

NEWSLETTER

Spring Issue

MARCH 19, 2018



RETURN OF THE BIRDS

Spring is approaching in Wellesley Island State Park, and that means the return of the birds! The captivating killdeer may still be a few weeks away, but we have many winter residents and some early migratory birds here at the Nature Center. Since the end of February, red-winged blackbirds have been singing their hearts out, filling the treetops around the wooded marsh with their melodious trills. Male blackbirds return first to their breeding grounds, claiming the prime territories before females arrive and the nesting season begins.

Though these migrants are just arriving, the forest has been far from quiet these past few months. Winter resident birds such as the black-capped chickadee, American goldfinch, white-breasted nuthatch, several species of woodpeckers, and the occasional dark-eyed junco frequent our feeders. Around the time the blackbirds returned, mourning doves could be seen pecking at the seed on the ground. Even

some not-so-feathery friends use the bird feeders; chipmunks, squirrels, and white-tailed deer like the birdseed too. As the temperatures rise and the snow melts, more bird species will arrive and fill the forests with their music.

As we welcome back the birds, we are also welcoming some new faces around the Nature Center. The Student Conservation Association (SCA) placed five Environmental Educators here in January. They will be with us through November, helping run programs and working on individual projects. We are excited to have Hunter M. Horton as our newest member of the Friends of the Nature Center Board. There is even a new turtle tank in our Wetland Room, housing two baby painted turtles, Nate and Nelly, and our resident diva, Nora the red-eared slider. In the coming months, new exhibits will be popping up.

Stop by the park to see the returning birds and the exciting changes to our Nature Center!

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON SERIES - ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED APRIL 5, 1932



The Killdeers Begin to Arrive

Flocks Spread Out Over Considerable Distance

Are Harbingers of Spring

One bird always acts as sentinel—Flock, feeding quietly, will wheel upward and away at sentinel's signal—Can be heard calling above clouds.

Falls from the March-blown sky
Suddenly, suddenly
A shrill, yet liquid cry,
Killdee! Killdee! Killdee!

High in the snow filled air they wind their swift course, these heralds of spring, dropping clear notes along the way, and we gazing upward, can scarcely locate them before they have disappeared from our sight.

Few birds fire the imagination as do the killdeer. There is a fascination in the curve of their long, graceful wings able to waft them from view so quickly. If we could only fly like that, to what far-away places we would go!

But even while we are still thinking about them, they are back again, one, two, another, and yet another. It might be a game of tag they are playing, but it is only a killdeer habit, this keeping in small flocks yet spreading out over a considerable space. They sweep about our heads, decide we are harmless, and alight to feed. They are almost invisible, for the striking black and white bands on their heads and necks camouflage the clean-cut shadows of grass and weed stalks among which they run.

One bird always acts as sentinel. So long as we remain quiet the flock feeds, but at any suspicious movement the sentinel spreads his beautiful wings and tail and away he goes, calling cheerily to his companions to follow. They obey without question and with a gleam of opal wing-lining they are again gone.

Every sportsman knows the killdeer plover, but bothers them little for they are not particularly toothsome.

The small boy and his dog know them, for whenever they cross the killdeer's chosen field the birds pursue them, making swift sallies at the dog and uttering such shrill, noisy calls that both boy and dog are glad to beat a hasty retreat.

The killdeer's institutions told him the time is at hand to be preparing the summer home so, although the weather is not what it should be, they came; and early each morning they can be heard calling to each other above the city's roofs.

High in the blue, remote,
Unseen, each clear bird note
Heralding spring.

- Reprinted with permission from
the Watertown Daily Times.

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

If you haven't been to the Nature Center recently, you must come over to see its stunning transformation! The Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) has done an extraordinary job to expand and renovate the Nature Center structure and the first two exhibits have been placed. The rest of the exhibits are scheduled to arrive in early May, with a tentative grand opening in early June 2018! More details will follow on the opening soon...

The support of the River community and the Friends has also been extraordinary. As of March 1st, the Friends of the Nature Center have raised \$503,353 in cash. The even better news is we have generously been promised \$444,160 over the next three years from public and private grants, and generous supporters to our naming campaign.

We have had a wonderfully successful campaign so far, but we aren't done yet. Payment for exhibit construction and installation will be due in June 2018. We either need to raise an estimated \$255,000 in cash funds between now and then, or take out a loan for the shortfall. Obviously, our goal is to pay for the installation outright and avoid financing fees.

If you are interested in learning more about our naming campaign, please email Matt Elliott at mbelliott@hotmail.com or call the Nature Center.

Please remember, any additional funds received above the target goal, will create an endowment to support natural education and the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center.



SCA member Rosie Friend educating a school group

Ongoing Programs:

Junior Naturalist Program

This summer visit the Nature Center and become a Junior Naturalist. This three-part series is full of fun activities to do outside. Complete all three packets and receive a Junior Naturalist patch. This program is recommended for ages seven and up. There is a \$4 program fee to cover the cost of the patches.

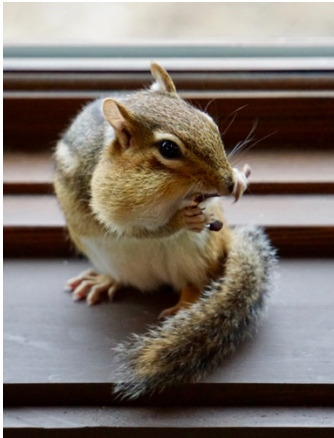
Natural Birthday Parties at the Nature Center

Make this birthday special for your child with a Natural Birthday Party at the Nature Center. Children ages 5 to 12 can choose from seasonally appropriate themes such as Turtles, Exploring Ponds, Trees, Beavers and more. Call the Nature Center for more information or to schedule a party.

**Members \$45;
Nonmembers \$60.**

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

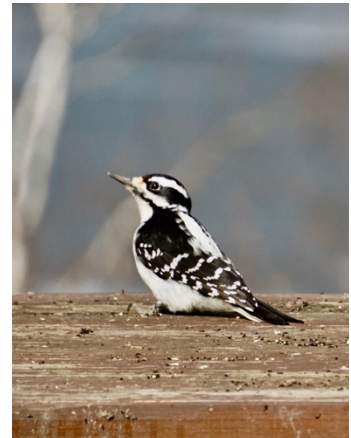
SCENES FROM AROUND THE CENTER



Scrappers the Chipmunk



Sunset viewed over Eel Bay



Woodpecker at the bird feeder



SCA member Andrew Fuellner enjoying Eel Bay



SCA member Shaina Johnson training Scrappers

SCA MEMBERS AT THE NATURE CENTER

The Student Conservation Association (SCA), in partnership with AmeriCorps and New York State Parks, has placed five Environmental Educators at the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center for ten months this year. These volunteers receive a small living stipend and housing within Wellesley Island State Park. When they finish their term in November, they will receive about \$6,000 in an education award for their service.

Our five SCA members are specializing in different areas here at the Nature Center. Dana Reinstein, a recent graduate of SUNY Fredonia, is focusing on MACNC's social media presence and this newsletter, while Shaina Johnson, a SUNY Potsdam alum, cares for the animals that live here. Michelle Knuepfer graduated from St. Lawrence University and is helping Andrew Fuellner, still currently a student at Kent State University,

plant several gardens and create a manual for their management. Rosie Friend, a Cornell alum is working closely with Kim Cullen to plan and run education programs for school groups that visit the Nature Center. Dana, Shaina, Michelle, Andrew, and Rosie usually focus on their project areas, but they often overlap and generally lend a hand wherever they're needed.

When they're not at work, the SCA members enjoy throwing shovels of snow at each other, going to the gym together, and playing games in their cottages. You might also find them engaging in long, intense discussions about the personalities of the turtles that live at the Nature Center. They can't wait for the ice to melt so they can get out on Eel Bay to run boating programs. Our SCA members are a huge asset to the Nature Center team, and we're excited to have them here!

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

THE FRIENDS OF THE NATURE CENTER

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.

The following members joined or renewed their commitment recently:

Sarah Baldwin	Clayton, NY
Caroline Batterson	Sackets Harbor, NY
Matt and Sara Elliott	Fayetteville, NY
Nancy Eustance	Hamilton, NY
Paul and Sandra Garrett	Wellesley Island, NY
Michael and Sandra Geiss	Clayton, NY
Kathleen Hanna	Clayton, NY
John and Susan Johnson Jr.	Watertown, NY
Joyce Knuepfer	Endicott, NY
Kerry and Joe Koen	Hamilton, NY
Carolyn Marlowe	Glen Park, NY
Leslie Rowland	Clayton, NY
Amy Schwerzmann	Watertown, NY
Ed and Claudia Smith	Oriskany, NY
Peyton Taylor	Theresa, NY
Tom Tinney	Clayton, NY
Vick and Susan Woodward	Wellesley Island, NY

Thank you!

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

Kerry Roberge

President

Barbara Butts

Vice President

Andrew Kane

Treasurer

Jane Arras

Secretary

Nancy Boynton

Barb Eldridge

Matthew Elliott

Hunter Horton

Sue Johnson

Stefanie Kring

Joseph Leskoske

Chase Miller

Lynn Morgan

Heather White

Park Employees

Steve Cline

Park Manager

Molly Farrell

Nature Center Director

Kimbrie Cullen

Program Coordinator

Friends of the Nature Center Employees

Darlene Sourwine

Volunteer Coordinator

Patty Davis

Bookkeeper

HUNTER M. HORTON, NEW NATURE CENTER BOARD MEMBER



Our newest board member Horton was raised on Wellesley Island from the age of three. As an adult, he moved all over the South to follow his career, but always returned to the St. Lawrence River. "The river has always held a special place in my heart," Horton says.

In 2006 he returned for good and continues to live and work here with his family. With his degree in Golf Course Turf and Sports Management, Horton managed Ives Hill Country Club in Watertown for eight years before starting Thousand Islands Landscaping Company. He and his father Douglas also have a golf course management company called Golf Services. Their business operates a few local courses and provides maintenance for others around New York.

Horton often visits the Nature Center with his wife Joey Marie and son Greyson to enjoy the beauty and serenity of the park. "I could not be happier to be a part of the Nature Center Board and can only hope to give back to this great place that has given me so much joy over the years."

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

FROM THE DIRECTOR



Vera Parmiter (left) and Molly Farrell (right) in Perry, NY

I come from a family steeped in a tradition of oral history. Growing up hearing stories from days gone by helped me better understand who I am and where I come from. Through that experience, I came to believe gathering stories is critical for understanding local history, particularly if you are not from the area yourself.

For the past two falls, I have been lucky enough to travel to Perry, NY with Board member Andy Kane and Regional Director Peyton Taylor to visit Vera Parmiter, Minna's youngest daughter. I'd sit in a comfortable rocking chair in her living room and listen to her spin tales of long ago summers spent on Wellesley Island. She told me of adventures had by her and her siblings in the forests of Wellesley Island and the waters of Eel Bay, the Narrows, and South Bay. She showed photos taken at places that can now be found along our trails. Vera answered countless questions I passed to her through her daughter Claudia Smith as we worked to create the exhibit about Minna and Catherine for the renovated Nature Center. The Minna display was particularly inspired by Vera and her retelling of the origins of the Rock Ridges Trail is preserved as part of Minna's display. Thankfully we were able to record our visits and take countless photographs to help us remember the wealth of knowledge and experience she shared.

Vera passed away suddenly a few weeks ago at the age of 98. Her passing saddened me as I was hoping to have the opportunity to

travel to Perry one more time to show her pictures of the other new exhibits that will be installed in the Nature Center named after her mother this spring. But Vera gave me the gift of her stories, and for that I am forever grateful. I have woven many of them into interpretation programs I lead because I think it is important our visitors have a chance to learn a little about the lives of the people who helped spur the development of the Nature Center. Minna Anthony Common becomes more real if you can envision her wearing a floppy, wide brimmed hat paddling through the Narrows in her skiff or wading in the shallow waters of Sand Cove. The potholes along the Eel Bay Trail are even more intriguing when you can envision Vera's sisters Faith and June sitting on the brim a pothole working to dig out the debris that had hidden them from view. Telling Vera's stories keeps Minna's spirit alive and helps inform what we are trying to accomplish at the Nature Center today.

So this summer, take a minute to visit with an older family member or friend and ask them a few questions about their past. You may be surprised to hear the stories they tell. Or come to the Nature Center on a sunny day, sit on one of our new benches with a friend and share a story about long ago adventures on the river. We may even come out and join you. It will be time well spent.

- Molly Farrell, Environmental Educator II

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

Volunteer Opportunities

Canoe Training

June 25th – June 28th

(Exact dates weather dependent)

Our 36 foot long canoe requires a lot of paddling power! Before summer programs start, our staff needs to practice steering our 1000 pound 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. We need eight 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. Please call if you're interested.

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 how to answer "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

Let's face it, every day is a great day to be a volunteer at the M.A.C. Nature Center. But this year it's even more exciting as we welcome patrons to the newly renovated Nature Center and watch them enjoy the new, state of the art, hands-on interactive educational displays. Volunteers will also enjoy working outside, surrounded by the beauty of the grounds while enjoying nature.

One of many volunteer tasks to choose from at the Nature Center is working the reception desk. Our reception desk volunteers are offered many books to enjoy that will teach them about our native plants, animals, bugs, and more. With the help of our trail map, you'll learn our hiking trails and the history of the Nature Center. You can share this newfound knowledge as you welcome and visit with patrons from around the world. As a reception desk volunteer, you will also be involved with maintaining our store. Volunteers such as Kathy May and Mary McNeil have taken great pride in keeping the store a fun and interesting place to shop.

Whether your choice of task brings you inside or outside, you will certainly enjoy being a part of the Nature Center's volunteer team. So please, consider joining our team – it doesn't matter if you only have an hour a week, a day a week, or even a day a month – any time given is greatly appreciated. Interested? Feel free to give me a call and I will get you started. It's always a beautiful day in the *naturehood*!

- Darlene Sourwine, Volunteer Coordinator



Volunteer Lynn Morgan educating a school group

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

SPRING PROGRAMS 2018

315-482-2479

North Country Earth Day at the Thompson Park Zoo

Saturday, April 21st, 10am-4pm

Come join the Earth Day celebrations at the Thompson Park Zoo! Learn about the natural world around you and the importance of protecting our natural resources. Discover new places and ways to enjoy the outdoors. There will be numerous family friendly activities and many different organizations will be at the event, including the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center. For additional information, call the Thompson Park Zoo at 315-782-6180.

TILT's 3rd Annual "For the Trees" Arbor Day Community Event

Saturday, April 28th, 9:30am

Join TILT at Zenda Farms Preserve for our 6th annual *For the Trees* Community Event in celebration of Arbor Day. We will be planting both large and small trees and we need lots of help. It's a wonderful way to launch into spring by getting outdoors and getting your hands dirty. This year, we plan to start a new maple grove. You'll also enjoy workshops and displays from our partner organizations including the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center, Cross Island Farms, Indian River Lakes Conservancy, the NYS Zoo, and more. Lunch will be provided by Subway. Please let us know if you'd like to help by emailing volunteer@tilandtrust.org or by calling the TILT office at 315-686-5345.

I Love My Park Day

Saturday, May 5th, 9am-3pm



Show your Nature Center some love! Join with other volunteers to spruce up the Nature Center for spring and get it ready for another busy summer season. This is the day when we get out our mop buckets, sponges, garden trowels, rakes, and clippers and get to work making our Nature Center beautiful. Lunch will be provided. Visit <http://ptny.org/ilovemypark/> for more information and to preregister. You can also preregister by calling the Nature Center (315-482-2479).

Preregistration for this event is required.

22nd Annual WPBS Ready Set Fun BookFest at the Salmon River Mall, Watertown

Saturday, May 12th, 10am-2pm

Meet Curious George, Clifford the Big Red Dog, and Daniel Tiger, while enjoying over 30 educational exhibits, local authors, a gently-used book swap, and other fun opportunities at the Mall! Get ready, get set to have some fun at the annual Ready Set Fun Bookfest!

Admission is free with a non-perishable food item and/or a gently used sweater.

Clarkson Seminar Series

Saturdays; May 12, June 9, July 14, August 11, September 8, October 13, 5:30pm-7:30pm

The Friends of the Nature Center recently entered a formal partnership with the Institute for a Sustainable Environment (ISE) of Clarkson University. The goal of this partnership is to increase opportunities at the Nature Center for Clarkson faculty and staff, while also supporting the Nature Center with Clarkson's strength in environmental education. Part of the partnership includes launching an exciting new Seminar Series to be held at MACNC. Featured speakers will include professors, scientists, and environmental advocates. Topics will include St. Lawrence River health, environmental economics, and species of local concern. Light refreshments and snacks will be served, and there will be social time before and after the seminar to talk with the featured speaker.

Early Bird Birding Hike

Saturday, May 12th, 8:30am

Come join us on an early morning birding hike! Listen for calls and learn a few more of the bird species that call Wellesley Island home. If you do not have your own binoculars, we will have some available for you to borrow. This hike is open to birding experts and beginners alike.

Little Hawn Library at MACNC

We are very excited to be partnering with Hawn Memorial Library to continue our free little library at the Nature Center. Stop by and borrow a book or add books to our little library. We have an assortment of books for all ages that were donated to us by Hawn Memorial Library. We call it the Little Hawn Library at MACNC.

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

SPRING PROGRAMS 2018

315-482-2479

Run Wild *Saturday, May 19th, 10am*



Join us for the 5th Annual Run Wild 5K Run/Walk. Registration begins at 8:00am and the 5K race starts at 10:00am. The \$15 registration fee includes a long-sleeved t-shirt for the first 100 registrants. This is a family friendly race – open to people of all ages and friendly dogs on leashes. To preregister for the race, download the registration form at www.MACnaturecenter.com and mail your check and completed form to the Nature Center. You can also pick up a form at the Nature Center.

Memorial Day Weekend Plant Sale

May 28th-30th, 9:30am-3pm

Help the Nature Center raise funds to maintain our gardens at our Annual Memorial Day Weekend Plant Sale. We will have an assortment of native flowering plants and more for sale. Incorporating native plants into your landscaping can help provide valuable food resources and shelter to local bird and wildlife species.

Art for Nature

Wednesday, June 6, 10am-3pm, 4pm-7pm

Cross Island Farms is hosting a Plein Air fundraiser in their “enchanted edible forest garden” in support of the Friends of the Nature Center’s continuing Capital Campaign and future endowment. The public is invited to observe the artists at work in the garden between 10am and 3pm. From 4pm to 7pm, a wine and cheese reception with live music by the 5-piece combo “Rajah” will be held. Artists’ works will be displayed and offered for sale during the reception. There is a \$5 fee for the reception.

Children’s Fishing Derby

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

Come join in the fun with Spider Rybaak 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 required.

This event is sponsored by the Barbara and Daniel Butts Enrichment Fund.

Zenda Farms Picnic

Friday, June 8th, 5:30-7:30pm

Here comes summer! The Annual Community Picnic at Zenda Farms is fun for the whole family, with fascinating exhibits, games, and of course, your favorite hamburgers, hotdogs and picnic fare! Tickets are \$12 for TILT members and \$15 for non-members. Kids under 12 are free. Please preregister with TILT by calling 315-686-5345 or registering online.

Spider’s Fishing Programs

Saturdays; June 9th, July 7th, July 21st, August 11th, and September 1st

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. This is a free program, but donations are appreciated to defray the cost of this and other programs.

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

Buy a Brick and be Part of the Nature Center!
Minimum Donation: \$150



Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

☐ Check enclosed. Please make checks payable to: **Friends of the Nature Center, Inc.**

☐ Please charge my credit card: ☐ Amex ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover

Card Number: _____ Exp. Date: _____ CVV: _____

Signature: _____

☐ My company's matching gift form is enclosed.

\$

ENGRAVED PAVING BRICK ORDER FORM

4 X 8

14 CHARACTERS PER LINE 3 LINES PER PAVER

PLEASE SEND COMPLETED FORM TO: P.O. BOX 6523 WATERTOWN, NY 13601-6523

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

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 2018 *Empire State Pass* that grants unlimited day-use vehicle entry to ANY New York State Park until March 2019.

Hickory - \$250

Maple level benefits and a 2018 *Empire State Pass* that grants unlimited day-use vehicle entry to ANY New York State Park until March 2019.

Please call or visit our website for more details:
(315)-482-2479 - www.macnaturecenter.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 for 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!

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? _____

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)

Please make checks payable to "Friends of the Nature Center". We cannot accept credit cards at this time.

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT



Event tickets are \$75 per person
Sponsor opportunities range from \$250 to \$2,500
Contact heatherwhite4@gmail.com for more information.

Goal: \$920,000
Raised: \$503,353

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

www.macnaturecenter.com



www.facebook.com/MACNatureCenter



[@friendsofmacnaturecenter](https://www.instagram.com/friendsofmacnaturecenter)

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



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**