share our updated Strategic Plan with you when it is complete.

We're also looking forward to spending time with you at one of our upcoming spring and summer events and programs or simply while enjoying a day at the lake.

Warmly,
Anne G. Rhoads, Ph.D.

Metaphire hilgendorfi, a jumping worm

Earthworms at the Huyck Preserve: Old and New Findings, Some Alarming

BY REBECCA PINDER, PH.D., 2023 HUYCK GRANT RECIPIENT

As a young Ph.D. student of UAlbany's George Robinson, Ph.D. in 2005, I was directed to the Huyck Preserve for my field research. I was interested in studying the impact that non-native earthworms were having on our streamside salamanders. At that time, news that non-native earthworms were invading our forests was a strange idea to me. Much of the research on this new phenomenon was being done in upland habitats, and it was unclear how salamanders were adapting to this threat. Most field guides list earthworms as prey for salamanders, yet the streamside salamanders that I was studying at the time are typically smaller than adult earthworms like the night crawler. Species like two-lined salamanders (*Eurycea bislineata*), dusky salamanders (*Desmognathus fuscus* and *orcrophaeus*), and even red-backed salamanders (*Plethodon cinereus*) were frequently encountered along riparian habitats. So, I wondered, do these salamanders really eat earthworms? And if more earthworms in this region are non-native, should we be concerned that they are expanding their range?

After lots of reading and learning field techniques, I officially started my research at the Preserve in the spring of 2007. My goal was to determine the extent that salamanders living along streams eat earthworms, and also to determine if this diet choice is proportionate to the amount of earthworms observed. To this end, I visited streams throughout the Preserve as well as in the Catskill State Park and searched for earthworms and salamanders along the streambanks. To find out if the salamanders ate earthworms, I used a non-lethal method of analyzing their gut contents. I looked at what was in the stomach of about 400 salamanders over the course of two years and found that earthworms made up less than one percent of the salamanders' diet. This means that streamside salamanders essentially don't eat earthworms!

What was also surprising was that I observed a very high diversity of earthworms living along these streams. Most upland studies were finding an average of five to seven species at their research sites; I was finding as many as 15 species. Even more surprising—and exciting—I was able to document earthworm species at the Preserve that are native to North America, including *Eisenoides lonnbergii*, *Sparganophilus eiseni*, and *Dendrodrilus rubidus*. Over the years, I traveled back to the Huyck Preserve frequently to look at these populations, and, with improved sampling techniques, in 2017 I was able to find another native species, *Bamastos parvus*. Although the earthworm populations seemed to be shrinking, they appeared somewhat stable.

I returned to the Huyck Preserve funded by a Huyck Research Grant last summer. One of the reasons for my interest in returning is that I had been finding invasive jumping worms on the banks of streams and rivers that are near the Preserve, and I was concerned that they would reach this precious habitat. For those unfamiliar with jumping worms, they are earthworms that originate from Asia, typically from the genera *Amynthas* or *Metaphire*. These earthworms can cause even more damage to our forests than European earthworm species, and an invasion can start with a single worm!

The jumping worms are so named because they can actually jump off the ground. They were first reported in California in the late 1800s, then again in the 1940s near the platypus

The forest floor in an area with an abundant earthworm community. This location only has European species. Jumping worm-invaded sites show similar pattens with more pelleted soil structure.

Earthworm castings form stiff pellets within the soil. Normally, forest soil and humus are light and spongy.

enclosures at the Bronx Zoo (the worms had been imported to feed the platypuses). Since then, they have been unwittingly introduced into most areas of the United States via products like landscaping material, potted plants, and even as compost worms intended to speed up the composting process. The existence of jumping worms is deeply concerning from an environmental perspective because like some other invasive species, just one individual is capable of starting a whole new colony. These species have the ability to create offspring through parthenogenesis (or asexual reproduction) and, although they only live one year, one individual can produce many cocoons (as many as 60) that each have one to two young worms inside. In peak season (early-midsummer), the density of jumping worms can be over 300 worms per square meter! When the jumping worms hatch from the cocoon, they are only about one to three millimeters long. By consuming massive amounts of leaf litter throughout the summer, they can balloon up to six to eight inches in size. What this means is that in areas of jumping worm infestation, the leaf litter can become thin to non-existent. Without leaf litter, the soil becomes compacted and forms a pelleted texture. When this happens, most other leaf litter-dwelling invertebrates, vertebrates, and sensitive plants are greatly diminished in population size. When jumping worms consume fine tree roots growing in the upper soil layers, tree growth declines.

Knowing that jumping worms were close by, last July I re-examined earthworm populations at the Huyck Preserve. I focused on streamside and riparian areas, revisiting all my previous research sites. All the sites that were near streams still contained earthworms, but the overall populations were significantly smaller than had been measured previously. One alarming observation was that the native species that I detected at these sites in the past were not detected during this survey. Instead, European earthworms were the only species found. Additionally, I expanded my survey to include the shores of Lake Myosotis and was saddened to find the jumping worm (*Metaphire hilgendorfi*) dominating the southern shore of the lake. It is hard to determine exactly when they arrived and how, but the extent of the population and its location makes me believe that they arrived within the last couple years and might have been brought to the Preserve as fishing bait. Although this is not good news, the bright side is that they appear to be limited to the lakeshore at this time and have not entered the adjacent forest.

The jumping worm population at the Huyck Preserve is small and could potentially be removed with diligent hand picking by volunteers in coordination with Preserve staff.

We can also do our part to not bring new hitchhikers into the Preserve. (Use the Preserve boot brush stations when entering and exiting or, better yet, clean mud off your shoes before coming to the Preserve!) These worms should not be used as fishing bait and any earthworms used to fish should be removed and disposed of properly. Never leave your fishing bait in wild spaces! Jumping worms and other non-native worms are surprisingly resilient when dumped in water, and will just swim out and take up residence on the shore.

At home, make your own compost if possible. If not, make sure that the compost you buy has been heat treated. Use caution when planting potted plants. Jumping worm cocoons are three to five millimeters long and are very hardy. Many believe that rinsing the soil off your plants and planting bare root stock are best practices. Carefully inspect all transplants' roots before planting, using a magnifying glass if necessary.

The jumping worm problem is something that we all have the ability to help manage. At the Preserve, be on the lookout for jumping worms. If you see them, report them to the Preserve staff and upload the coordinates to iMapInvasives. Together, we can continue to protect the sensitive habitats at the Huyck Preserve and help minimize this threat.

How to Identify Jumping Worms

- Jumping worms move like snakes do and can thrash wildly from side-to-side, sometimes jumping off of the ground. European and native earthworms move much more slowly with very little to no side-to-side movement.
- Jumping worms have higher internal pressure and look more "puffed up" than European or native earthworms.
- Jumping worms have a teal iridescent shine and smooth whitish clitellum (their thickened, non-segmented section) encircling their entire bodies, whereas the native and European earthworms range in shades of green-grey to deep red-violet and a clitellum that is often on the top and sides of their body only.

Rebecca Pinder is an Associate Professor of Biological Sciences at SUNY Columbia-Greene Community College. She is passionate about all things living in the leaf litter and the forest. In her spare time, she often hikes with her family, who are very patient when she abruptly stops to look under logs and rocks.

Growing up at the Huyck Preserve: An Interview With Calder Raio

BY LYNN LOVE AND ANNE RHOADS, PH.D.

Calder Raio is a sophomore at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry after spending the formative summers of his childhood at the Huyck Preserve. This year, Calder will return to the Preserve for our Undergraduate Odum Internship Program. We recently sat down with him to reminisce about his experiences here and the impact they had on his college and career plans.

Q: Tell us a bit about yourself and how you came to participate in the Huyck Preserve's education programs when you were younger.

A: I am a sophomore now at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF), and I've been studying chemistry, with a concentration in environmental chemistry. I can't even remember the first time I came to the Huyck Preserve. I've been coming all my life. I suppose the earliest memories would have been the elementary school programs [Nature Study]. I started coming to them because my brother and I would spend summers living with my grandparents who are about 15 minutes away from the Huyck Preserve [see Huyck Highlight on p. 11]. So, pretty much every day, they brought us over, and we spent time at the lake and walked around Lincoln Pond. It was natural that we would participate in those summer programs. I think we participated every year, all the way through high school.

Q: Was there a particular program, lesson or age when you were at the Huyck Preserve that you remember vividly or cherish most?

A: Yes, there are two ages that I keep coming back to. When I was younger [in Nature Study], I remember playing running bases, but instead of sharks and minnows, it was more complicated, like deer and coyotes. We had all the trophic levels—we had vultures and decomposers like fungi [as part of our game]. It stands out that we were able to understand [the concepts of trophic levels] at such a young age. I was only introduced to those ideas formally in high school, but I had already become familiar with concepts such as the ten percent loss of energy as you go up the trophic levels, from the time I was eight years old.

I certainly remember the high school program being pretty different from the earlier two programs. It is more research focused, and we spent a lot of time talking with various professors and research fellows who showed us what they were working on at the time, trying to get us interested, and to pick a research project of our own. I remember spending time indoors at the research benches [at the Eldridge Research Center] for the first time in the high school summer program. We spent a lot more time with the equipment and learning field methods. I remember that we analyzed water samples that we collected and then brought inside to the Research Center. That felt so cool to me. And then, more recently, I am very fond of the time that I spent with Dr. Jon Titus and Dr. George Robinson [during the Forest Ecology Internship]. That was the summer of 2021. We spent a lot of time walking around Lincoln Pond, measuring trees.

Q: You also worked as a lifeguard at Lake Myosotis, right? How was that experience?

A: As far as recreation goes, it's beautiful at the Huyck Preserve. I spent so much time in childhood swimming in Lake Myosotis that I became a lifeguard for a summer. That was so much fun, and I'm glad I got to immerse myself in the beauty of the lake.

Q: Did your participation in the Huyck Programs shape your choices in education, specifically now at college?

A: I spent a lot of time talking with Dr. Titus about college [during the Forest Ecology Internship in 2021] and deciding what to be interested in. I think at that point I knew that I was going to study something in the environmental sciences, but I wasn't exactly sure what subfield.

Above L: Calder Raio measures a red pine in 2021. Above: Calder and Jonas Raio (far right) attend Ecological Explorations in 2018.

I remember that vividly in helping me decide to go to SUNY ESF, and end up doing what I'm doing now.

Q: You're a chemistry major. How did you arrive at that decision? How do you envision using this knowledge after graduation?

A: I think I always knew that I was going to do environmental science. Maybe there was a part of me that thought I was going to do computer science. But, when I came to ESF, I didn't want to just be an environmental science major because everything is geared to environmental science. And there's no undeclared option here. So, I think I just chose chemistry because I thought sure, I like chemistry. From those conversations I had with Dr. Titus, I realized that there was at least a string of chemistry running through everything. And then I figured I could teach myself other things that I might need to know beyond chemistry.

After two years [of college], I definitely identify as a chemist. I don't know exactly what I'm going to be doing [in the future], but I definitely think a lot about research. Plant physiology interests me. Glaciology and hydro-geology surrounding glaciers interests me. I'm pretty happy being with chemistry because of the topics I was introduced to at the Huyck Preserve. I know I want to do research of some kind, and chemistry puts me on the right footing.

Q: Did we overlook anything that you wanted to talk about?

A: Maybe I should mention how fortunate I am to have worked with Dr. Susanne Foitzik and her Ph.D. students via mail while she was in Germany [during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020]. Anne Rhoads [Huyck Preserve Executive Director] reached out to me and asked me and my brother if we would be able to go up to the Huyck Preserve and collect samples of the slavemaking ants and their hosts, which are found in acorns. We spent hours and hours digging in piles of acorns, finding these ants, bagging them, putting them in coolers and sending them over to Germany.

Q: What would you like to tell kids and families who haven't experienced the Huyck Preserve's education programs yet?

A: The summer education opportunities have shaped so much of my path. I think if you can, you should definitely take advantage of learning, even if you don't go on in environmental science. You don't have to dedicate your career to environmental science, but it's important in changing the mind of future generations to be conscious of environmental health—not just being aware of it, but also having the knowledge to do something about it and to improve the world that we live in. So, that should be woven into all disciplines, not just the section of science that is dedicated to it. For anybody, it's really important to spend time outdoors in a place like the Huyck Preserve, and learn from it.

L-R Jon Titus, Ph.D., Willa Remich, Jonas Raio, Calder Raio, and Julian Remich during the Forest Ecology Internship in 2021

Education at the Huyck Preserve Runs in the Family

By Jonas Raio

For my entire life, I have spent summers exploring the Huyck Preserve. There, I learned how to swim underwater in Lake Myosotis looking for crayfish. I learned how to balance by jumping between rocks to cross Ten-Mile Creek. I learned how to climb by looking for beetles in the knots of trees. One summer, I joined my brother, our cousins, Willa and Julian, Huyck Preserve Director Anne Rhoads, Ph.D., and visiting researcher Jon Titus, Ph.D., for the forest ecology program. We discovered that the Huyck Preserve has something called a Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI), which is like a forest health check-up. We went to the CFI plots and learned about why keeping track of the trees over time is so important. It was a chance for the four of us to get our hands dirty and see what forest ecology is all about. Another memory that stays with me is the Wildlife Ecology Research high school program where I participated in fieldwork with undergraduate students and Susan Beatty, Ph.D. We used the field station's kayaks to venture onto Lincoln Pond and study the effect water composition had on shoreline flora and the fish that find sanctuary there, ending in a poster presentation where I was the spokesperson for my team. We were invited back to join the Huyck Preserve's 80th Anniversary Research Celebration in 2019, and our group shared our poster with everyone who attended.

Jonas Raio is a senior in high school and plans to continue research in marine aquaculture in college starting next year.

Coyote Rehabilitation, a Somewhat Different Approach

BY KELLY MARTIN, WILDLIFE REHABILITATOR

Coyote pups taking a nap

The coyote is a difficult species to rehabilitate properly, especially when they are very young. In the spring of 2022, I took in a litter of seven coyote pups. The mother was killed, supposedly by a vehicle collision, and the pups' eyes had just opened. Established protocol for coyote rehabilitation is to minimize human contact as much as possible to prevent habituation. Coyotes are still much maligned, and they need to avoid humans when released for their own protection.

This 2022 litter was so young, I needed to ensure all got the appropriate amount of food and maintenance. They did not accept a bottle, so feedings consisted of a meaty mush with formula at the beginning which created quite a mess! The dominant/submissive roles were evident early on and they clearly viewed me as alpha mom. This was not encouraged, but I decided to play out that role knowing I would release them on my family's own property (surrounded by state land with no neighbors) where I felt they could not get into too much trouble once free.

There are a few examples in wildlife rehabilitation where species are allowed to attach to one caregiver with little or no exposure to other humans. Several years ago, I heard a lecture given by rehabilitators from British Columbia who rehabilitate moose this way—each orphan has one designated caregiver and with this model, they've never had a nuisance moose problem post-release. In one event, a moose returned with an injury and its caregiver was able to easily treat the problem.

My interaction with the pups was primarily functional, feeding and cleaning, but they did seek my attention. Being able to closely observe them was beneficial in reaffirming the importance of having family unit interactions. They played like puppies finding fun in (and sometimes destroying) simple things—toys, bones, branches, dishes, rags, cardboard boxes. Occasionally, if I was away and an assistant cared for them, there was no overt fear of or aggression toward that person. This did cause concern, but they did not seek attention from other humans like they did from me when I entered their enclosure.

That summer, all the pups came down with parvovirus, a deadly and highly contagious disease against which domesticated dogs are vaccinated. Wild dogs aren't so lucky. One pup died quickly, and the remaining five went to Cornell's Wildlife Health Clinic (another pup had died early on when its siblings slept on top of it). The clinic did a stellar job in stabilizing the patients, and though five came home, ultimately one more died. Their acceptance of me as "mom" was a huge advantage in the follow-up care and administration of medications.

As cage and exercise space became tight for five large mammals, I pondered when to release them. I waited until soon after Labor Day when recreational use of state land lessened and when hunting season was still fairly far off. I wanted to give them time to "wild up" before the risks of hunting season arrived, though initially I did worry that they were not wild enough. Upon release, they had a grand time racing around, chasing each other, running up to me, rolling over and exposing their bellies. That day, I left food out for them and by morning there was no sight of them, though they had dragged toys and bones all over the yard during the night. The next evening, they were back, and it only took one night of freedom for them to be full of burdocks and ticks. The most inconvenient aspect to the pups' release was walking our dog, an eight-pound maltese/poodle. For a couple of months I drove a mile away to take her out for her last walk of the night. Of the four released pups, the most dominant male stopped returning after about a week.

Older coyote pups on a return visit

It was a deliberate decision to take on the role of alpha mother but not to the point of over-handling or taming.

Three weeks into their release, one returnee was behaving oddly, holding her head in an abnormal position. Again, being "mom" proved to be an advantage. She allowed me to touch her and there was an obvious problem with her jaw (swelling, drooling), most likely a fracture. She could lap very wet, mushy food but was unable to chew. It took an hour and a half to lure her back into their cage. I sent her to Cornell the next day, and we opted for euthanasia due to a confirmed fracture in the back of the jaw. My only guess as to how it happened is that the state had logged all around us leaving many downed trees, creating a real obstacle course. It is unlikely that it was a vehicle collision as we live on a dirt road with little traffic. There was no indication of fighting or puncture wounds. This was most likely just an unfortunate accident.

As time passed, visits became more infrequent. They were more hesitant to approach me, but one would come close enough for me to touch and assess that its weight and coat condition were good. I continued to put food out but not as much and not as often. We were vigilant about checking if any were around before taking our dog out. They were present a couple of times in November and December. Mid-January of 2023 a male came back two nights in a row and was in good physical condition. He behaved like a playful pup racing around me, tail between his legs, rolling over, running off and then running back. The last visit, by the same male, was mid-February 2023. He alerted me of his arrival by howling in the backyard. Eventually, he approached me and was playful, and I could tell he was still in good shape. This visit, over a year ago now, is the last we saw of any of them.

I was unsure if raising these pups in this manner would be successful. It was a deliberate decision to take on the role of alpha mother but not to the point of over-handling or taming. My release site factored in heavily with no neighbors in close proximity, and it offered the opportunity to observe their behavior once released. A hard, sudden release of these animals in a different location would have been a hardship on the pups. The soft release allowed them time to wild up while having a safety net. They visited as needed until they no longer needed to. Although I'm pleased that they weaned off visiting, I wish I knew how they were doing today—more so than with most animals I've worked with and released.

Kelly Martin is a state-licensed and federally-permitted wildlife rehabilitator. She provides care for sick, injured, orphaned, and displaced native wildlife, with the goal of returning healthy animals back to their natural environments. She also presents public education programs regarding native wildlife, their natural history, and what to do when encountering wildlife in need, offers education on how to rehabilitate wildlife, and trains volunteers to promote the overall aims and values of animal care and rehabilitation.

Updates From the Land

BY GARRETT CHISHOLM,
STEWARDSHIP COORDINATOR

Many of my observations at the Huyck Preserve are of the relatively hidden life of animals that reside here. These include porcupines in our towering Eastern hemlocks or mink belly sliding down snowy hillsides (a sight I am fortunate to observe regularly). My role as the conservation steward of the Preserve's 2000+ acres of land brings me to many off-trail places. However, I regularly encounter an animal that most visitors to our trails also have a high probability of observing: the white-tailed deer!

A walk on any of our trails can bring about an encounter with a deer as they are numerous and will often appear when you least expect them. But they show themselves in less obvious ways, too. You can frequently observe their two-toed tracks in the snow, see signs of their browsing on a variety of young plants, or even spot the marks on a tree that a buck (an adult male deer) has rubbed his antlers on.

I had an exciting experience with deer this winter, when I discovered many tracks, all headed in the same direction (Dave Muska of Ondatra Adventures who led a tracking event here in January would call this a deer superhighway). Following this path led me to a deer wintering area or "deer yard." This is a wind- or precipitation-protected area where deer go to avoid harsh winter conditions. The deer were not present, but their impressions were—beds in the snow where deer sleep together to conserve body heat.

High deer populations have a negative impact on the land by altering what can survive in the forest understory, and the Preserve is studying this impact by way of deer exclosures.

A deer seen at the Huyck Preserve

Deer exclosures are small study areas designed to keep deer out so we can better understand the effect deer browsing has on young trees and shrubs and on plants growing on the forest floor. The Preserve's exclosures were started in 2014 and remain in place to create a long-term comparison of browsed and unbrowsed forests at the Preserve. Without human protection through exclosures, some plant species have adapted to life in areas with high deer pressure. One of these adaptations is known as *mercesance*, which is a tree's ability to hold onto its dead leaves through the wintertime. A common hypothesis is that the dead leaves remaining on some species like American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) and American hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*) serve as a protective shield to the young buds that the trees produce in the fall and that will remain dormant until spring.

Left: A deer "superhighway" trail near the Upper Falls Trail; Above: Impression of a deer bed in the snow; Right: A single deer track

To learn more about deer, the Preserve's deer exclosures, or to volunteer (which increases your chances of seeing wildlife) contact garrett@huyckpreserve.org.

Summer Research Fellow Announcement

The Huyck Preserve is excited to welcome Mark Lesser, Ph.D. as its 2024 Summer Research Fellow. Mark Lesser is a forest ecologist in the Center for Earth and Environmental Science at SUNY Plattsburgh. Originally from Halifax, Nova Scotia, Mark completed a B.S. and Master's in Forestry and Forest Genetics at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay Ontario before going on to the University of Wyoming for a Ph.D. in Ecology where he studied long-term development and structure of ponderosa pine populations. After completing his Ph.D., Mark held postdoctoral positions at SUNY ESF and Syracuse University and was an assistant professor at Shepherd University in West Virginia for two years before moving to SUNY Plattsburgh where he has been since 2017. Broadly, Mark's research focuses on understanding the factors that dictate plant species range limits. He is also interested in population dynamics, tree migration patterns, and dispersal over multiple spatial and temporal scales. Recently, he has been exploring disturbance ecology and how differences in forest structure across the landscape influence wildlife habitat selection. Come meet Mark at this summer's Thursday Night Lecture series or at our July 13 Science Symposium!

Huyck Highlight, Spotlighting an Important Volunteer and Member

By Maureen Schlereth

My earliest memories of the Huyck Preserve start even before we moved to the area in 1999. Our family, some of whom already lived nearby, introduced us to the lake and the trails to the waterfalls, which are great places to hike. Later, we realized we could help support the Preserve by becoming members, and we quickly signed up. Some of my best memories were being lakeside with the family. It is a great spot for watching the sun go down and to see the children develop their swimming and diving skills. We always kept our canoe at the boat launch area, and I fondly remember family picnics, kayaking, and paddle boarding on Sunday mornings.

Our summers with our four grandchildren kicked off around the Fourth of July and the start of swimming lessons—yikes the water was cold, but they had a blast, and Calder eventually became a lifeguard at the lake during the pandemic. When the grandchildren were old enough, and I was retired and home in the summer for "Grandma Camp," they were eager to participate in the adventure of the summer science education programs (see pp. 6-7). Incredibly, those programs (from Nature Study to Wildlife Ecology Research for high school students) promoted their interests in the natural sciences and now two of my grandsons, Calder and Jonas, have or will have college majors related to environmental science.

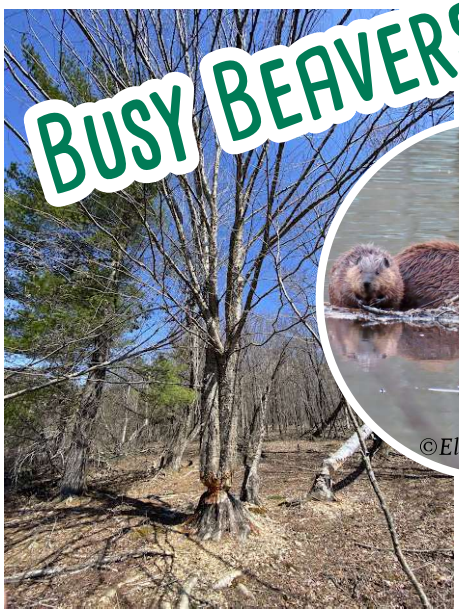
In the summer of 2020, the summer of the COVID-19 precautions, those same two grandsons were asked to help Susanne Foitzik, Ph.D., a German researcher studying ants that live in the woods at the Preserve. Her lab was unable to travel to the Preserve during the pandemic, so Huyck Preserve Director Anne Rhoads, Ph.D. asked if my grandsons would want to help. They quickly enlisted the aid of their cousins who also had participated in the science programs. Actually, they involved a few of the grown-ups to hike with them, and we were led by our own future scientists.

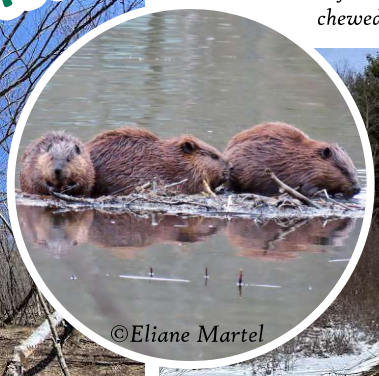
Another big family favorite over the years was the Winter Festival. I volunteered to help, while the kids would toboggan, skate, watch the lifesaving demonstrations, and eat s'mores by the fire. They especially loved coming in to get warm and meet with wildlife rehabilitator Kelly Martin who they also knew from her visits to the summer programs. Once I had more free time, I realized that I could help with the Preserve's summer science and school field trip programs. Hiking with the students, learning about fauna and flora, invasive species, and crayfish (while trying not to fall in the creek) is great fun and educational!

The Preserve, through the direction of Dr. Rhoads, has offered our family so many opportunities, and it is a pleasure to help when and where needed, including in the office. Several of us gather around the table and help get big mailings (including this newsletter) out to supporters. Volunteering has given me a connection with the Huyck Preserve community that has been very rewarding, and I highly recommend it!

Huyck Preserve Snapshots
Winter at a Glance

Busy Beavers





©Eliane Martel

Lincoln Pond's resident beavers have been very active lately. Pictured at left is a large yellow birch chewed by the beavers.

Beaver lodge on Lincoln Pond

Rainbow over Lake Myosotis
©Colin Walsh

Trail Upkeep

Huyck Preserve staff clear fallen trees on Partridge Path.

Ice Crystals
©Janice Kammerer

Needle ice ©Garrett Chisholm

©Heidemarie Carle

©Maureen Butler

Below: The Rensselaerville Fire Department gave a live ice rescue demonstration at Winterfest.

Arts & crafts at Winterfest: tree cookie painting (below) and birdfeeder making (left)

Fun at Winterfest

©Tracy Benson

Sledding by Lincoln Pond

Winterfest attendees learn about raptors with wildlife rehabilitator Kelly Martin.

©Maureen Butler

Upcoming Events

Registration is required for all events unless otherwise noted.

Please see our website at www.huyckpreserve.org/events for registration and event details or email info@huyckpreserve.org with questions.

April

Bittersweet Cutting For Earth Day
Saturday, April 20 | 10 AM - 12 PM | ***This is a free event.***

May

Signs of Spring
Saturday, May 11 | 10 AM - 12 PM
Join us for a spring hike! We will look for markers of springtime changes experienced by plants and animals.
Suggested donation of $5; members and children under 12 free

Spring Wildflower Walk
Saturday, May 25 | 10 AM
Wildflower expert Chris Schiralli returns. Join us for this gentle walk in search of some of our favorite flowers.
Suggested donation of $5; members and children under 12 free

June

National Trail Day: Volunteer Trail Work
Saturday, June 1 | 10 AM - 12 PM
Lend a hand! Volunteers are invited to stay for a potluck lunch. ***This is a free event.***

Invasive Species Intensive
Saturday, June 8 | 10 AM - 12:30 PM
Learn about invasive species in this workshop with Capital Region Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) and Huyck Preserve Staff.
This is a free event.

Beach Opening
Saturday, June 22 | 1 - 8 PM

Annual Membership Meeting
Saturday, June 29 | 1 - 3 PM
Meet with board members and staff, and cast your vote at the annual board election. Guests will also learn more about current and future happenings at the Preserve.
Registration is not required but is helpful for planning.

July

Science Symposium
Saturday, July 13 | 1 - 4 PM
Human Impacts on Ecosystem Function and Health
Join us for presentations and a discussion with a panel of experts. ***Registration is not required but is helpful for planning.***

Thursday Night Lecture Series
Potluck at 6 PM | Lectures at 7 PM
Gather at the Research Center every Thursday night starting July 11 and continuing until August 8 for an engaging scientific lecture series following a communal, pot-luck meal.
Please bring a dish to share or a suggested donation of $5.
Stay tuned for event details and full lecture series schedule.
Registration is not required.

August

Benefit Gala
Saturday, August 3
We will enjoy cocktails and appetizers on the shore of Lincoln Pond, and attendees can view auction items on display and bid through our virtual auction site.
In-Person Gala, August 3, 5 - 8 PM
Virtual Auction
opens: Friday, August 2 at 8 AM
closes: Saturday, August 3 at 8 PM

Geology Guided Hike
Saturday, August 24 | 10 AM
Follow New York State Museum Geologist Chuck Ver Straeten, Ph.D., on a guided hike to learn about the Catskill Devonian fossil forests.
Suggested donation of $5; members and children under 12 free

Events continued on next page...

Upcoming Events Continued

Read + Hike Book Club Summer Reading List and Meeting Dates

Come discuss themes of ecology and humanity's relationship with nature with other book and nature lovers in this reading and hiking club! Each meeting, we will go on a leisurely hike with stopping points for book discussion. Book club meetings take place once a month. Participants may choose to come to all the meetings, some meetings, or just one!

Hikes will start from the **Eldridge Research Center, 284 Pond Hill Road,** and meet from **2 - 3:30 PM.**

MAY 5

JUNE 9

JULY 7

AUGUST 4

SEPTEMBER 8

OCTOBER 12

Stay Tuned!

For updates, please see our events page at www.huyckpreserve.org/events or follow us on Facebook for event postings.

Want to receive updates in your inbox?
Join our email list by checking the "please send Huyck Preserve announcements" box on your membership renewal form or emailing info@huyckpreserve.org.

Nature Study

Grades K-5, July 8-12, 9 AM - 12 PM - FULL
Grades K-5, July 8-12, 1 - 4 PM - FULL
Grades 3-5: July 15-19, 1 - 4 PM
$120 for Members, $200 for Non-Members
A morning K-5 Program may be offered July 15-19 pending interest.
Email info@huyckpreserve.org to be added to the list.

The Nature Study program at the Huyck Preserve introduces elementary school children to nature through a week-long, half-day program. Students learn about nature through exploration of our forest trails and streams. What animals and plants live in our forests, pond, and streams? The kids will find out! We use science-themed games and crafts to reinforce the basic concepts of ecology and environmental science we've discussed out in the woods.

Have your children attended Nature Study in the past? We hope they will return this year, as we offer new lessons and activities each year while bringing back popular favorites!

Ecological Explorations

Registration for this program is FULL for 2024.
Families may email info@huyckpreserve.org to join the waitlist.

Grades 6-8: July 22-26, 9 AM - 4 PM
$250 for Members, $320 for Non-Members

Ecological Explorations provides the opportunity for middle school students to explore the Preserve's natural treasures and ecological concepts in an immersive, hands-on format. Students spend time hiking the Preserve's trails, exploring the ecosystems of the streams, lake, pond, and forests, problem solving, participating in group challenges and activities, and frequently end the day swimming at the lake.

Wildlife Ecology Research Program

Grades 9-12: July 29-August 9 (M-F), 9 AM - 4 PM
$475 for Members, $600 for Non-Members

Wildlife Ecology Research is an intensive two-week day program where high school students learn basic ecological principles through hands-on research experience. Ecologists from colleges and universities around the region will instruct students on broad topics in ecology. Wildlife Ecology Research culminates in small group research projects that are mentored by program staff as well as by undergraduate Odum Interns. This program aims to provide a significant academic experience that will help students prepare for courses and research experiences at the college level while letting them explore career options in the natural sciences and have fun with peers with shared interests.

Visit www.huyckpreserve.org/summer-programs for more details and registration.
Please email info@huyckpreserve.org with questions. To register at the member rate, please call (518) 797-3440.

Huyck Preserve
and Biological Research Station
2024-2025 Membership Form
Membership year is May 1 - April 30

Name _____

❑ **Please update my info below:**

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Phone _____ **Cell** _____

❑ Please keep my donation anonymous by leaving it out of Huyck Preserve publications.
❑ I would like to sign up for paperless correspondence. Please send my newsletter to my email provided below.
❑ Please send Huyck Preserve announcements to my email provided below.

Email _____

Membership Levels

❑ Student	$25
❑ Individual	$45
❑ Family	$60
❑ Contributing	$150
❑ Sustaining	$350
❑ Patron	$1,250
❑ Benefactor	$3,000 or *more*

❑ New Member ❑ Renewal

Membership $ _____

Additional Donation $ _____

Total Amount $ _____

This gift is given in **honor** of/ in **memory** of
(please circle)

_____

Please make checks payable to the Huyck Preserve.
To make a payment online, please visit www.huyckpreserve.org/membership.

Thank You!

The Edmund Niles Huyck Preserve, Inc. is a registered 501(c)3 organization and all gifts including dues are deductible to the extent provided by law.

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

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ABOUT THE COVER:
February at Lincoln Pond
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