NEWSLETTER

Summer Issue JUNE 17, 2017



RAIN RAIN GO AWAY!

At the end of last year's summer season, the River was uncharacteristically low after one of the most significant droughts the area had faced in years. We worried if our trees, insects, and animals would make it through the season. We begged for rain...

Amazingly, just six months later, we got it! The entire Great Lakes watershed would begin receiving record precipitation. Seasonal snow melt compounded by coastal storms, taxed the seaway system, as if Mother Nature was making up for lost time. Now, most people have had enough of the rain and are understandably worried about the people whose properties and

businesses have been so negatively affected by the flood.

To find positivity in a difficult situation, the high waters may test our man made structures and comfortable manner of living, but it doesn't seem to have bothered the River habitat at all. Osprey continue to return, loons find crags of rocky shoals to build straw nests, and fish continue to spawn. In fact, the high waters may actually rejuvenate certain game fish, like pike.

Perhaps we can find a bit of solace in the resilience of nature. It tests us to our limits and then rewards us with new life, and more importantly, an appreciation for it. As always, we can't wait to see you on the trails!

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON SERIES - ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED DECEMBER 1931

ORIOLE'S NEST NEAR B.R.V.C.

NOTICED ON TIP OF BRANCH OVERHANGING BUILDING

OTHER NESTS ARE RECALLED

Pair of Birds Formerly Had Nest Near Woolworth Home-Another Was Discovered Near Clinton St.

On the tip of a branch in the top of the big elm that overhangs the Black River Valley Club roof, is an oriole's nest. Last fall when the leaves had fallen a similar nest was revealed in a great elm in front of Leland Woolworth's home, a block away. The year before, just such a nest hung at the Clinton corner. It would be interesting to know if the same pair of oriole's built all three or if the noise and confusion of a city street have attractions for more than one pair. No one has yet thought out a way to band an oriole's leg and get all the interesting information obtained in that way about many of the ground birds.

The nest as it hangs there looks as secure as it is. It will undoubtedly stand the buffetings of winter's gales and some fragments may even remain by another winter. Although the oriole builds so well, he does not occupy the same nest a second year. Even from such a distance beneath it can be seen that it hangs below the branch like a pocket. Sometimes, in truth, the oriole is spoken of as the hangbird.

As a nest builder our oriole is second only to the tailorbird of the tropics. That bird, so the naturalists say, sews two stout leaves together to form a pocket to hold the nest. However wonderful such an accomplishment, the weaving of our own Baltimore oriole is a work of no mean art. Strings, thread, yarn, bark strips, anything long, stringy, and stout which the bird can find he uses with consummate skill. It is most interesting to examine carefully an oriole's nest whenever one

can be obtained. No two are ever exactly alike except in general shape and size and appearance. Entirely different materials would probably be used by the different architects. One bird perhaps found on a bush the gay yarn and strips of cloth hung there by some friendly person. His nest is as colorful as grandmother's coverlid. Another bird discovered no such helpful friend, but had to find his materials as best he could. Probably his greatest help was a wild grape vine whose bark is shed in long tough shreds. How the bird must have tugged and tugged to get the pieces loose! How often he gave up, tired out, only to return again and again with a persistence worthy of emulation! So sometimes the bird hangs itself by the very strings he has worked so hard to obtain. The tragedy of it!

A nest almost completed and swinging from it in the breeze the fay body of its maker, the firebird. As we examine the intricate weavings and as we trace the line of a single strand in and out, over and under, up and around, we are surprised that tragedies do not occur even more often. On one side the pocket is bound closely and securely to the limb, on the other it hangs lower in a loop. The net is several inches deep and it is made very soft and comfortable. The young could not possibly be spilled out of blown away when cradled so deeply from harm. But how the winds must have swung that branch and nest back and forth during some of the storms of the summer.

What confidence in his own ability as a builder our oriole had when he chose such a lofty location for his home! We know that as he sang at his task the cherry call, "Peter, Peter," the sound must have been quite lost in the din and clang of traffic on the street below. If it is the same oriole where will he build next year?

- Reprinted with permission from the Watertown Daily Times.

THE WETLAND DISCOVERY ROOM - JEAN S. NEWELL

"Do what you can, with what you have, where you are."
- Teddy Roosevelt



The Friends of the Nature Center have received a significant donation from local philanthropist, Allan P. Newell. The newly renovated Nature Center will contain an exciting wetland themed room that will be dedicated to Newell's mother, Jean S. Newell.

Originally, from Long Island, Jean Smith graduated from Potsdam Normal School in 1940 and married Edgar A. Newell of Ogdensburg, who graduated from Clarkson University in 1940. She was civically active in Ogdensburg and later Freeport, Illinois.

Mrs. Newell became the first female Newell Co. director in 1966 and served as a trustee of Clarkson University. A voracious reader and historian, she was an avid bird watcher and observer of life who always fostered a love of the natural world in her children Allan, Jennifer and Carol. Even her homes were decorated with natural selections from forests, fields, and fence rows.

Mr. Newell, who grew up along the majestic St. Lawrence River, still proudly calls the North Country home. He has a particular admiration for wetlands and their critical role in the health of the River ecosystem. According to Mr. Newell, "wetlands are a mysterious soup of complex interconnected flora & fauna. These exhibits will instill a sense of curiosity, wonder, understanding, and exploration in both children and adults."

We are extremely grateful for Mr. Newell's generous donation to our capital campaign. It is the first significant gift that will allow our Friends group and the Nature Center to enhance our educational opportunities for many years to come. We sincerely thank our forever Friend, Allan P. Newell.

- Matthew B. Elliott, Chair of the Capital Campaign

The Board of Directors for The Friends of the Nature Center, Inc.

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SCENES FROM AROUND THE CENTER



The high water wreaked havoc on the launch area.



Michael Elliott tests his rubber boots at ILMPD.





SCA interns Tamarata Wague (left) and Nathanial Young, giving a fur talk for 2nd graders from Ohio Elementary

EDUCATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

This spring, in the months of May and June, we had over 30 school groups - one almost every day! It hasn't always been easy with the Nature Center under construction, especially with the seemingly endless rainy days, but our teachers, students, volunteers, and staff have been so resilient and supportive!

The education committee met in March to review two new school programs written by Kim Cullen (Education Coordinator) and Heather White (EDU Committee chair) over the winter. One program unit about butterflies is geared to grade one students while the other program unit about weather and erosion is geared to grade three. Both units were developed in response to teacher requests and are New York State Science and ELA aligned. All units designed include student led, inquiry based, hands on activities.

We have had positive feedback from the teachers who experienced these units this spring and look forward to building upon these successes. It is our goal to continually develop and improve upon our school program curriculum to provide the best outdoor education experience possible.

THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS JOINED OR RENEWED THEIR COMMITMENT RECENTLY:

The Friends of the Nature Center appreciate our members and their continuous generosity. Such steadfast support, through the construction and the capital campaign, allows us to continue to provide the community and school children with critical natural education.

Susanne Duclon

Eleanor and Henry Goldacker

Skip and Donna Behrhorst

Sue Mahoney

Elizabeth Benson and Tim Cummings

Molly Farrell

Mike and Amy Phelps

Innovative Physical Therapy

Maggie and Dan Lort

Matt and Sara Elliott

Peggy and Gary De Young

Heather and Jonathan White

Wellesley Island, NY

Thousand Islands Park, NY

Aspen, Co

Chaumont, NY

Hingham, MA

Clayton, NY

Naples, FL

Watertown, NY

Wellesley Island, NY

Fayetteville, NY

Clayton, NY

Watertown, NY

Thank you!



FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

The high water we are experiencing on the River may be an abnormality or a new normal with a changing global climate. Nevertheless, the importance of the flood-drought cycle is a key component to the integrity of the flood-plain ecosystem. This article from Penn State helps us understand this critical process.

https://www.e-education.psu.edu/earth111/node/902

Remember to like us on Facebook for realtime updates and the calendar of events. Look for "Minna Anthony Common Nature Center - Friends."



Story Time Programs with Hawn Memorial Library

Every Thursday from July 6th-September 7th **10am**

Story Walks

Thursdays, July 13th and 27th and August, 10th and 24th
Hike through woods looking for pages of a book that have been hidden along the trail. Explore the trails while traveling through a storybook! The books will vary from week to week so you can come all summer!

Trail Tales

Thursdays, July 6th and 20th, August 3rd and 17th, and September 7th Perfect for preschool aged children (3-5 years old), accompanied by an adult. A naturalist will first read a story or two to the children and then lead the group in an activity (a hike or craft, weather dependent) themed to match the stories.



FROM THE DIRECTOR

The near constant rain has certainly made our spring season interesting, as it has for many. We held I Love My Park Day in the Temporary Nature Center Saturday, May 6th and despite a downpour in the morning, 36 people came out to volunteer! It was the perfect number of people to fit inside the Temporary Nature Center for lunch. We managed to get a tremendous amount accomplished even when working in the rain. We made a dent in the spring weeding that is critical to maintaining the



butterfly house gardens, we potted a few hundred plants for our plant sale, raked leaves, straightened trail sign posts, surveyed the trails for winter storm damage, planted 300 shrubs we ordered from the DEC tree nursery, and pulled garlic mustard from the Friendship Trail. It always amazes me how much work we can accomplish in a small amount of time when we have a large group of volunteers. It is a great program to kick off the summer season with.

The high water has created a few issues for us this spring, though. We have been unable to put our docks in because the anchor points on the island are underwater. Our lack of docks has caused us to cancel or relocate some of the on the water collaborative school programs we lead with Save the River and Clayton Island Tours in the spring. Nevertheless, we have been creative and are coming up with alternative solutions for programs typically dependent on safe shorelines and dock space. The duration of the high water will determine how much of an impact it will have on summer programs, like our canoe trips and kayaking workshops. There will invariably be a lot of shoreline debris that will need to be cleaned up when the water finally recedes before our docks and shoreline will be safe. On a more positive note, although there is some flooding at low points on our South Bay and Narrows trail, we have not had to restrict trail access. Please call us if you have any questions about current trail and dock conditions at the Nature Center.

Furthermore, we are happy to report some exciting things that happened here this spring. We were lucky enough to have Pat Snyder of River Restorations restore our 36' Voyageur canoe. He replaced portions of the gunnels that were weakened by age, refinished the seats and gunnels, reinforced the longer seats, and repainted the fiberglass shell. We think the boat is beautiful and are excited to get it back on the water! Our new kayaks arrived from Mountainman Outdoor Supply Company in Old Forge and Joe Leskoske and I built a kayak rack for them down by our dock house. I am very excited to have 14 new kayaks to use in our summer kayak programs. We were also excited to have 250 eighth grades from Indian River Middle School here for a field trip on May 5th. They were the largest school group we have ever accommodated and although we had to relocate the program to the Recreation Barn and Park Pavilion because of heavy rain, the day was hugely successful. We were fortunate enough to have all 10 of the Student Conservation Association interns working within our region of NYS Parks this year help us with the program. It was a very successful day for all.

We hope you take time to enjoy the bountiful wildflowers that are lining our trails this spring because of the wet weather and come visit us soon!

- Molly Farrell, Environmental Educator II

Volunteer Opportunities

Canoe Training

Tuesday, June 27th and Wednesday, June 28th - 9am
Our 36 foot canoe requires a lot of paddling power! Before summer programs start our staff needs to practice steering our 1000 lbs fiberglass canoe and learn the necessary interpretation. If you like to paddle or are interested in assisting with our summer canoe trips, this training is for you! You do not need to be available to help with canoe programs to participate in this training though. We need 8 paddlers to take the canoe out so even if you just want to add your paddling power to the canoe for one day, your help is appreciated. Preregistration is required.

Front Desk Operations

Ongoing Trainings
If you enjoy talking to people and witnessing nature in action (you never know what will walk in the front door!) then come learn about the ins and outs of our front desk. You are bound to learn more about the Nature

Center, be shown plenty of trailside pictures, and learn the answer to the question "what's the best loop to hike?" if you become one of our volunteer front desk attendees. This is a much needed and appreciated volunteer position! Please let

Darlene know if you are interested in working the front desk and we will set up a time for you to come be trained.

Please pre-register by calling the Nature Center at 315-482-2479

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

We sure have been experiencing some very wet weather, certainly not lacking for rain and although our winter and spring have been fluctuating between unseasonably cold and warm temperatures, our visitor numbers continue to increase. For those who are patiently

to increase. For those who are patiently counting the days until the official first day of summer, you only have a few weeks to wait!!! No more spring coats and warm boots weather, although I have been contemplating a purchase of hip waders!! I haven't seen water levels like this since April, 1979 on Murray Isle when I found myself pulling everything I owned out of the high St. Lawrence River.



Despite the weather and high waters, like our visitors many volunteers are returning for the summer. Whether they're returning from a winter flight to the south, or just caming out of hibernation, we're just happy to have them back!! I am grateful to have our weekly volunteers who man the reception desk and gift shop and tend to any other tasks given. Their help allows staff time to manage all the other tasks necessary to keeping the Nature Center running.

That being said, I would like to recognize Kathy May, Sue Mahoney, Mary McNeill and Kathy Mooris. These volunteers are crucial to the nature center. They answer the phone, greet our patrons, run the store and organize our inventory keeping the store appealing to those who shop. They also take on many other tasks we give them such as pricing store inventory, making signs and more! We are very grateful to them for their weekly commitment and dedication to the Nature Center.

I would like to express my gratitude to another volunteer, Kathy Leskoske who single handedly recruited six new volunteers!! Kathy's enthusiasm to the Nature Center is evident in the store and throughout the grounds and now she's credited for the increase in our volunteer team. We are very thankful for all of our volunteers. If you'd like to join our team and get into the nature side of life, please feel free to give me a call at any time and I'll work hard to match you with a volunteer task you'll enjoy.

- Darlene Sourwine, Volunteer Coordinator

SUMMER PROGRAMS 2017

315-482-2479

Trail Tales

Saturday, June 17th **10am**

Perfect for pre-school aged children (3-5 years old), accompanied by an adult. A naturalist will first read a story or two to the children and then lead the group in an activity (a hike or craft, weather dependent) themed to match the stories.

Composting: From Black Mold to Black Gold With Savannah

Monday, July 3rd 10:00 AM

Join us in building a compost bin for the park! Learn how to turn your food scraps into rich compost you can use at home, while helping us enhance our gardens here at Wellesley Island State Park.

Program to include: A brief introduction to the process of composting followed by a handson group construction of a compost bin for campers at the park. We will also discuss the different types of compost bins you can use at home and basic dos and don'ts.

Westy's Birds of Prey

Friday, July 7th, 6pm Friday, July 21st, 10am Thursday, August 3rd, 6pm

Rick West will be returning this summer with his live birds of prey. Rick's programs will be held under the Park Pavilion located near our marina. Please call the Nature Center for directions. These programs are made possible this year thanks to funds Wellesley Island State Park raises by renting boats at our marina.

Tall Tales from Nature with Lynn Morgan

Fridays, July 14th and 28th, and August 11th and 25th

Listen to professional storyteller, Lynn Morgan, tell engaging folktales about nature from around the world. Her tall tales are interactive, involving songs and audience participation. Lynn will entertain the whole family!

Spider's Fishing ProgramsSaturdays, July 1st, August 12th, September 2nd, & October 14th

Two programs are offered each day: **Basic Fishing from 11:00am to 1:00pm and** Basics of Fly Fishing from 1:30pm to 3:30pm

Join Spider on the Nature Center dock as he shares his knowledge and love of fishing. Spider brings a limited number of fishing poles, hooks, bobbers, and worms. If you can bring your own tackle, it will allow for more participation in the program.

Spider's classes are free thanks the support of Board member, Barbara Butts. Due to high water issues, the location of this program is subject to change. Please call the Nature Center for additional information.



Children's Fishing Derby

Sunday, July 8th, 12:00-3:30pm

Come join in the fun at our fishing derby for children 14 and under! There is a \$2.00 entrance fee that will go towards supporting future programming at the Nature Center. Prizes will be awarded to participants in three categories: the longest, heaviest, and most fish. Fish must be taken with rod and reel; all legal baits will be allowed.

Preregistration is appreciated

Please be advised the location of this program may change to due high water issues.

SUMMER PROGRAMS 2017

315-482-2479

Yoga on the Lawn

Wednesdays, July 5th and 19th and August 2nd, 16th, and 30th
10am

Come join Barb Eldridge for a gentle yoga class on the side lawn of the Nature Center! Yogis of all abilities are welcome. Bring a mat if you have one! We will have a few spares.

The Lost Lady Bug Project

Wednesday, July 12th
10am

Join Leah Tyrell of the Lost Lady Bug Project and learn about the importance of our native ninespot ladybug (the NY State insect!) while making a ladybug themed craft. Leah will be at the Nature Center the week of July 10th surveying for ninespots in our butterfly house field. Be sure to keep a look out for her!

Lost Lady Bug Project

Insect Release and Survey

Thursday, July 13th
1pm

Come be a Citizen Scientist and help Leah Tyrell of the Lost Lady Bug Project release ninespot ladybug larva in our butterfly house field. She will survey the field looking for a resident population of beetles that she released into the field last summer. Come test her knowledge of ladybugs!

Discovering Wild Mushrooms -Hike and Discussion

Saturday, July 15th 1pm

Jean Fahey, President of the Central New York Mycological Society, will be at the Nature Center to teach people about the many species of wild mushrooms that grow on Wellesley Island. The program will include a brief talk where she introduces people to the different forms of mushrooms and explains a little about their life cycle. She will then lead the group on a hike to search for mushrooms along our trails. If you are at all interested in wild mushrooms then this program is not to be missed! Call the Nature Center for more information or to preregister.

Slash Bash at Keewaydin State Park

Saturday, July 15th, 10am-3pm
Join us at the Keewaydin pool to celebrate summer! Participate in all three of our noodle races to be eligible to be the 2017 Keewaydin State Park Noodle Champion! Prizes will be awarded to the top three finishers in the championship race. We will have more games and other fun activities for the whole family! Come and spend the day at the pool!

Thousand Island Woodturners

Saturday, July 15th 10am-2pm

Come watch a demonstration by the TI Woodturners. They will be at the Nature Center all day demonstrating the fundamentals of woodturning. You can go home with a handmade pencil and more!

Goose Control - Dates

Fridays, July 21st and July 28th

ıoam

Come learn how we use border collies to manage Canada goose populations in the park! You will get to meet the dogs and their trainer!

Boater Safety Course

Sundays, July 23th and August 20th **8-4pm**

The course will be held at the Park Pavilion down by the marina. Adult and children are welcome to participate. There is no charge for the course but you will be expected to pay the \$7 day use fee to enter Wellesley Island State Park. If you are 18 or older there is a \$10 fee payable to NYS OPRHP for your certificate. Please call Gary Kocher at 315-486-5230 to pre-register. Pre-register is required and space is limited.



SUMMER PROGRAMS 2017

315-482-2479

Restored connectivity in cattail dominated wetlands: effects on early life stages of Northern Pike

A presentation by graduate student Ericka Augustyn of SUNYESF

Saturday, August 5th

6pm at the Park Pavilion

Donations appreciated

Spawning pool and channels excavations occurred in French Creek between 2008 and 2010 to reconnect the main stem with seasonally flooded wetlands and to create new and diverse habitats for aquatic organisms. A study was designed to evaluate the response of larval northern pike survival in enhanced versus reference nursery marshes. The results from the study will help guide future enhancement projects in the region.

Folk Music with Rod Fraser

Fridays, July 15th and August 25th
3-6pm

Acoustic guitarist, singer and song-writer with over 20 years on the road performing Country, Blues, Pop, Rock and Folk classics and originals Rod Fraser covers songs ranging from Johnny Cash to Jimmy Buffet, and Neil Young to Neil Diamond as well as his original songs written about his days on the road and life in the north country.

Kathy Sommer & Paul Hubert of THE BUSKERS Friday, August 12th, 4-6pm

Featuring fantastic fiddle, guitar and great vocals, seasoned with mandolin and banjo, local fiddler Kathy Sommer and guitarist Paul Hubert make heads turn with their wide variety of music from traditional tunes to blues, swing, and original songs, and seasoned stage presence. Both are members of the roots/folk/pop band THE BUSKERS, the NH-based touring band that visits the North Country each year.

Concert to be held at the Park Pavilion by the Marina

Kayaking with Molly Saturday, July 8th, Thursdays, July 13th and July 27th and Saturday, August 5th and 12th 5:30-7:30pm

Participate in an American Canoe Association (ACA) Smartstart Kayaking class, look for signs of wildlife, and learn about River ecology as we paddle along the shorelines of Wellesley Island State Park. The ACA's Smartstart paddler orientation is perfect for anyone new to kayaking and will reiterate proper paddling technique for more experienced paddlers. Feel free to bring your own kayak, but we have kayaks for all participants. The program will start in our parking lot.

Preregistration is required. Must be 13 or older to participate

If you need to rent a kayak, please register before the day of the program.
\$10 per person.

Voyageur Canoe Program Most Weekdays beginning July 4th, 9am-11am

\$4 for adults and \$2 for children under 13 Come and spend a few hours helping to paddle our 36 foot Voyageur Canoe while learning about the history of the Voyageurs and the ecology of the St. Lawrence River. If staffing permits, we may be having one evening canoe tour per week. Preregistration is required.

Kayaking with Molly and Save the River

Saturday, July 22nd, 5:30-7:30pm and Saturday, August 26th, 9am-noon

\$10 per person. Must be 13 or older.

Come learn about how you can become a Riverkeeper Volunteer while brushing up on your kayaking skills! Molly will teach the ACA course Smartstart Your Kayak which is perfect for anyone new to kayaking and will reiterate proper paddling technique for more experienced paddlers. Following the kayak training, Kate Brehany from Save the River will talk about various factors that threaten the health of our river and what you can do to help. You will have plenty of time to look for wildlife and explore our shoreline! Participants will receive a T-shirt and an invasive species guide.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS!

Members of the Friends of the Nature Center provide the critical means and resources necessary to support the cherished education and preservation found here. Most of our members rejoin annually and for that we are continually grateful.

Birch - \$25 Quarterly newsletter, 10% discount at our gift shop, discounts on some program fees, and a Minna Anthony Common T-Shirt (redeemable at the Nature Center).

Maple - \$75 Quarterly newsletter, 10% discount at our gift shop, discounts on some program fees, and a Minna Anthony Common T-Shirt (redeemable at the Nature Center).

Oak - \$150 Maple level benefits and a 2017 *Empire State Pass* that grants unlimited day-use vehicle entry to ANY New York State Park until March 2018.

Hickory - \$250 Maple level benefits and a 2017 Empire State Pass that grants unlimited day-use vehicle entry to ANY New York State Park until March 2018

Please call or visit our website for more details - http://macnaturecenter.webs.com/

MISSION STATEMENT

The Friends of the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center support environmental education programming that fosters conservation of local ecosystems, encourages outdoor recreation, and inspires our visitors to develop an increased respect for the natural world.

MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION FORM





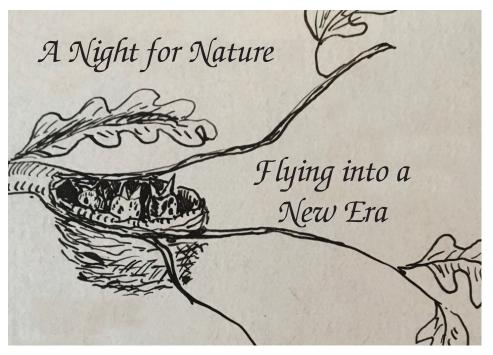
Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Thank you supporting the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center by becoming a member of our Friends organization or by making a donation. We hope to see you soon!

| making a domation. We hope to see you soon. | | |
|---|--|--|
| Name: | | |
| Street: | | |
| City: State/Prov: | | |
| Zip/Code: Phone: | | |
| Email: | | |
| I would prefer to receive our newsletter via email. | | |
| I would be interested in volunteering at the Nature Center. | | |
| Alternate mailing address? | | |
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| Yes, I want to help | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| This is a: | | |
| ☐ New Membership | Renewal | |
| ☐ Donation | | |
| General Donation amount: | | |
| Membership Level: | | |
| ☐ Birch (\$25) | ☐ Maple (\$75) | |
| ☐ Oak (\$150) | ☐ Hickory (\$250) | |
| | | |
| | payable to "Friends of the Nature accept credit cards at this time. | |

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT



We can't wait to dance and party the night away at the TI Club on Thursday, July 20th from 6-10pm. Come celebrate Nature with us! \$75 per person.

MY
NATURE
CENTER

Goal: \$890,000 Raised: \$183,299

The capital campaign is under way...
Please support the Nature Center!
www.macnaturecenter.com

Friends of the Nature Center, Inc. Minna Anthony Common Nature Center Wellesley Island State Park 44927 Cross Island Road Fineview, NY 13640

Hours of Operation: Museum 8am-4pm Trails open sunrise to sunset



