



A NEWSLETTER

from the

CAPE ANN VERNAL POND TEAM

Winter/Spring 2018

www.capeannvernalpondteam.org

Email: cavpt@yahoo.com

THE CAVPT IS A NON-PROFIT VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO VERNAL POND CONSERVATION AND EDUCATION SINCE 1990.

New Volunteer Brings CAVPT Kicking and Screaming into the 21st Century

By Rick Roth

When she joined our team in 2016 many important items had been left to gather dust through the years. Our listserv, the source of getting out all our important information, like field trips and events, randomly dropped people and we didn't know who. Our website hadn't been updated in years and no one knew about the cool stuff we were doing. Lastly our financial records were behind. Well...Viki looked at the whole mess and decided it was something she wanted to fix. After a bit of research, she found a wonderful program, Wild Apricot, which is specifically designed for small non-profits to help manage membership, website and events. Now we know who's getting their emails. Viki isn't a web designer but she persevered up the learning curve and has created our great website which is current and a fabulous place to view our activities complete with beautiful photos. She has our books updated and our tax documents are ready to file.



Wilhelmina started going to activities in 2011 when she was 4. She's 10 now and still likes to help out and attend activities and hang out with the animals.

There's more. Viki's family is solidly behind her, her daughter Wilhelmina Rolf Thaemert and husband Verdun Thaemert help at our shows and love getting out in the field.


Viki is also the driving force behind the Cape Ann Wildlife Center committee. Along with Colleen Anderson, Nick Taormina, and Richard Roth, we meet once a week to work towards raising the funds and planning to build the Center.

Don't miss any of our exciting upcoming events!

Check out our website at:

www.capeannvernalpondteam.org

Like Us on  Facebook Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team

Follow us on  Instagram CAVPT

Follow us on  Twitter @CapeAnnVernalPT

DID YOU KNOW...?

by Nathan Mineo

Did you know that trees can talk? Actually, this isn't anything new. It's long been known that trees and other plants can communicate with one another using pheromones. One of the most famous examples is the iconic acacia tree of the African savanna. When a giraffe starts browsing on the leaves, it triggers the tree to produce high levels of poisonous tannins in the leaves, making them inedible. Also produced is a distress pheromone that is released from the leaves of the browsed tree, carried by the wind to the leaves of other acacias in the area, who then also start to produce high levels of poisonous tannins. Now that all the acacias in the area have inedible leaves, the giraffes have to move on.



Plant communication doesn't only come from the leaves, however. Sometime in the late 80's, scientists found that plants can communicate underground. Not only communicate but help each other out by sending carbon and other nutrients to trees in need. The fact that trees can do this is incredible! Even more incredible is how they do it. Growing amongst the roots of every plant sprouting from the Earth is mycelia. Mycelia is fungus—it's kind of like the "roots" of a mushroom. Mycelia and plants have a mutualistic relationship. The plants provide the fungus with sugars, the fungus provides the plants with nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus, and help the plants absorb water. The mycelia connect to one another, and connect plant to plant, and tree to tree, in what are called mycorrhizal networks. These mycorrhizal networks give entire forests a communication and delivery system. One of the leaders in this field of research, Susanne Simard, calls it "tree talk". Simard was the first to study this in an actual forest and confirmed that trees can send carbon to one another via mycorrhizal networks. Since then, much has been learned. Trees can recognize and favor their own kin, they can supply nutrients to seedlings to help them establish, different tree species can swap resources, water can be transferred to help trees avoid drought stress, signals can be sent to trees to help them defend against attack from insects like aphids, the list goes on. Researchers have even mapped out these mycorrhizal networks and the connections between trees in forests. They found that older trees have more connections and therefore have more influence on the rest of the forest. Simard calls these trees "mother trees" (aka hub trees). Mother trees have the ability to help forests recover faster from disasters, such as logging, because they "nurture" their young by sending them nutrients. Identifying and preserving mother trees could be an important part of sustainable forestry.

The secret world of trees is fascinating! Just think, when you are walking among them, they are talking and caring for one another. Hopefully that changes your perspective of trees and forests the same way it has changed mine.

For more information on this topic, check out Susan Simard's TED Talk at: https://www.ted.com/talks/suzanne_simard_how_trees_talk_to_each_other

We're bringing The Fools back to Gloucester!

**THE
FOOLS**

**Benefit Concert,
Auction & Raffle**



Save the date:

Saturday September 15, 7-11pm at the Mile Marker One, Under the Tent
Cool critters and 2 Rick Roths!

Tickets and info coming to our website soon
www.capeannvernalpondteam.org

Millbrook Meadow and Mill Pond Restoration Project

Rockport voters decided to drain and dredge the Mill Pond to remove about 3 feet of toxic sediment from the bottom of it. CAVPT, Eric Hutchins from NOAA, Kestrel Educational Adventures and the Millbrook Meadow Committee along with students from Rockport High School, Essex Tech and Glen Urquart School participated in a catch and relocation project for the turtles and fish that would have surely met their demise had we not moved them. Using turtle and eel traps, seine and dip nets we gathered 31 turtles (28 painted, 3 snappers) and about 200 fish including eels and elvers. They went in buckets and fish totes to the Loop Pond which is about a half mile away and it's connected to the Mill Pond by a stream...so if they want to get back where they came from they can do it.

All photos by Viki Rolf



Eel ladder



Rick Roth briefing volunteers



Snapper



Eric Hutchins showing students an elver

Fundraising

Amazon Smile

In this day and age of virtual technologies, donating to your favorite charity is easier than ever. Most of us frequently make purchases through Amazon. It's fast, convenient, and can be done pretty much anywhere at any time with your smart-phone. Thanks to Amazon Smile, when making your online purchases you can choose a favorite charity and Amazon will donate a percentage of your total to them at no cost to you.

Please support what we do and consider selecting the Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team as your charity of choice.



We're the Clutter Busters...we want your stuff

Our yard sale is a tremendous fundraiser for us! Fundraising is an ongoing project, but an event such as this brings in money that isn't earmarked for specific uses as are most grants. This money can go directly to overhead expenses such as rent, insurance and animal care.

So...start getting ready for the big event...clean the closets, garages, storage units and sheds and set aside everything for us! Drop your stuff off at St. Peter's parking lot (Rogers St., Gloucester) on Saturday May 26 between 7:00 and 9:00am. The rain date is June 2, same time...same place. When it gets closer check your emails and Facebook for the latest info.

We are joined in this event by our sister organization Kestrel Educational Adventures. Your donation benefits two great non-profit conservation groups on Cape Ann.

Oh...and by the way, this is a wonderful opportunity to volunteer! An hour or two gives a break to someone who started the day early.

Please no TVs, Computers, Mattresses or Junk.

Thanks again to Mac Bell for donating the great location!

Your Boots are Made for Walking, so..

Get your Pride Stride pledge sheet from the website - www.gloucesterpridestride.com and walk for CAVPT on Sunday April 29. This is another great way to raise money for us. So, round up your family and friends and walk for us. In past years we have had a wonderful live animal exhibit and we'll be there again this year weather permitting. □

Rainy Nights and Flashlights

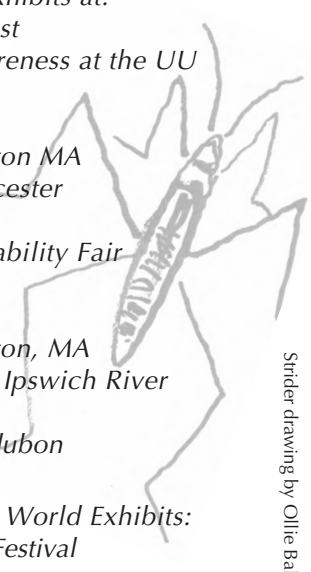
Every spring CAVPT members lead nighttime field trips to the ponds to see the amphibian-breeding activity. Check your flashlights, get new batteries, and put your rain gear on the hook by the door. To avoid habitat destruction and critter disturbance, we limit the number of participants on each trip. We also ask that you leave your dog at home. Interested? Email us at cavpt@yahoo.com.



Photo credit Susan Boye

Last Year We...

- Led our usual nighttime vernal pond field trips
- Led daytime field trip for Essex County Greenbelt at the Tompson Reservation
- Presented "Intro to Vernal Ponds" at:
Gloucester High School
Perley School in Georgetown MA
- Presented "Snakes of New England and the World" at:
Sawyer Free Library, Gloucester
Summer Fun Day Care, Rockport
Halibut Point State Park, Rockport
Harold Parker State Forest, Andover
Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge for Riverfest, Sudbury
The Crane Estate, Ipswich
Earth Fest at Lynn Woods
Glen Urquart School
Seekonk Public Library
Cape Ann YMCA
- Presented Vernal Pond/Snake Exhibits at:
Bridge Cape Ann's Fall Fest
Summerfaire Annual Awareness at the UU Church, Rockport
Motif #1 Day, Rockport
Mass Reptile Expo, Brockton MA
Strawberry Festival, Gloucester
Gloucester Pride Stride
Clean Energy and Sustainability Fair
- Native Snake Exhibits at:
Mass Reptile Expo, Brockton, MA
Audubon Nature Festival, Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary
Cape Cod Beer for MA Audubon
- Snakes of New England and the World Exhibits:
Gloucester Harvest Music Festival
Maritime Heritage Day
Main Street Block Party, Gloucester (twice)
Cape Ann Farmer's Market
Gloucester Sidewalk Bazaar
- Millbrook Meadow and Mill Pond Restoration Project, Rockport-relocating turtles
- Hosted Wicked Scary Pumpkin Carving Event: The Get Outside Center, Gloucester
- 59 volunteers, thousands of volunteer hours



Snider drawing by Ollie Balf

The CAVPT newsletter committee is powered by



Delaney's
PIZZA

332 Main St., Gloucester
978-282-7878

Certification Report

In 2017, CAVPT collected data and filed reports on several vernal pools in Rockport, Gloucester, and Essex. Keith Bertone has become quite a swamp rat, and gave us some much appreciated assistance. Adam Bolonsky also helped with his drone while we experimented with aerial photography. Herb Stillman helped us with some scouting in late 2017 to identify potential vernal pools in West Gloucester. We continue to look for volunteers adept in map reading, bush whacking (scouting pools), and people who enjoy the outdoors. If you are at all curious or interested in certification or know of pools that need to be certified, please reach out via our website, capeannvernalpondteam.org, or email us at cavpt@yahoo.com.

Turtle Trapping

We spent the months of May and June setting, baiting, and checking our traps for Blanding's turtles at the Tompson Reservation. Although none were found, several snapping and painted turtles were. We also lured in a spotted turtle, *Clemmys guttata*, a small aquatic turtle 3.5 - 4.5 inches in length, that has similar habitat requirements with that of a Blanding's turtle, so this was a rewarding find. We were assisted this year by Keith Bertone and Adam Bolonsky who brought his drone which provided us with a unique perspective of the swamp. There are historic records of Blanding's turtles (a threatened species in Massachusetts) in Gloucester, if there are any left. If not, there might be a reintroduction project in our future.



Photo credit - Viki Rolf

Wildlife Center Update

Our vision for the future is to open a Wildlife Center on Cape Ann. This will not be restricted to vernal ponds - all kinds of New England habitat will be represented.

We have a committee who meet regularly to create a fundraising plan and timeline. The idea is for the Wildlife Center to be it's own entity, but the Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team will have a home there and continue to do what we do.

This is an ambitious project, but the Cape Ann Community often comes together to make good things happen.



A very preliminary sketch of what the building would look like

Grants & Donations

In 2017 We Received Grants From:

Thanks to everyone who responded to our annual appeal with generous donations, and to those who donated throughout the year.

Special thanks to,

- William Taylor
- Anne Rosenfeld
- Ted Tarr
- Captain Planet Foundation - \$2000 for the Millbrook Meadow Restoration Project

We had a very thoughtful grant from Essex County Ecology Center/ Toad Hall Bookstore. Included was a letter from President Robert Buchsbaum, and the Board of Directors and we have quoted the body below. We want to thank them and acknowledge the exemplary work their organization has done over the years to support conservation and the CAVPT.

"Please accept this grant...from the Essex County Ecology Center. As you know, Toad Hall Bookstore, the funding arm of ECEC, had to close this past fall after 45 successful years in Rockport. On the positive side, we were left with some remaining funds. The Board of Directors thought it entirely appropriate that some of our remaining proceeds be granted to the Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team in support of your environmental education and conservation initiatives. Our founder, Buck Robinson, and the rest of the board were always proud of the support we were able to provide to CAVPT and to see the fruits of your labors in your wonderful video."

We are proud, and oh so grateful, to have over fifty volunteers generously donating their time and energy to make CAVPT grow and flourish.



Photo credit - Richard Brown

We showed up at the Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge in Sudbury last June to do a snake show. I saw these two shady looking characters sort of loitering around while we were setting up. Eventually they began to look familiar. It was none other than Gerry Swislow and Norm Williams, with whom I graduated Rich Central High School in Olympia Fields, Illinois in 1970. What a fun surprise, and since we were a little short on volunteers, of course I roped them into helping. Along with Colleen Anderson and Adam Bolonsky, it was a great crew and we had a fun and informative presentation.

Maritime Gloucester

Maritime Gloucester is happy to support vernal ponds and their crepuscular activities through use of our bulk-mailing permit. Stop by this summer to visit our locally stocked aquarium, relax with our beautiful harbor views, sail on a schooner, and more. Open Memorial Day through October at 23 Harbor Loop, Gloucester. www.maritimegloucester.org



If we value wildlife, we must protect vernal ponds.....

What a CAVPT membership offers:

- A really neat CAVPT car decal
- CAVPT t-shirts and hats
- Subscription to our annual newsletter
- Email updates of vernal pond activities and events
- Guided field trips to local vernal ponds
- The satisfaction of knowing you are helping preserve these unique and vital habitats

Our programs & activities include:

- Vernal pond certification
- Exhibits & presentations
- Daytime & nighttime field trips
- Certification workshops
- Posters
- "Vernal Ponds" video
- Website: capeannvernalpondteam.org
- Scout patch program
- Snakes of New England & the World

Salamander linoleum cut by Isabel Natti



Anna Diperna shows a wood frog egg mass to some interested young vernal pond field trippers.

The funding for our programs is provided by:

- Corporate gifts
- Grants
- Sale of our merchandise
- Donations from community members like you
- Memberships

CAVPT thanks the following organizations and foundations for their generous support over the years:

The EnTrust Fund • The Norcross Wildlife Foundation • GoodSearch
New England Herpetological Society • Sweetwater Trust • TD Bank
Toad Hall Bookstore • Gloucester Cultural Council • Sam Park & Company
New England BioLabs • The Bellevue Fund • The William P. Wharton Trust
New England Grassroots Environment Fund • Cell Signaling Technology
Barnes Group • Captain Planet Foundation

Support the Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team. Become a member or renew today!

Membership levels

- Family - \$35.00 (USD)**
Subscription period: 1 year
Yearly membership to CAVPT for a family (2 adults and children)
Gift includes a CAVPT decal & bumper sticker
*Please list names of adults and names/ages of children
- Family - Lifetime - \$350.00 (USD)**
Subscription period: Unlimited
Lifetime membership to CAVPT for a family (2 adults and children).
Gifts include CAVPT decal & bumper sticker, Vernal Pond Field Guide,
Shirts or hats
*Please list names of adults and names/ages of children
- Individual - \$20.00 (USD)**
Subscription period: 1 year
Yearly membership to CAVPT for an adult (17 years and older)
Gift includes a CAVPT decal & bumper sticker.
- Individual - Lifetime - \$200.00 (USD)**
Subscription period: Unlimited
Lifetime membership to CAVPT for an adult (17 years and older).
Gifts include CAVPT decal & bumper sticker, Vernal Pool Field Guide,
Shirt or hat
- Junior (under 16) - \$10.00 (USD)**
Subscription period: 1 year
Yearly membership to CAVPT for juniors (16 years and younger)
Gift includes a CAVPT decal & bumper sticker

Go to our website: www.capeannvernalpondteam.org
for membership gift details

Name _____

Street _____

City, State, Zip _____

(address required if paying by credit card)

Phone _____ Email _____

Send me email updates about field trips and events

Yes! I'd like to be a volunteer

Additional donation \$ _____

Check enclosed: \$ _____ Payable to: Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team

Charge my credit card (Visa, MC, Amex, Discover)

CC # _____

exp date ____/____ CVV code (on back of card) _____

Signature _____

(required if paying by credit card)

Please detach this form and mail with
your donation to:

Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team
The Get Outside Center
186 Main St., Gloucester, MA 01930



CAVPT is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your contribution is tax deductible

Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team
The Get Outside Center
186 Main Street
Gloucester, MA 01930

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Gloucester, MA
Permit No. 21

Return Service Requested



Block print by Isabel Natti

The Need for Protection...

The temporary nature of vernal ponds often belies their importance. Countless plants and animals live in vernal ponds. Insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals visit to drink, feed, breed and nest. Some species, such as spotted salamanders, wood frogs and fairy shrimp are totally dependent on this habitat.



Photo by Chris Wood

How to Protect...

The best way to protect vernal ponds is to own the property. The next best way to protect them is to certify ponds with the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program. Certification applications are now done online and include photographs and field observation data. To learn more go to www.capeannvernalpondteam.org or check out the Vernal Pool Association's website at www.vernalpool.org



Monarch print by Isabel Natti

Come see us this spring! CAVPT leads nighttime field trips to witness the annual migration and breeding of wood frogs and spotted salamanders...see inside, or our website, for more details.

