



**FRIENDS
of HEMPSTEAD
PLAINS**
at NASSAU COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The mission of the Hempstead Plains at Nassau Community College is to preserve, restore and manage the Hempstead Plains prairie habitat on the campus of Nassau Community College and foster good stewardship of the land through education and research.

Board of Directors

Nina Shah-Giannaris, President
David Stolarz, Treasurer, Editor
Dr. Paul van Wie, Secretary
Harriet Carotenuto, Art Director
Dr. Betty Borowsky
Prof. Annetta Centrella-Vitale
Dr. Scott Emmons
Meagan Fastuca
Dr. Lisa Filippi
Catherine Ripley
Bob Pollack

Advisors

CeCe Haydock
Prof. Carole Ryder
Andrew Goldstein, NC Parks

Conservation Project Manager

Dr. Betsy Gulotta

For extra newsletter copies, address changes, membership and volunteer information, please contact Betsy Gulotta, at 516-572-7575, ext.26531 or email: info@friendsofhp.org

www.friendsofhp.org

Friend Us on Facebook

Table of Contents

Society	2
Job Opening	3
Technology	4
Reading	4
Engineering	5
Arts	5
Math	6
Science	6
Calendar of Events	6
Science	7

Meadowlark



Friends of Hempstead Plains at Nassau Community College

Winter, 2018 Volume 17, No. 1

President's Report

By Nina Shah-Giannaris

It has been a very exciting time at the Hempstead Plains!!

Winter is in the air and the Plains is in deep hibernation after a busy 2017.

We held our Fall Open House at the Education and Research Center and had visitors from different departments of Nassau Community College including Biology, Engineering, Philosophy, Physical Science, and the Grants Department representing the K-12 initiatives.

Fall semester we have had over 25 classes visit the Hempstead Plains from all different departments attesting to the fact that the Education and Research Center is the perfect classroom and the Hempstead Plains the perfect living laboratory.

We have been tirelessly working to make new stronger connections to attain grants and funding to support all of the wonderful educational programs at the Hempstead Plains.

If you haven't visited the Hempstead Plains recently, please come and visit and enjoy "This Beautiful Jewel".

Editor's Message

It's been quite a ride this year as FHP expanded its role in the community. Betsy's been counting visitors to the plains and it is in the thousands. Research projects with local schools are proceeding quite nicely, and FHP looks forward to sharing those with you in the future.

Thank you to all who came out to enjoy the plains as it changed through its annual lifecycle.

Over the summer, we tried out several options for hosting visitors, and discovered that our outreach works best when targeted to specific audiences. The Tuesday sunset talks gave people an option for a new time, and Betsy offered summer volunteer sessions and walks.

Our STREAMS education philosophy took on a new implementation via the displays in the Education and Research Center with plenty of open space for student and professor projects. Please make a point to plan a visit once the weather turns warm.

Your editor is also a hobbyist drone operator and flew several missions to capture imagery of the plains in a few locations and with a variety of height, exposure and angle settings. Future efforts will turn those images into useful research.

The Chinese Bush Clover and Mugwort have been taking over wherever they can and are the focus of intervention by mowing and targeted clipping. Mowing can be seen from the drone photos.

Writers, editors, photographers, and educators who have an interest in our mission are encouraged to participate in the production of Meadowlark. Please contact info@friendsofhp.org.

Society

Thank you to everyone who came out for our
Twelfth Annual Prairie Benefit



Dr. John Staudt, Tom Coughlin, Chief John Skelly, Hon. Norma Gonsalves, Ed Ichart, Lisa Bott, Maryann Richer, Joe Grupp, Betsy Gulotta, Hon. Anthony Santino, Hon. Dave McDouough

An Extra-Special THANK YOU to those who responded with their donations to the Giving Tuesday appeal after Thanksgiving. Although we were not selected to receive matching funds from the national efforts, we greatly appreciate the participation of a select group who understand the importance of our role in the community.

And ... if anyone wants to commit to matching funds next year, that would be **AMAZING!**

BOCES Center for Community Adjustment

By David Stolarz

For the third year, FHP is proud to play host to volunteers from the BOCES Center for Community Adjustment who donate their time and energy as part of their school day. As the seasons change, they harvest seeds, clip invasive species, and produce artwork to support the mission of the FHP.

During colder weather, students and teachers meet inside to learn about various aspects of the grassland prairie ecosystem. Watersheds, plant lifecycles, even chemistry are explained in an open forum of discussion, followed by hands-on activities that anchor concepts.

The students (and teachers) seem to respond well and participate actively with Betsy and David as the group charts new territory each week. An occasional guest speaker or special event highlights the learning process.



BOCES CCA students Ryan Odabasi and Mathew Ferrara work with David Stolarz as they tear apart owl pellets to discover what the owl ate.

Job Opening At FHP

Executive Director

The Governing Board of the Friends of Hempstead Plains at Nassau Community College is seeking a replacement for its long-time Executive Director, beginning July 2018. The Hempstead Plains is a 19 acre grasslands demonstration and research site dedicated to preserving the last remaining parcel of the prairie ecosystem that covered a great deal of the central part of Long Island, and its endangered endemic species, the sand plain gerardia (*Agalina acuta*). This is a unique, one-of-a-kind position that requires specialized knowledge, but offers considerable flexibility in carrying out its responsibilities.

Qualifications

Bachelor of Science (with Masters preferred) in Biology, the Environmental Sciences or Sustainability.

Experience teaching all ages.

Competence in basic computer skills, especially Microsoft Office products and Internet.

Requires own transportation.

Experience managing nonprofit organizations and fundraising desirable.

Responsibilities

Fundraising

- a. Seek funding, write grants and fulfill funded obligations.
- b. Run spring annual Prairie Benefit fundraiser and other fundraisers, as needed.
- c. Send out annual fundraising appeal letters

Education and Research

- a. Help prepare and distribute the organization's Newsletter, Meadowlark
- b. Schedule and present programs and tours to schools, local organizations, and the public
- c. Seek and sustain current partnerships with local and national organizations
- d. Support annual fall Grassland Managers conference.
- e. Advise and assist in research projects at the Hempstead Plains.
- f. Monitor and report on the *Agalinis acuta* population.
- g. Recruit, train and advise volunteers and summer interns.
- h. Create relevant educational programs for all audiences.

Plains and Center Management

- a. Maintain roof top garden; weeding and seeding.
- b. Perform and supervise habitat management
- c. Keep all required documentation and annual calendar of all events and activities, including walks, volunteer workdays, programs, tours, special events, when the Center will be open to the public, Board meetings, etc.
- d. Work with Treasurer to oversee Center's finances, including insurance coverage, program fees, maintenance expenses and tax filings.
- e. Prepare Conservation Project Managers Report of all events, meetings, programs, activities and other items of importance to the organization, and submit to Board members at each Board meeting.

Oversee and Recruit Membership

- a. Keep member and supporter contact information.
- b. Send out member renewal notices and invitations to join FHP to potential new members..
- c. Send thank you notes to donors and supporters.

Job Structure

While the successful applicant must be flexible with their time, they can arrange their work week as they feel appropriate. Some work can be done at home, but travel to local sites to give programs, and some time spent at the Education and Research Center on the Plains is required, including some weekends. This position is a part time job; salary commensurate with qualifications and number of hours per week.

If interested, send letter of intent and resume to info@friendsofhp.org

Technology

New Birdhouses Built and Installed

By Professor Catherine Ripley

It came to my attention that the birdhouses we had on the on The Hempstead Plains could not be opened to clean out the old nests and therefore could not be disinfected (bleach followed by a water rinse). Nests need to have yearly maintenance to get rid of any infectious, or parasitic, organisms and to remove carcasses or old eggs due to other causes of nest failure.

At first I thought: "I'll bring in a reciprocating saw (Sawzall) and open up one of the sides, attach hinges, and voila, the job is done." This would require a very long extension cord and battery operated tools. I could use a portable drill and a keyhole saw, but the more I thought about it, the more I realized that neither were realistic plans. So, I came up with plan C.

My son, Damien Rouzier, wanted to get back into building things so I said: "I need 7 birdhouses." He said: "Let's do it." So we designed the birdhouses for bluebirds, though we mostly get swallows nesting, and off we went to the big DIY store (one of my favorite places). Damien wanted to paint or stain them to "make them pretty" and I told him we couldn't do that. Experts agree that the birds can be affected by any chemical substances put on the houses and really -- the birds don't need it. I remembered seeing some houses with coppery roofs on the Audubon website and I found a sheet of copper-colored aluminum we could use.

My husband, Stephen Ruocco, Damien, and I took down the old houses and put up the new ones on a lovely, warm, sunny day. I took home the old birdhouses to refit with side walls that open for cleaning. We can put up more birdhouses or we can save them for when these new ones wear out in a few years.



Reading

Invitation to submit essays and research for a new publication entitled, "Essays on the Human and Natural History of the Hempstead Plains".

The Cedar Swamp Historical Society has made a generous grant to Friends of Hempstead Plains for the purpose of promoting the rich history of the Hempstead Plains. In order to carry out the intent of this grant, Friends of Hempstead Plains intends to publish a book of essays and articles dealing with the human, natural, and cultural history of the Hempstead Plains. This book will highlight the important and unique role of the Plains in American History. Articles may be previously published or unpublished works. In the case of previously published works, the holder of the copyright must give written permission for inclusion in the book. The Board of Friends of Hempstead Plains shall decide the content of the book, and submission of articles does not guarantee their inclusion. The Board of the Friends reserves the right to act as judge in this matter. All scholars, historians, scientists, writers, students, and members of the public are invited to participate.

Topics for inclusion may include:

Aviation, wartime activities, flora and fauna, descriptions of the Plains in history, ecology of the Plains, sustainability of the Plains, immigration, local history of communities on the Plains, significant persons, events, institutions, geology of the Plains, or other relevant topics.

Dr. John Staudt, Department of History, Hofstra University and Dr. Paul van Wie, Department of History and Political Science, Molloy College, will serve as Editors. For further information or please contact Dr. van Wie at pvanwie@molloy.edu.

Submissions should be sent electronically as a Word Document to Dr. van Wie at the email above. References within articles should appear as endnotes, and bibliographies are encouraged.

The deadline for submission of articles is August 30, 2018. Earlier submissions are strongly encouraged. If you contemplate submitting an article kindly inform the editors so that we may have a sense of the content in preparation.

Copies of the book will be available for sale, with all proceeds going to Friends of Hempstead Plains to benefit the non-profit organization.

Engineering

Green Roof Irrigation

By David Stolarz

Last summer, with funding from Nassau County, a drip irrigation system was installed in the green roof. The Signature Systems equipment uses three zones that monitor rainfall rates and soil dryness to determine whether watering is required.

Water is drawn from the primary storage tank that fills with rain runoff from the roof, and is backed up by the public water supply during periods of extreme drought.

Since roof aggregate is unlike natural soil, it has a tendency to dry out rapidly. A regular flow of water helps maintain consistent growth on the roof and the amount has been set to replicate a natural amount for the grass land prairie vegetation.

System status updates are automatically communicated via email to FHP and Nassau County staff. We also receive daily information on temperature, wind chill, wind velocity, relative humidity, air pressure and range of visibility.

Anyone interested in performing a scientific study of the progress of growth on the green roof is encouraged to contact us at info@friendsofhp.org.

Arts

A Look Into a Rare Flower

By Tom Stock

A LOOK INTO A RARE FLOWER

I am a bee
 Who lands on five pink petals
 Of globally rare Sand Plain Gerardia
 Whose flowers last less than a week
 I jam my head into its calyx
 A pink room of nectar
 I accidentally brush against pollen
 That clings to the hairs on my back
 I mate with the flower
 Of the Hempstead Plains



Oblique Aerial Photo Taken August 19th, 2017 Showing An Irrigated Green Roof, Solar Array, Outdoor Classroom and Old Mitchel Field Runway.
 Photo Courtesy David Stolarz

Endangered Species Day 2018

National 2018 Saving Endangered Species Youth Art Contest

<http://www.endangered.org/campaigns/endangered-species-day/saving-endangered-species-youth-art-contest/>

Even though Endangered Species Day (ESD) is officially on May 18th, we are caretakers of an endangered species, the Sandplain Gerardia, so every day is ESD for us. Please use the #HempsteadPlains and #ESD2018 hashtags when posting your Facebook and Instagram photos.

These local contest entries must be related to our mission and include photos of the Hempstead Plains. Top 3 with the largest number of likes will receive a local restaurant gift certificate. One winner per family. All aspects of participation subject to change at the discretion of FHP.

FHP Upcoming Events

Annual Prairie Benefit Cocktail Party

April 27, 6 PM. At Hofstra. Save The Date!

And the **Visonary Award** goes to ...

County Executive Laura Curran

Endangered Species Day Celebration

There is a National Youth Art Contest, as well as

our Facebook and Instagram Hashtag Contest

See Information on Page 5

Education and Research Center

Spring Open House

Date and Time To Be Determined

Friday Afternoon Walks at 3:30 PM

See friendsofhp.org tentative dates:

April 20, May 4 and 18, June 1 and 15

Bring your camera, binoculars and hiking boots.

Saturday Morning Volunteering

Saturdays from 9:30 AM to 12:00 PM

(Weather permitting)

See friendsofhp.org tentative dates:

April 21, May 5 and 19, June 2 and 16

Bring gloves, rakes and clippers.

We can schedule additional workdays for you.

Special Events

FHP can host your class, troop, or family outing!

Contact us at info@friendsofhp.org

Partner Events

EMPL

East Meadow Public Library activities year-round.

Please see: <http://www.eastmeadow.info/>

North Shore Land Alliance

Please visit: <http://northshorelandalliance.org>

South Shore Audubon Society

http://www.ssaudubon.org/ssas_events.html

Mathematics

How Many Gallons Do We Need?

By David Stolarz

1200 sq.ft. roof x .041667 ft water = 50 cubic ft.

1 cubic foot of water is 7.48 gallons so we need:

374 gallons to irrigate the roof with ½ inch of water!

Science

Bird Types and Counts

Reported By Peter J. Martin (THANK YOU!)

6/17/17 Quick walk with Diane Worden

Half hour. Around noon.

C. YellowThroat 1 male singing

Yellow Warbler 4, 2 male and 2 female

Song Sparrow 2 singing

Tree Swallow 10+

Barn Swallow 2

R.W. Blackbird 2 male singing, 1 female

Mockingbird 1 singing

Morning Doves 3 (fly by)

Rock Doves 1 (fly by)

Starling 5 (fly by)

C. Crow 2 (fly by)

8/20 with Diane mid day

few birds, but Goldfinchs active.

Good insects- Buckeye's, Spring Azures,

Blackswallowtail laying eggs on Queen

Annes Lace. Good variety and numbers of

bees wasps and dragonflies.

8/24 7 PM with Wendy Martin

Peregrine, good. Two feral cats, bad.

8/26 - with Diane - midday.

Hummingbird fly by. Eastern Kingbird,

8+ Bobolinks foraging. Monarch Larvae on

Milkweed -your volunteer spotted.

9/16 good insects, Buckeye and Spring Azures

Palm Warbler, Savannah Sparrow, House

Wren, Northern Waterthrush

9/29 2 Kestrels hunting insects (crickets?)

10/1 5 E. Meadowlarks, Kestrel, Coopers Hawk

10/6 Kestrel

11/5 Eastern Meadowlark

11/12 Red-Tailed Hawk caught rodent; Kestrel

Science

Conservation Project Manager's Report

By Betsy Gulotta

Last year over 1100 people visited the Hempstead Plains. This year has already produced a significant increase of visitors (students, volunteers and the general public). This fall over fifteen Nassau Community College classes have visited the plains, from several different departments, along with classes from Hofstra University, Adelphi University and Farmingdale State College. High School classes from The Wheatley School in Old Westbury, Waldorf School in Garden City, Hempstead High School and Hampton Street Elementary School in Mineola also visited for programs. Four Scout troops visited for programs, and the Friends continue to work with students from Nassau BOCES Center for Community Adjustment for the fourth year as the students come to volunteer both in the Education and Research Center and in the field.

This past summer, the Friends were lucky to work with a College intern from Hofstra University. Jacob Roday chose the Hempstead Plains Education and Research Center to fulfill required volunteer hours for his graduate degree in Sustainability. In addition two summer intern college students who worked with North Shore Land Alliance spent part of their time at the Hempstead Plains. At the end of the summer, these students participated in a Summer Intern Forum at the plains in which they shared their work and research at the Hempstead Plains and other North Shore Land Alliance properties. A student from East Meadow High School undertook an ecological survey of native and non-native plants on the plains, in an attempt to replicate a similar study done in 2004, to determine what changes have occurred in the past 13 years.

The annual count of the endangered species, *Agalinis acuta*, at the Hempstead Plains in September yielded a modest 593 plants compared to last year's record breaking 4000 plants, the largest number ever recorded at our site. No one knows exactly what conditions the plant prefers, but hot dry summer plus annual winter mowing of the sites where it grows may help. Volunteers, including BOCES students, Girl and Boy Scouts and many student groups cut woody shrubs, pulled Mugwort and Chinese Bush Clover, and collected seeds from the native grasses. The roof top "garden" exploded with species from all over the prairie, through wind dispersal.

Mowing in other areas with the brush hog was put on hold this summer due to a botanical survey and ecological assessment that was conducted from May through September. This was part of a larger potential restoration project that the Friends are hoping to undertake. Last fall the Friends met Clark Mitchell from a New York City based environmental organization interested in grassland restoration, called the BAND Foundation. BAND Foundation is investigating the possibility of funding a large scale restoration project of all Hempstead Plains remnants including the College's 19 acre preserve, a 6 acre section on campus between Perimeter Rd and Charles Lindbergh Blvd., the 65 acre County-owned Francis T. Purcell preserve and a 10 acre piece at the north end of Eisenhower Park. The BAND Foundation funded the botanical survey and environmental assessment of the parcels, which were done by botanist Steve Young and ecologist Greg Edinger from New York State Natural Heritage Program. Recommendations from the outcome of the surveys will determine the extent of BAND's participation in the restoration project. The report will be ready in early 2018. This is a very exciting potential project for the Friends.

The Hempstead Plains Education and Research Center, now in its third year of operation, has attracted more people and college classes than ever before. The Friends are making a strong effort to introduce faculty and students through open house events, faculty development programs and advertisement in our newsletter, on our website and facebook page. A second book and bookcase donation from member Barbara Conolly has increased our library book offerings to several hundred. The Friends now have a "gift shop" in the building where we sell our books, mugs, patches, seeds, Hempstead Plains honey and some monogrammed clothing. All the proceeds benefit our habitat restoration and education programs.

The Education and Research Center sets the tone for environmental mindfulness, operates on net-zero energy, provides shelter for students on field trips, space for science lessons and research, and venues for art, poetry and writing. It is fulfilling its plan to become a field station that appeals to all academic disciplines and serves as a place for multicultural events from classes to meetings to workshops to social events.

Francis T. Purcell Preserve

Photo Courtesy David Stolarz



Oblique Aerial Photo Taken November 9th , 2017

FRIENDS OF HEMPSTEAD PLAINS

at Nassau Community College, Inc.
Department of Biology
Nassau Community College
Garden City, New York 11530