

NEWSLETTER

Winter Issue

DECEMBER 10, 2016



Georgia Madore

Beauty can be found among the smallest and simplest of things. common hair cap moss (Polytrichum Commune) with a dusting of ice, as found regularly on a winter Nature Center trail.

THE SEASON OF CHEER

Minna Anthony Common's article this month takes a lively look at the tradition of decorating with forest greenery. She personifies trees willing to give up their lives "for a fortnight the center of so much gaiety and happiness." She delicately gives the reader an idea of the choices they must make based on the special characteristics (strengths and weaknesses) of the flora before them.

The Friends of the Nature Center have been weighing the benefits and cons of the new "decorations" at the updated Nature Center, as well. After careful deliberation, the board has

concluded that more money is required to properly update the interactive exhibits at the Nature Center. As a result, the board voted last month to increase the Capital Campaign target to \$600,000.

This new project goal will properly place the Nature Center as a "must see" destination for both current and future naturalists. The Friends now begin the process of actively pursuing grant opportunities, foundations, and sponsors. If you are interested in helping, please contact Matthew Elliott, campaign chair, by calling the Center or emailing MACNatureCenter@gmail.com. We are truly excited for the changes to come!

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON SERIES - ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED DECEMBER, 22 1931



CHRISTMAS TREE QUALITIES CITED

NEEDLES OF SPRUCES DO
NOT FALL OFF QUICKLY

BALSAMS HAVE A SPICE ODOR

Hemlocks Have Graceful,
Drooping Branches- Cedars and
Pines Look Bedraggled Beside
Others.

By MRS. JAMES A. COMMON

Christmas green is everywhere; wreaths of holly and ground pine, ropes of laurel, sprays of fir, and miniature groves of Christmas trees at most unexpected places, beautiful thick – foliated young trees, rejoicing that at last they are large enough to be brought to market. What if their first trip must needs also be their last. Surely it is worth giving up one's life to be for a

fortnight the center of so much gaiety and happiness.

Here in the heart of town is a clump of spire-shaped young spruces, every needle clinging closely to its special twig and burnished until it shines. Trim and neat they stand in orderly rows for inspection as if on dress parade. One can easily imagine them looking superciliously at the little group of hemlocks not far away. "We," they seem to be saying, "care for our needles and keep them polished perhaps, "haughtily," perhaps that is why OUR needles do not fall as soon as we are taken in doors."

"Well, we," answer the hemlocks in a soft murmuring whisper "may hold our beauty for (only) a day or two in the warmed room, but our graceful (drooping) branches and long, white needles make up by their (beauty) whatever we lack in end(less) (longevity). We can never be accused of (orderliness) and formality, we are (friendly) and companionable," and glanced pityingly at their spruce cousins.

Then here is a wagon of balsam firs. How spicy they are. The very air about them is (filled) with life-giving ozone. They carry with them the breath of northern forests. They (spread) their plummy branches evenly (in all) directions, each needles standing

out from its twig as if proud to be seen. There is no tree to compare with them and they are conscious of this superiority.

The cedars and pines scattered here and there among the trees look bedraggled and out of place, but they do not feel so dejected. They make a green background and many a happy tableau and branches will cheer up the dark corners.

Some of the trees will go to homes joyous with the laughter of children, but some will bring the old, the sick, the weary a glimpse of the Christmas spirit like the touch of friendly fingers. It will be the lot of some to sit outside in the cold, perhaps beside a doorway, but they must not be down-hearted for interwoven among their branches will be dozens of dazzling lights. How hospitable and gay that doorway will then appear!

From all this display we must choose our special tree. Shall we take the tall erect spruce, the wide-spreading balsam, the graceful hemlock, the long needled pine, or the little cedar? That is a matter of personal opinion, for one and all they are Christmas trees.

- Reprinted with permission from the
Watertown Daily Times.

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

Come Try Our NEW Snow Shoes

Rental Information:

Snowshoes: \$3 to enjoy as much snowshoeing as you like
All snowshoes must be returned to the nature center by 3:45pm. There will be no rentals after 3:00pm.

Please note: We decided not to rent cross country skies this winter as we do not have enough space to store the equipment in the garage. You are more than welcome to bring your own cross country skis and we will continue to groom our trails for both skiing and snowshoeing.

Conditions:

We need a minimum of 7 inches of snow to pack the trails and set tracks. We strongly recommend calling the Nature Center before heading to the island to ski or snowshoe. Weather and snow conditions can be quite different at the park than areas to the south. Wind off the river can increase the wind chill and remove snow from sections of the trails. Please remember to dress appropriately.



Did you know?

Skiing and snowshoeing originated at least 5,000 years ago in northern Europe and Asia. Skis and snowshoes were originally developed to make traveling in deep snow easier. They work by distributing body weight over a larger surface area. This allows skiers or snowshoers to travel over the surface of the snow rather than sinking into it. Come to the Nature Center to try out this ancient mode of transportation.

Have some fun taking in the sights and sounds of winter at the Nature Center!

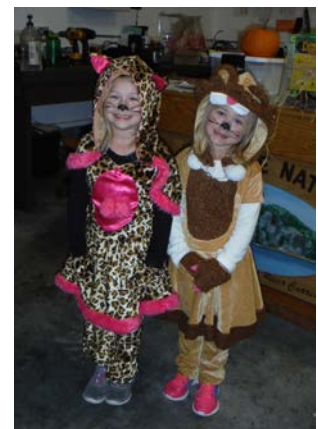
CREATING A TRADITION

The second annual Luminary Hike was a terrific success! It really is shaping up to be a spectacular fall tradition. Almost 100 people came out to witness the beauty of the woods at night; some officially kicked off Halloween by wearing their costumes! We all had so much fun!

We must thank our precious donors and volunteers who spent so much time making and placing the luminaries for the hike.



From left to right: Florian Barrie, Simone Barrie, Jacob Barrie, Nikki, Leaba, Danielle Deaner, and Mariele Lautenschlager pose with Scarecrow before hitting the trails during the Luminary Hike



Ryan and Alivia McGaw break out their costumes for a "purrfect" fall night!

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Our December newsletter marks the end of what I think can most aptly be described as an atypical year here at the Nature Center. As you all know, we completely emptied our building for the start of construction on July 11th and moved into our temporary home, which normally functions as our maintenance garage. We created exhibits that included bulletin boards hung across garage doors. Some of our live animals, such as our chipmunk and unofficial mascot, Scrappers, moved with us into our temporary nature center.



Even with limited space we were able to offer 257 public programs during the Park operating season (May-Columbus Day weekend) that were attended by 8,633 individuals! Throughout the entire calendar year we offered 343 programs (257 public programs from May-October, 40 programs from October-May, and 46 school programs) that were attended by 12,939 people, a record for the Nature Center (-2,000 more people than in 2015).



We are excited and proud to say that our program attendance numbers are steadily increasing. From January 1st - November 29th 29,383 people visited the Nature Center. Patrons who signed our registration book arrived here from 34 states and seven countries (Canada, of course - Provinces of Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia, and Nova Scotia-, Mexico, Romania, Poland Pauraque, South Korea, and Germany). Many more came from just down the road. In the summer you talk to many patrons of Wellesley Island State Park who have made the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center a part of their summer vacations for decades – some have said they have been coming every summer since the Nature Center opened in 1969! It is a joy to see families who have been coming here for multiple generations.

Each year we are invited to attend more off-site events and develop new programs with outside organizations. This summer we were asked to lead new programs at the Hammond Historical Society, the Chippewa Community Club, and the Samaritan Summit Retirement Center.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

Please watch our latest video from Feather in Flight Production showing the construction progress at the Nature Center! Such exciting times!

<http://www.vimeo.com/192549892>

Remember to like us on Facebook for realtime updates and events calendars. Look for “Minna Anthony Common Nature Center - Friends.”



THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

We were involved with a total of 21 offsite programs in 2016 and developed new partnerships with Hawn Memorial Library in Clayton, the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, TI Bridge Authority, the Lost Lady Bug Project, Terrestrial Environmental Specialists, the DEC Education Division, Algonquin to Adirondacks Collaborative, the Nature Conservancy, and SUNY ESF. Many of the programs that resulted from these partnerships were held at the Nature Center. These partnerships allow us to expand our reach and offer more programs than would otherwise be possible with our limited staff.



The changes to the Nature Center necessitated in 2016 and 2017 by

construction have caused us to postpone some annual programs typically held in the winter such as our annual Holiday Bonanza and the March Basket Workshop. We decided we do not have adequate indoor space to accommodate these programs this year. Have no fear! There will be plenty to do here in the cold winter months. We have a moonlight hike and the Annual First Day Hike (if you attend the hike you will get a free fleece hat) in January, and more! We will be renting our new snowshoes in the coming months (my fingers are crossed that we get snow enough this winter to use them) but we decided not to rent cross country skis as we do not have adequate space to store the equipment in the temporary Nature Center. Please check out our upcoming events listed in this newsletter and call the Nature Center if you have questions. We look forward to seeing you here this winter!

- Molly Farrell, Environmental Educator II

THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS JOINED OR RENEWED THEIR COMMITMENT RECENTLY:

Sally Johnson	Buffalo, NY
Windsor and Kay Price	Wellesley Island, NY
Jean Gianfagna	Watertown, NY
Mary Beth Branche	Alexandria Bay, NY
Tom Gamage	Watertown, NY
Jill Bouvier	Eldridge NY
Jennifer Smathers	Farmington, NY
Sue and Harold Johnson	Watertown, NY
Madeline Bennet	Watertown, NY
Brian and Kate Breheny	Clayton, NY
Jean and Mike Kimber	Fayetteville, NY

Thank you for your critical support!

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

Kerry Roberge

President

Barbara Butts

Vice President

Jonathan White

Treasurer

Jane Arras

Secretary

Nancy Boynton

Sue Johnson

Chase Miller

Lynn Morgan

Joseph Leskoske

Heather White

Matthew Elliott

Barb Eldridge

Andrew Kane

Susan Mahoney

Stefanie Kring

Park Employees

Steve Cline

Park Manager

Marvin Mattingly

Assist. Park Manager

Molly Farrell

Nature Center Director

Kimbrie Cullen

Program Coordinator

Friends of the Nature Center Employees

Darlene Sourwine

Volunteer Coordinator

Patty Davis

Bookkeeper

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

38TH ANNUAL AUTUMN FESTIVAL



A little rain wouldn't stop this naturalist fashionista from meeting a new friend!



Ryan Grant deserves a medal for not only singing and entertaining but staying dry as well!



Kathy Leskoske and Betty Ryan take a hard earned and brief respite.

October 10th began with a warm, but steady rain in the morning....clearing in the early afternoon. Over 600 people braved the weather and enjoyed our Festival in a new location. Due to construction at the MAC (Minna Anthony Common) Nature Center, H area was our venue of choice for 2016... the large campsite area just before reaching the Nature Center.

Vendors, visitors, volunteers and state park staff found H area to have numerous advantages. For the first time, everyone could see the entire Festival from any location. Set-up and break-down were so much easier for all involved. The site offered much more flexibility in set-up plans, and most importantly, the area will enable the Festival to expand in the future.

A HUGE thank you is extended to our Nature Center staff as they explored creative ways to prepare for the off-site Festival location. They were extremely well-organized. The NYS Park staff was again a HUGE help in setting up and breaking down all of the tents (a greater number of tents was helpful with the inclement weather). Their assistance with parking was most appreciated.

This year our number of volunteers increased which was helpful for our vendors and for the numerous other Festival activities. This group of people is so dedicated and committed to providing assistance with activities and program for Autumn Festival and throughout the year. Without you, the Nature Center could not offer as many quality programs.

We deeply appreciate everyone who came to participate in our scarecrow gallery production, play games enjoy children's crafts and face-painting, visit our crafters, enjoy the food vendors goodies, listen musicians and so much more. Rick West's "Birds of Prey" and the Stark's sled dogs are always favorite attractions, as well.

The Autumn Festival is the Nature Center's largest fundraiser of the year. This event provides critical monies for high quality programs and for the purchase of supplies throughout the year. New York State has provided us with significant monies for physical improvements and for the expansion of the Nature Center. However, all of the future exhibits will be financed through our Capital Campaign and fundraising events like our annual "Night For Nature" in July.

Your participation in our Autumn Festival was MOST appreciated. Next year's Festival will be **October 8th**...Save the Date!

Come visit the Nature Center throughout the year with your family. Enjoy this beautiful treasure in our own backyard!!

- Lynn Morgan, Volunteer and Board Member

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS AUTUMN FESTIVAL SUPPORTERS!

Wellesley Island: DAK Design & Constructing

Alexandria Bay Businesses: Gouverneur Savings & Loan, Watertown Savings Bank, North Country Seed & Feed, Price Chopper, Big M Market, Jreck Sub, Abay Thrift

Cape Vincent: Cliff James' Pumpkins

Carthage: Caskinettes LoFink Ford

Clayton Businesses: Wheeler Creek Pumpkin Patch, Clayton Shurfine, Jreck Subs

Redwood: Heath Photography

Watertown Businesses: Davidsons Automotive Group, Walter H. Bisnett Inc., Mattress Express, Comfort Inn & Suites, Ramada Inn, Kohls Cares Program, Target, Morrison's Furniture, Car Freshener, Sam's Club, School Daze, Great American, Impossible Dream

LaFargeville: Citizens Bank of Cape Vincent

Sterling: Ontario Orchards

Thank you Ryan Grant and The Fort Drum Band for entertaining throughout the day!



THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Volunteers are like jelly beans - you can't have just one!! We are so fortunate to have many wonderful, ready to work on any task given, volunteers including our committed, weekly volunteers who have faithfully showed up on their chosen day ready to work. They work the reception desk, weed the butterfly house and other gardens, and help with trail maintenance, including repairing foot bridges and many other handyman tasks necessary to keep our Nature Center in tip top shape. These weekly volunteers help enable us to accomplish the "behind the scenes" tasks and many other aspects of the continuing work involved with running the Nature Center. Without these volunteers, our job would be much more difficult.

Our committed weekly volunteers that I would like to recognize are: Mary McNeill, Sue Mahoney, Joe Leskoske, Kathy Leskoske, Betty Ryan, and our new volunteers, Kathy Morris and Kathy May. Kathy May and Kathy Morris both enjoyed working the reception desk while exercising many of their craft skills such as cutting, laminating and painting which helped us prepare for the Autumn Festival. We are so grateful of their commitment to volunteering weekly.

Two people that we would like to welcome who recently joined our volunteer family are Harold Pray and Barbara Hearn. Harold spent the summer enjoying working with Russ Ruttan, our maintenance employee on trail maintenance. Barbara signed up and eagerly went right to work in the herb garden with Kathy Leskoske and worked hard at cutting bags for our luminary hike. She was a big help at the fall clean-up and we even got a two for one deal as Barb volunteered her husband, Glen. Together they tackled the task of cleaning out our rain barrels and garbage cans. Although we still have a need for volunteers during the winter months, because of the extremely high summer/ fall traffic flow, we like to give our weekly volunteers a little break as this time of the year it's quieter and the Holiday season is in full swing. But as we begin the 2017 spring season we will be welcoming back all of our volunteers which is very exciting!!

Again, we want to thank you all for volunteering here at the Nature Center and we welcome our new volunteers. It is our volunteers who truly are the backbone of the Nature Center. We wish you all an awesome holiday season and all your wishes for the New Year fulfilled.

Sincerely,

Darlene Sourwine - Volunteer Coordinator

Get into the nature side of life, become a volunteer!! If you are interested in joining our volunteer team, please contact Darlene Sourwine at (315)-482-2479, any time donated is appreciated!

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

WINTER PROGRAMS 2017

315-482-2479

Audubon Christmas Bird Count

Tuesday, December 20th

All Day

Birders of all skill level are welcome to participate in the annual count of all birds observed in 1000 Islands Region on December 20th. Volunteers are divided into different sections region to record every bird they see or hear during the day. Beginner birders will be paired up with experienced birders. Participating in the Christmas Bird Count is a great way to begin learning your birds as there are fewer species around in the winter than the spring. Since the Christmas Count is held throughout North America, it provides valuable data concerning species numbers and diversity and insight into potential winter range shifts (for example, some birds are overwintering in the 1000 Island that previously migrated south). The 1000 Islands Christmas Bird Count extends from just west of Mallorytown, Ontario to just east of Gananoque and from north of Lansdowne into the US Mainland.

**Contact Josh Van Vieren at
Tel: (613) 923-5261 ext 113
or via email (josh.vieran@pc.gc.ca)
for additional information.**

First Day Hike

Sunday, January 1st

1pm

Start the New Year off right with a guided hike at the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center. Look for tracks and learn about how wildlife adapts to winter conditions while we walk. If weather permits, this hike will be offered on snowshoes. You may bring your own or borrow a pair from the Center. We will hike for no more than 2 miles over easy terrain. Preregistration is required (315-482-2479).



Trail Tales

Saturdays, January 7th and March 18th

10am

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

Guided Moonlight Snowshoe Hike

Thursday, January 12

6:30pm

Explore our winter woods by the light of the full moon! Look and listen for signs of wildlife as we walk, along our trails guided by moonlight. *If weather permits, this program will be offered on snowshoes.* Registration is required. Please call for additional information or to preregister. We encourage you to try walking by moonlight alone, but you can bring a flashlight with a **red** light if desired

Snowshoes may be rented from the Nature Center for \$3.

Indian River Lakes Conservancy Winter Hike

Saturday, January 21st

1 pm

Come explore the winter woods at the Indian River Lakes Conservancy in Redwood. The exact location of the hike is yet to be determined. Please contact the Indian River Lakes Conservancy (indianriverlakes@gmail.com) for additional information. This hike will be led on snowshoes if there is sufficient snow.

Guided Winter Weekend Walking Explorations

Saturday, January 28 and March 4th

1pm

The winter months provide some of the best opportunities for viewing wildlife along our trails. Come brave the cold and the wind on a Saturday in January or March and learn about animal tracks, plant and animal adaptations to winter, winter tree identification, and more. This program will be offered on snowshoes when weather permits. Snowshoe rentals are available for \$3.

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

WINTER PROGRAMS 2017

315-482-2479

Super Science Saturday at Jefferson Community College

Saturday, February 4th

10am-3pm

Come join the Nature Center and other local organizations for a day of family friendly fun at Jefferson Community College! We will have crafts, animal artifacts, and other fun activities!

Save the River Winter Conference

Saturday, February 4th

Join the Nature Center at Save The River's Winter Environmental Conference! The conference is one of the ways we bring important information to the large and diverse River community. It is a regionally significant and well-attended event that has been held annually for over 25 years. Contact Save the River at 315-686-2010 for additional information or to register for the conference.



Winter Break Activities

The Wonderful Wildlife Show

Tuesday, February 21st, 1pm

Come learn about wildlife adaptations that help animals survive the hard winter months at this interactive fur talk.

Winter Exploration Snow Shoe Hike

Wednesday, February 22nd, 1pm

Ever wonder who made those tracks you walked passed in the woods? Come learn about the animals that are active at the Nature Center during the winter months and

more during our Winter Exploration Snow Shoe Hike. This hike is open to both children and adults. Distance traveled may vary depending on the abilities of participants.

Snowshoes may be rented from the Nature Center for \$3.

Trail Tales

Thursday, February 23rd, 10am

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

Try Your Hand at Snowshoeing During Our Free Snowshoe Day!

Saturday, February 25th

Snowshoe lesson to begin at 1pm

*Whether you are an expert or novice, this is the day to take advantage of our snowshoe rentals at no cost!

Continuous Programs

Natural Birthday Parties at the Nature Center

Make this a 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

How do I schedule a program?

If you are interested in scheduling a program for your classroom or organization please call the Nature Center and we will be happy to develop a program that will suit your needs.



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 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!

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)

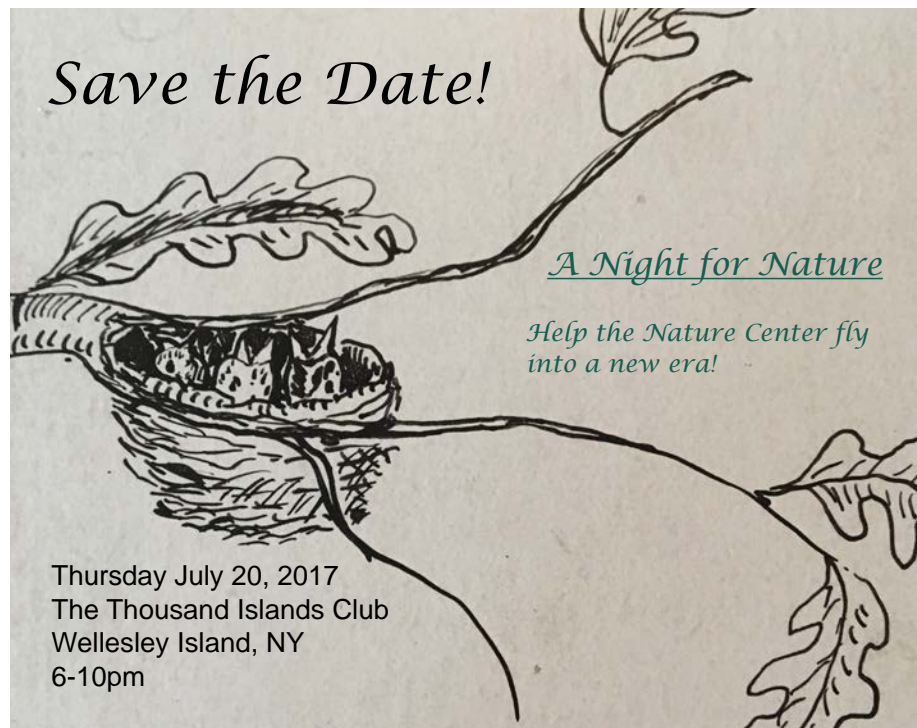
☐ Oak (\$150)

☐ 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



MY
NATURE
CENTER

Goal: \$600,000

Raised: \$43,617

The capital campaign is under way...

Please consider our naming opportunity for a holiday gift!

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



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**