

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2021 Issue • April 2021



Liverwort (Hapatia noblis) wildflowers blooming in early spring

It has been a pleasure helping the Friends of the Nature Center these past six years. This April I step down from the board of directors after serving two consecutive terms. The Friends' mission is to 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. Together, we have accomplished much to fulfill this mission and our River community should take great pride in its accomplishments.

Our public-private partnership with the State Parks reimagined, redesigned, and expanded our Center's ability to interact with our patrons. A successful capital campaign (thanks to you all!) not only paid for a state-of-the-art facility, but also created an endowment that will sustain the Friends in the future. Personally, I have received great joy working with the dedicated Parks' staff, our vibrant

volunteers, and our energetic board - thank you all for your time, talent, and hard work.

It is easy to be passionate about a place like the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center when you see its impact on its patrons. Many of us are lucky to call the St. Lawrence River "home," and are lucky enough to give back to a place as special as the Nature Center. Please find your own way to give back to your Nature Center. Whether it's removing litter from the trails, guiding students on the Voyageur Canoe, or helping with I Love My Park Day, you have talent and we need your help!

Thank you for the opportunity to serve and I hope to see you on the trails soon!

Matt Elliott
Board President

The Minna Anthony Common Series

Number of Birds Breed in the North

by Minna Anthony Common

The following is an excerpt from a column written by Minna Anthony Common, June 1931. Reprinted with permission of the Watertown Daily Times.

Approximately 150 species of birds breed in the North Country each year, yet among this whole group there is only one delinquent in the serious matter of tending its young...the cowbird. June finds all the rest working industriously to construct a home and raise a brood. Gaily they start the task, singing, rollicking, resplendent in their bridal clothes. As the weeks go by and the hungry mouths demand more and more, the parent birds grow sober and quiet and appear often bedraggled. However...they fairly exude pride, happiness and satisfaction.

Some birds perform their assigned tasks with the least possible effort; the nighthawk, for instance, builds no nest. It hunts up a depression, preferably a shallow muddy one, on a hilltop and lays there its eggs. They are hard to find because they so closely resemble pebbles in size and color.

The little tip-up, our common sandpiper, chooses a spot where some dead seaweed has collected and with a bill and feet shapes a crude circular wall to hold the eggs in place; the bluebird and the wren find an abandoned woodpecker hole, and carry in twigs. No weaving is required.

The group of birds that excavate their own holes with only bills for tools demand a trifle more admiration. The kingfisher burrows four feet or more into a sand bank, the bank-swallow almost as far, while the woodpecker chisels his home in a dead tree trunk. After so much labor of

construction, it is small wonder these birds spend so little time in furnishings.

Some birds are plasterers and make adobe brick homes of grass and mud. The robin's is shaped like a bowl, the barn swallow's like half a bowl.

The most skillful nest of our northern birds is probably that of the oriole. It is built pendant from the tip of a slender twig on a swaying branch of an elm. It is shaped like a pocket with one side higher than the other and hangs a full eight inches below the branch. Long strings moor it so securely that even the lashing of winter's storms cannot dislodge it. This bird, too, will use man-made materials and delights in long strands of bright colored yarns.

Some of the birds show eccentricities in their nest building. The hummingbird and the pewee shingle theirs with gray-green lichens so that they cannot be told from the branch; the great-crowned flycatcher always incorporates a cast-off snake skin into his nest furnishings, why, no one knows...the brown creeper so carefully hides her nest beneath a bit of loose bark that it has seldom been found. ■



Oriole nest built above Eel Bay trail

From the Director

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Spring is in the air! Our bird feeders and snowshoes will soon be put away, and we will start preparing for the busy season. 2021 has proven to be fruitful and eventful with many new projects. We welcomed our new SCA member, Jasmine, in early March – she will be taking care of our animals and offering environmental education programming. Read more about her on the next page.

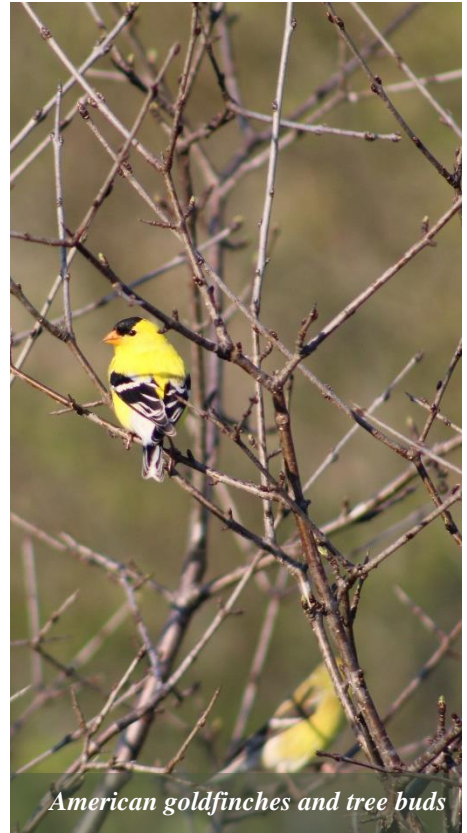
We also have several great collaborations planned for Earth Month. We are partnering with WPBS on *Be a Nature Defender Day* on April 17, and then hosting a tree planting with the Clayton Rotary Club the Saturday afterwards. Thank you to the Clayton Rotary for donating all native trees! In May, the 10th anniversary of *I Love My Park Day* is taking place over two days. We invite all who've enjoyed volunteering in the past to come help with our spring spruce up and cleaning in a Covid-friendly way.

Also, exciting news – *Common Currents* membership mixers are back! Come meet fellow Nature Center members while enjoying a fun activity, see page 9 for more details.

This April, we say a heartfelt **Thank You** to outgoing President Matthew Elliott, Treasurer Susan Mowers, and Education Committee Chair Barbara Eldridge as they complete their service on the Friends of the Nature Center's board. It has been truly a privilege to work with these individuals in their respective roles. Many Nature Center milestones and accomplishments were achieved thanks to their time and effort. Matt, Sue, and Barb – thank you for the tremendous progress that was achieved under your leadership and guidance. We will miss working with you, and hope to see you on The River.

The natural world is waking from its winter torpor. Spring brings rebirth and renewal – migrating spring birds, emerging insects, and green new growth gives hope. Wishing you all wellbeing in the sunshine of spring.

Gabriela Padewska
Nature Center Director



American goldfinches and tree buds

For Your Consideration

Thousand Islands Life Magazine published two stories in this recent issue that we'd like to share!

First, [More About Minna](#) talks about the life and work of our beloved trailblazer and namesake, Minna Anthony Common. The second story, [Andrew Kane: His Photography - His Art, His Passion, and His Life](#) features our very own Andrew Kane. Andrew has been nominated (and soon elected) board president for the Friends. We love seeing his terrific success and can't wait to visit his new gallery in TI Park! P.S. Andy's beautiful artwork is also for sale at the Nature Center store!

Welcome New SCA Member, Jasmine!

Hi, I am Jasmine Garrett, the new SCA member here at Minna Anthony Common Nature Center! I am currently the caretaker for the beautiful animals we have here and training to be an environmental educator. What brought me to this Nature Center was my passion to connect people to the importance and beauty of the natural world. I grew up in Rockville, Maryland, right outside the D.C. metropolitan area, with strong love for wildlife and running. I felt a big disconnect from nature and noticed how it wasn't just myself. The passion to bring that connection back brought me to attend college in Burlington, Vermont.

During my experiences living in the cute state of Vermont, I got to explore the outdoors through hiking, biking, climbing, running, and swimming. While exploring, I was learning about organisms of all kinds and how important each one is to human and environmental survival and how they, in many ways, may not be as different from us as we think. I spent the rest of my time surrounded by inspiring people who connected to each other and their environment through their love of cooking local farm fresh food; others who loved playing or seeing live music bring people of all different backgrounds together; people who had a passion for art because it increased their appreciation for nature; and the people who were always just dying to get outside to play or learn about it. I love Vermont but it has only expanded my urge to discover more parts of the world for their natural landscapes, unique species, and meeting a variety of people of different backgrounds, cultures, and interests. While exploring, I want to be sure I am following my passion of influencing others to find that important connection to nature.

I chose this place in particular because I have never been to the Thousand Islands before, so I am thrilled to be able to uncover a new area



Jasmine with our Red-Eared Slider turtle

while working with animals, informing people of the crazy cool outdoors, and I am not a far drive to Vermont. As well, I can't wait to meet everyone who comes to visit. You can find me by looking for the sweaty person trying to have full conversations with the animals.

Jasmine Garrett
SCA Member



Donor Spotlight

The Minna Anthony Common Nature Center has hosted hundreds of annual school field trips for many years. School buses would drop off several classes of children each trip from local and distant schools for an exciting day at the Nature Center to learn about nature and the environment that supports it. The Alexandria Central School, Alexandria Bay, has been busing students to the Nature Center's education programs since they began. In the early seventies, one of those ACS students exiting the bus was a young man named Max Patterson. Max enjoyed and had a unique connection with nature, and you could say he was born into it. Max not only spent some of his younger years visiting the Nature Center on field trips for environmental education classes, experiencing nature up close and hands-on (sometimes sneaking away exploring nature on his own), he also grew up seeing his grandfather, Theron Patterson, put life back into nature. Starting with his great grandfather, Ed Patterson, today Max is a fourth-generation taxidermist. And with Max's connection to nature and the Nature Center, we are so fortunate to be the recipients of one of Max's beautiful taxidermies.

With Wellesley Island being host to a large white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) population, we are thrilled to welcome Max's full-size, leaping deer taxidermy to our *Masters of Disguise* forest camouflage exhibit. This 6-point buck has traveled many places with Max. In 2001, the deer was part of

an exhibit that he entered in the Duck & Decoy show, helping Max win Best in Show! But this isn't the only taxidermy we have from Max. Complementing our Nature Center you'll also find a raccoon, fox, juvenile Red-Tailed Hawk, Barred Owl, and a Northern Pike (coming soon), all displaying Max's taxidermy skills. We are grateful to



Max Patterson donates prize-winning taxidermy deer

Max, not only for donating his prize-winning deer but for bringing to life the beauty of nature so that children and adults who might never have the opportunity are able to experience the beauty of these animals up close. Thank you!

Darlene Sourwine
Outreach Coordinator

Spring Events



Scan to see the full
calendar of events on
our website

Program size is limited. Preregistration required.
Please call **(315) 482-2479** between the hours of
8:00am—4:00pm, Wednesday through Sunday to
register. *Face covering required.*

APRIL

WOODPECKER WALK

Saturday, April 3 // 10:00—11:00am

From the tiny Downy Woodpecker to the large Pileated Woodpecker, and all sizes in between, Wellesley Island has them all! We'll also listen for drumming and keep an eye out for signs of woodpecker activity such as feeding holes and nesting cavities. BYO binoculars.

NATURE CENTER EXHIBIT TOUR

Saturday, April 10 // 10:00—11:00am

A Nature Center exhibit tour is your portal to the outdoors! Whether you are looking to learn more about our namesake Minna Anthony Common, the wildlife found along the trails, or to simply enjoy an indoor activity – this tour will introduce you to the Nature Center's history and ecology. Nature Center is ADA accessible. All ages welcome.

NATURE DEFENDER DAY

Saturday, April 17 // 9:00am—3:00pm

The Nature Center and WPBS invite you to be a Nature Defender! Complete the missions along our trails to become a Nature Defender and receive your official certificate – presented to you by our special guest, Nature Cat! Bring your hiking shoes, activities spread out along one mile of trails. Superhero costumes encouraged.

TREE PLANTING

Saturday, April 24 // 10:00am—Noon

In celebration of Earth Day, join the Nature Center and Clayton Rotary Club to plant trees! We are excited to help our planet and local environment with this reforestation project. Thank you to the Clayton Rotary Club for generously donating all native trees.

MAY

I LOVE MY PARK DAY

Saturday, May 1 and Sunday, May 2 // 9:00am—Noon

I Love My Park Day—the largest single-day volunteer event in New York—will be celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2021! Join with other volunteers to spruce up the Nature Center for spring. Projects will include gardening, raking, building care, and shoreline cleanup. For more information and to preregister, visit ptny.org/events/i-love-my-park-day

PICNIC HIKE

Saturday, May 8 // 11:00am—1:00pm

Bring a lunch and a good pair of hiking shoes for a fun hike along Eel Bay Trail. Group will stop along the way to eat a socially-distanced lunch overlooking the St. Lawrence River.

PLANTING SEEDS

Saturday, May 15 // 10:00—11:00am

Learn about what seeds need to grow, then plant your own to take home!

EYE SPY HIKE

Saturday, May 22 // 1:30—2:30pm

Remember playing the classic game “I Spy” on long car rides? This fun game can also be played on our trails! We’ll visit different habitats to see how many different things we can spy.

SOUNDS OF WETLANDS

Saturday, May 29 // 1:30—2:30pm

What does a bullfrog sound like? What is that humming sound in the cattails? Join us for a quiet hike to the wetlands around Cottage Trail. While relaxing on our boardwalk, participants will listen and explore the beautiful sounds of the wetlands.

JUNE

TREE GAMES

Saturday, June 5 // 1:30—2:30pm

Take a short walk while playing fun games with the trees in the forest. Please wear long pants and a pair of good hiking shoes.

ALIENS FROM OUTER STATES

Saturday, June 12 // 10:00—11:00am

Take a short hike to learn about the aliens in the area – not aliens in spaceships but *invasive species*! Come learn about the plants and animals that don’t belong in our area and how to help stop the spread. Let’s see how many you can find!

UNDER LOG STUDY

Saturday, June 19 // 1:30—2:30pm

What lives underneath rotting logs and rocks? Find out on this fun observation hike. Participants are encouraged to wear hiking shoes. All ages are welcome.

FREE FISHING DAY

Saturday, July 26

Rod & Reel: 11:00am—1:00pm // Fly Fishing: 1:30—3:30pm

Hook some new fishing skills with expert fisherman Spider Rybaak! Eel Bay on the St. Lawrence River is a prime location to learn the basics of rod-and-reel and fly fishing. Fishing license requirement is waived during this New York state-wide Free Fishing Weekend. BYOT: Bring Your Own Tackle, limited supply available. Program is free thanks to the Barbara & Daniel Butts Enrichment Fund.

THANK YOU to the following 105 members for joining or renewing their commitment recently

Mary McNeill	Syracuse, NY	Matt & Sara Elliott	Fayetteville, NY
Andy Kane	Liverpool, NY	Sue & John Johnson, Jr.	Watertown, NY
Sarah Elliott	Roslindale, MA	Kenneth & Tina VanHatten	Theresa, NY
Harold & Jean Pray	Wellesley Island, NY	Tom & Julie Tinney	Clayton, NY
Gabriela Padewska	Clayton, NY	Helen Brennan	Clayton, NY
Richard & Carolyn Glass	Dunedin, FL	Kate & Bob Laisdell, Jr.	Dexter, NY
Bob & Beth Weldon	Watertown, NY	Roy Moore	Manlius, NY
Ed & Claudia Smith	Oriskany, NY	Ann Ward	Alexandria Bay, NY
Donna Gipperich	Alexandria Bay, NY	Robert Hedden	Wellesley Island, NY
Carolyn Marlowe	Glen Park, NY	Mark Walczyk	Watertown, NY
Elizabeth Fredenburg	Clayton, NY	Caroline Batterson	Sackets Harbor, NY
Joe & Kerry Koen	Hamilton, NY	Jenny Spencer	Watertown, NY
Sue & Ted Mowers	Wellesley Island, NY	Rande Richardson	Watertown, NY
Meredith & Patrick Sullivan	Clayton, NY	Deanne Scanlon	Chaumont, NY
Jane Keenan	Hinsdale, NY	Amy Brillhart	Brooklyn, NY
Mary Jean & Brad Jones	Wellesley Island, NY	Dr. & Mrs. Anthony Ferrari	Fairport, NY
Sue & Harold Johnson	Watertown, NY	Jim & Pauline Little	Alexandria Bay, NY
Rocco & Amy Schiraldi	Wellesley Island, NY	Jack Butts & Dominique Noel	Rome, NY
Darden MacSherry & Molly MacWade	Jackson, MS	Libby Benson & Tim Cummings	Hingham, MA
John Stevens	Emerald Isle, NC	Peter & Laurel Pike	Watertown, NY
Frederick Hager & Leslie Rowland	Wellesley Island, NY	Ronald & Betty Jacobs	Alexandria Bay, NY
Kathleen Morris	Alexandria Bay, NY	Dani Baker & David Belden	Wellesley Island, NY
Francis Doheny	Wayne, PA	Kristina Ronson-Robbins	Watertown, NY
Mark & Marie Greenbaum	Wilmington, DE	Royal & Ann Garlock	Alexandria Bay, NY
Bob & Helene Barnes	E. Syracuse, NY	Bill & Tina Siebels	Gouverneur, NY
Andrew & Susan Gardener	Worthington, OH	Rev. Richard & Ellen Jagger	Hop Bottom, PA
Donna McIntosh & Allen Hewitt	Hagaman, NH	Macar's	Watertown, NY
Martha Smith	Watertown, NY	Tom & Irene Carman	Wellesley Island, NY
John Bober & Leslie Snelling	New Canaan, NY	Steve Baker	Fairfield, CT
Mark & Renee Waterbury	Watertown, NY		

Manfred & Victoria Jerome	Fineview, NY	Addison & Barbara Vars	Wellesley Island, NY
Al & Jane Arras	Manlius, NY	Richard & Eugenie Kavanaugh	Alexandria Bay, NY
Northern New York Community Foundation	Watertown, NY	Jake & Gloria Reilly	Ossining, NY
Robert & Judy Parmiter	Newark, NY	Michael & Jean Kimber	Fayetteville, NY
John & Melinda Comstock	Alexandria Bay, NY	Jo Ann Schwalm & Family	Hobe Sound, FL
Kenneth Sachse	Wellesley Island, NY	Paul & Sandy Garrett	Wellesley Island, NY
Bridget Elliott	Tucker, GA	Michael & Susan Putnam	Alexandria Bay, NY
Norman & David Cushman	Watertown, NY	Larry & Nancy Kuhl	Wellesley Island, NY
Jodi Towne	Mannsville, NY	Jim & Cathy Breuer	Fayetteville, NY
John Tucker	Cape Vincent, NY	Bill & Judy Munro	West Palm Beach, FL
Joseph & Mary Allis Latt	Wellesley Island, NY	Mary Beth Branche	Alexandria Bay, NY
Leslie Tolman	Chesterland, OH	Sandra Geiss	Clayton, NY
Mary Ellen Carroll	Watertown, NY	Barbara Mead	Huntington Stn, NY
Alec Johnson	Watertown, NY	Brian & Kate Brehany	Clayton, NY
Ted Meylor	Westfield, NJ	John & Pat Peach	Clinton, NY
Jeff & Linda Batts	Fernandina Beach, FL	Stan & Barbara Eldridge	Watertown, NY
Jill Bouvier	Elbridge, NY	Skip Behrhorst & Family	Aspen, CO
Marion Huntly	Fineview, NY	Tom & Karen Allen	Fairport, NY
Louise Strayer	Tucson, AZ	Flory Basile	Cicero, NY
Jonathan & Heather White	Watertown, NY	Dan & Maggie Lort	Wellesley Island, NY
Michele McKinney	Watertown, NY	Susan Whitney	Wellesley Island, NY
Benjamin & Peggy Coe	Watertown, NY	Richard & Virginia Edsall	Cape Vincent, NY
Norm & Nancy Pray	N. Syracuse, NY		
Rick & Michele Gefell	Watertown, NY		



Common Currents

MEMBERSHIP MIXERS

May 14 **Lecture**
Friday
MAY 14, 2021
6:00 - 8:00pm

Aug 13 **Kayaking**
Friday
AUGUST 13, 2021
6:00 - 8:00pm

Oct 23 **Luminary Hike**
Saturday
OCTOBER 23, 2021
6:00 - 8:00pm

Please RSVP (315) 482-2479



We're Hiring!**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

The Nature Center and Wellesley Island State Park is hiring for summer seasonal positions! We are looking for individuals interested in environmental education, visitor services, gardening, trail work, and maintenance. Please, spread the word! There are also positions with other State Parks within the Thousand Islands region. To apply, please fill out an [Employment Application \(pdf\)](#) and email to WellesleyIslandStatePark@parks.ny.gov or submit to your nearest [NYS Parks Regional Office](#).

**student
conservation
association**

The Nature Center also has 5-month SCA environmental education internships available! SCA members protect and restore national parks, marine sanctuaries, cultural landmarks, and community green spaces in all 50 states. There are currently two focus areas needed: gardening/outdoor stewardship, and publicity/social media. Visit theSCA.org to learn more or call the Nature Center (315) 482-2479.

Save the DateA poster for the "A Night for Nature" event. The background is a photograph of a lush green field with tall grass and trees under a blue sky with white clouds. A large, fallen log lies in the foreground. The text is overlaid on the image in a white serif font. The event title "A NIGHT FOR NATURE" is in all caps. The date "Thursday, July 8, 2021" and time "6-9pm" are in title case. The phrase "complimentary beer • wine • hors d'oeuvres" is in a mix of bold and regular weight, with "complimentary" in italics. The phrase "live music" is in italics. The closing phrase "We look forward to seeing you!" is in italics. There is a small signature in the bottom right corner of the image.

A NIGHT FOR NATURE
Thursday, July 8, 2021
6-9pm

complimentary
beer • wine • hors d'oeuvres

live music

We look forward to seeing you!



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.

The Friends of the Nature Center, Inc. works in partnership with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS THE FRIENDS OF THE NATURE CENTER, INC.

•

Matthew Elliott, *President*
Stefanie Kring, *Vice President*
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Gabriela Padewska, *Director*
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Darlene Sourwine, *Outreach Coordinator*
Mary Jean Jones, *Bookkeeper*

WELLESLEY ISLAND STATE PARK STAFF

•

Steve Cline, *Park Manager*
Bill Carr, *Assistant Park Manager*

Mark Your Calendars!**Annual Open Meeting***Friday, April 8, 4:00pm*

The Friends of the Nature Center rely on the support of members. Both monetary and volunteer time are integral to the Nature Center's continued success. The entire membership of Friends of the Nature Center, and the general public interested in learning more about the critical role of the Friends of the Nature Center, Inc., are invited to attend our annual open meeting.

I Love My Park Day*Saturday, May 1, 9:00am—noon**Sunday, May 2, 9:00am—noon*

I Love My Park Day—the largest single-day volunteer event in New York—is celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2021! Join with other volunteers to spruce up the

Nature Center for spring. Projects will include gardening, raking, building care, and shoreline cleanup. For more information and to preregister, please visit ptny.org/events/i-love-my-park-day

**Minna Anthony Common Nature Center**

Wellesley Island State Park

44927 Cross Island Road

Fineview, NY 13640

(315) 482-2479

Hours of Operation

Nature Center open Wednesday—Sunday

9:00am—3:00pm (closed noon—1pm)

Closed Mondays & Tuesdays

Trails open sunrise to sunset daily



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the electronic version
of the newsletter