

NEWSLETTER

Fall Issue

OCTOBER 4, 2019



GROW IN THE OPEN AIR

Is there anything more glorious than a hard earned view? The struggle to make it through thick underbrush, down ravines, and up steep hills only to have the benefit of looking at something few others have been lucky to witness. Minna's article this month taps into this feeling as she recounts the swamp in the fall.

As always, Minna appreciates the beauty in the often overlooked - the magnificence in the small scale wonders. The swamp, too dense to walk through in August, is now open to exploring as the vegetation recedes and fall takes root. Such joy in rediscovering!

Our 41st Autumn Festival will be back at the Nature Center this year with more vendors and opportunities to celebrate the changing seasons. Come drink cider made by hand from an apple press, meet a new friend at the petting zoo, or compete in the intensely competitive scarecrow building contest.

Our fall season is shaping up to be one of the best at the Nature Center! We have excited and knowledgeable staff to assist you in your your pursuit of nature. Please come explore the beauty and wonder of fall in the Thousand Islands - maybe you'll find a hard earned, overlooked corner of the woods, too. See you on the trails soon!

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON SERIES - ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED FALL 1931



The Swamp in Fall

by Minna Anthony Common

All summer the swamp has concealed its treasures and defied all who would enter. There was not water enough to float a canoe, but enough to make the ground boggy and walking impossible. How luxuriantly the plants grew here with their roots in water and their leaves getting every ray of sun from morning until night!

All summer the swamp has flaunted its gay-colored flowers where none could go, but now the hot dry weather and the dazzling sun of August working together have made it possible to walk through. True, there are

numerous small pools that must be avoided, and spongy places to be jumped over, but for the most part dead grasses and sedges made a dry carpet. The lush plants meet high above overhead. Everywhere is variety, color, beauty.

Here the broad-leaved cattail rush grows, the kind used by the early settlers to make their rush-bottomed chair seats. Single plants often measure four or five inches through at the butt and they seldom grow less than a yard apart. The narrow-leaved cattail grows always in such dense close-packed masses that little else can fend any foothold near them. However, between the broad-leaved kind are many and varied swamp loving plants. Many are gaily colored as if late summer must flaunt herself a bit in the face of on-coming autumn. Quantities of our marygolds make masses of yellow, stately plants of polygonum hold high their spreading tops and hang out tassels of pink velvet all along their branches. Swamp grasses wave plumes of silvery brown on ten foot stalks. Russet brown cattail heads and the darker brown bulrushes furnish the needed contrast. There are even frail and delicate plants, the kinds that grow in the shady area near the ground, and their blooms are as dainty in coloring as any wild woods bloom of spring time. Marsh skull cap and monkey flowers are both sky blue while bedstraw has airy tiny blooms like garden gypsophelia. Wild buck, wheat vines, dodder, bindweed trail over everything and tangle our feet. Hercules club prods us with its fierce sharp akenes arranged to extend in all directions at once from the ball shaped seed body. It is an art to walk through a swamp.

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON SERIES (CONTINUED)

As one struggles along constantly into a worse mess, it is provoking to see a big clumsy turtle slip easily between the dense growth and disappear from our view. Except for a few late butterflies there seems to be little wildlife about, but we found the abandoned nest of a marsh wren family. It had been placed about two feet from the ground, fastened securely to a bunch of plant stalks, was neatly woven of grasses and was about the size of a croquet ball. It looked

perfectly round, was completely roofed over and the entrance was a tiny round hole in one side. It felt quite firm to the touch and in every way was a marvelous bit of architecture.

At last we emerged with arms of treasure—laden, faces flushed, clothes awry, but with a feeling of accomplishment, for we had at last conquered the swamp that had defied us all summer and had pushed our way through to its very heart.



FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

Plan 2014 was initiated after years of study to improve wetland conditions in the upper St. Lawrence River. Unfortunately, record precipitation hit two of the last three years coinciding with the new plan.

Please consider this excellent article from August about the reason for the high water levels in 2019.

<https://eos.org/articles/what-caused-the-ongoing-flooding-on-lake-ontario>



THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

FROM THE DIRECTOR

It's been over two months since I've started at the Nature Center – what an adventure it's already been! I arrived at the tail end of July. The summer season had me describing Wellesley Island as a “biodiverse paradise” to my friends and family. I got to experience most of what Wellesley Island State Park has to offer – I even rented a campsite for a week!

On August 14th, we celebrated our 50TH Anniversary. I am so grateful to have attended the semi-centennial milestone of the MAC Nature Center with so many of you! Almost a thousand people turned out to celebrate with us on that beautiful, sunny day. Among many highlights, the day served as the book-launch for *Blazing a Trail: The Story of Minna Anthony Common* by Becky Ferrigno. This is the first book published about Minna Anthony Common. Minna's appeal is timeless, and this amazing children's storybook will introduce a new generation of nature lovers to the pioneering spirit and environmental heroism of Minna Anthony Common.

I am moved by the legacy of our heroine. I keep a running list of environmental heroes – John Muir, David Attenborough, Elizabeth Titus-Putnam among others – individuals leading courageous lives inspiring people to love and steward the natural world. At the nucleus of our Nature Center, located on the desk of our Minna exhibit, sits an antique

leather sign that reads: “It Can Be Done.” I resonate with our heroine's passion and tenacity. Yes, Minna quickly earned a place on top of my list. Minna is felt in these woodland trails, these Nature Center exhibits, and in the river winds that sweep over the entirety of Wellesley Island. I imagine her as a figurative *Grandmother Willow*, her legacy acting as a compass guiding us toward her vision of ecological consciousness and environmental conservation.

As environmental educators our mission is to connect people to the outdoors and inspire stewardship of our natural world. My life work is promoting ecological compassion and biophilia through heart-centered, inquiry-based learning in the outdoors. Prior to starting in this role, I read *A Life at Work: The Joy of Discovering what You Were Born to Do* by Thomas Moore. Moore states that a workplace “can be merely pragmatic and efficient, or it can embody spiritual values like beauty, community, friendship, craft, generosity, and hospitality.” In addition to being a premier environmental education facility in New York State, I can confidently say that the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center also embodies these deeper ideals.

I am honored to serve as Director of a Nature Center under the inspiring namesake of Minna Anthony Common. I feel very blessed to work here. Thank you all – Nature Center staff, State Park staff, the Friends of the Nature Center, volunteers, and patrons – for making me feel welcome. I look forward to working side-by-side with you. Let's continue to make the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center an extraordinary community resource, together! Cheers to another fifty years for MAC Nature Center!

Warmly,



Gabriela Padewska



New Nature Center Director, Gabriella Padewska with coworkers Sara Chapa (left) and Kim Cullen (right) at the Nature Center's 50th Anniversary Celebration.

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

SECOND ANNUAL ART FOR NATURE

Despite the cool, rainy weather, we had a wonderful turnout and a wonderful time at Cross Island Farms in June. Hosted by Dani Baker (seen below right with artist Jan Byington) the event brought local businesses and patrons together to enjoy nature and art.

Plein air artists painted throughout the day at various sites on Wellesley Island and were visited by the general public. Students, who at the Nature Center on a field trip, especially loved watching them work. The evening included music by Rajah, wine by Cape Vincent Winery, and food provided by the Wellesley Hotel and the Guzzle. A great time was had by all!

We must thank our generous sponsors, volunteers, musicians and artists for making the day so special.



THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

A NIGHT FOR NATURE

Thank you wonderful Friends and sponsors for another terrific Night for Nature! The music was magnificent, the conversations engaging, and the dancing was infectious.

Not only was it a fun evening, but also critical to our mission. This year, we raised over \$26k! Our most successful event yet! Much of this funding supports our annual operating budget, and some of it will fulfill our commitment to the Ken Deedy Environmental Internship Fund; our partnership with Thousand Island Land Trust and Save the River.

We truly appreciate your support of environmental education!



THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

A NIGHT FOR NATURE



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THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

As the saying goes “it takes one to know one” – Darlene Sourwine, the Volunteer Coordinator at the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center, lives to give back to the community. She works tirelessly to make sure our volunteers feel appreciated for all the work they do with Nature Center! Darlene will pick up the phone, send hand-written thank you notes, and greet volunteers with a big hug. Her warmth and empathy are felt by all those she encounters. We are so grateful for her service and hard work!

Our coworker, Sara Chapa, was so taken by Darlene’s devoted service that she sought out a way to recognize her. Sara’s nomination sparked the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation to present Darlene with a Special Award in recognition of her dedication. An excerpt from Sara’s recognition piece, entitled “A Heart for Nature,” is below.



Darlene Sourwine (right) with volunteer Cathy Cullen

A Heart for Nature

The Minna Anthony Common Nature Center holds a variety of events throughout the year. Amazing volunteers donate their time helping our Nature Center. Darlene Sourwine is the Volunteer Coordinator with the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center. She spends her busy days working hard to keep these wonderful volunteers returning. Mrs. Sourwine came to work here in 2013 and has not stopped devoting so much of her time for our amazing Nature Center.

After all, we appreciate all our volunteers who go above and beyond for the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center. Without the hard work and dedication of Mrs. Sourwine, we would not be fortunate to have these wonderful volunteers returning every year. Mrs. Sourwine always devotes her time to making the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center the greatest experience anyone can have while on their nature adventure.

In addition, Darlene went above and beyond, contacting NY State Senator Patty Ritchie, to achieve our goal of funding the re-design and renovation of our Nature Center. The new exhibits are now more interactive and educational for children. Darlene deserves to have this recognition for all her love she puts into this beautiful place.

Few people have the heartfelt emotional motivation to reach out and help create a better Nature Center. Darlene strives to keep our Nature Center the best in upstate New York. Without her deepest devoted affection, the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center would not be the best Nature Center that it is today. Minna Anthony Common would be more than proud of Darlene Sourwine for carrying on her goal of educating, protecting and preserving our natural world. Darlene is an amazing person with ***A Heart for Nature.***

- Sara Chapa is a NYS Parks employee at the Nature Center. She can often be found greeting people with a smile at the front desk.

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

CONNECTING KIDS WITH NATURE

On Thursday, September 12th, friends and family gathered at the Pavilion at Wellesley Island State Park to celebrate the establishment of the Kenneth Deedy Environmental Internship Fund. Attendees reminisced about Ken Deedy and his passion for the Thousand Islands region, and came together as a community in support of this exciting endeavor.

In honor of Ken, the Thousand Islands Land Trust, Save The River and Minna Anthony Common Nature Center have established the Kenneth Deedy Environmental Internship Fund. As a true endowment, this fund, inspired through his vision, will be used to hire a high school/college student for a summer long internship. Each year, the selected student will have a once-in-a-life opportunity to work for all three organizations, immersing them into the fields of land conservation and stewardship, environmental education, and environmental advocacy.

“The Kenneth Deedy Environmental Internship is an environmentally focused program like no other. We believe it will have a positive impact on our region and future environmental stewards of this place we all so deeply love” commented Terra Bach, TILT’s Director of Development and Communications.

Before his passing, Ken made the initial gift to establish the Kenneth Deedy Environmental Internship Fund and thanks to the generosity of many supporters and a \$50,000 grant made by the Northern New York Community Foundation (NNYCF) nearly \$158,500 has now been raised. If you would like to contribute, gifts may be made in Ken’s honor to the Thousand Islands Land Trust, Save The River, or Minna Anthony Common Nature Center and will be directed to the Fund which is held at the Northern New York Community Foundation.



Staff, board members, and volunteers from Thousand Islands Land Trust, Save The River, and Minna Anthony Common Nature Center celebrate the establishment of the Kenneth Deedy Environmental Internship Fund. Front row (l to r): Spencer Busler, Brandon Hollis, Bridget Wright, Kendall Hathaway, John Peach, Matthew Elliott, Andy Kane, Jake Tibbles, Gaby Paderwska, Kate Breheny; second row (l to r): Terra Bach, Margaret Hummel, Patricia Shulenburg, Anna Kellner, Darlene Sourwine, Lauren Eggleston, and Max Koch

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

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

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Kimbrie Cullen

Program Coordinator

Friends of the Nature Center Employees

Darlene Sourwine

Volunteer Coordinator

Mary Jean Jones

THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS JOINED OR RENEWED THEIR COMMITMENT RECENTLY:

John Tucker

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Goldacker

Amy Brillhart

Ken White

Stewart & Jean Kerr

Richard Casali

Daniel & Lauran Throop

Kathleen Hummel

Joan Trimble Jordan

Angela, Scott & Nicoleena Storer

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Wellesley Island, NY

Rochester, NY

East Burke, VT

Chaumont, NY

Syracuse, NY

Huntington Station, NY

Fayetteville, NY

Clayton, NY



- **Renew your membership at the Oak or Hickory level to receive your hand-painted hand-thrown plate**
 - **Oak and Hickory members may purchase additional plates (for gifting) for \$75**

- This opportunity ends December 2019!

Cecilia Madore

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

CALENDAR OF EVENTS & PUBLIC PROGRAMS

CALL 315-482-2479 TO PREREGISTER

OCTOBER

DIY Grocery Bag Mat

Saturday, October 19th // 9:00 am

Repurpose plastic grocery bags with Anna. Braid your own gardening knee pad, camping mat, sit upon, or outdoor rug – for free! Ages 13+. Pre-registration is required. Please call (315) 482-2479 to pre-register.

Backyard Explorers: Fascinating Fall

Sunday, October 20th // 1:00 pm

Ever wonder why leaves change colors? Join two Junior Naturalists, Cecelia and Levi, on an exploration of autumn. The sibling duo will lead a short hike through our colorful forest in search of fascinating fall findings, then return to the Nature Center for a craft.

Nature Journals

Saturday, October, 26th // 1:00 pm

Spark your creativity in the outdoors by learning to use a nature journal! Create a record of your observations as we discover the trails in a new way.

NOVEMBER

Photography Workshop

Saturday, November 2nd // 10:00 am

Join Max on a slower-paced hike to find beauty in nooks and crannies along our trails. Take part to learn about field techniques for nature photography. Participants should bring their own cameras. Ages 13–Adult.

Leave No Trace Awareness Workshop

Saturday, November 9th // 9:00am–Noon

Learn and practice the *Seven Principles* of Leave No Trace, developed by the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics. These best practices in outdoor recreation will inform your next adventure. Free and open to all.

Shipwrecks of the Upper St. Lawrence

Sunday, November 17th // 1:00 pm

Hundreds of shipwrecks lie on the floor of the St. Lawrence River. Don't you want to know how they got there? or who was on them? or how to visit them? Join Anna as she geeks out about the incredible and diverse history of ships on the river.

Trails and Puppy Dog Tails

Saturday, November 23rd // 10:00 am

Join naturalist Kim Cullen and her four legged friend, Finnegan, on a fun furry hike. All dogs and dog lovers are welcome to come. Dogs must be on a leash, be able to walk with other dogs and people, and have proof of rabies vaccination.

Opt Outside Hike

Friday, November 29th // 9:00 am

Opt to spend this Black Friday in nature! Join us for our signature 3.5-mile hike along the scenic Wellesley Island waterfront. Trails consist of uneven terrain, and slight elevation changes. We recommend wearing comfortable footwear, and packing water. Beginner hikers welcome!

DECEMBER

Little Hands, Wild!

Thursday, December 5th // 10:30 am

Let's put on our winter gear and head outside for some fun! We will be exploring snow, ice, frost, and anything that inspires use to take a closer look. Please come prepared for hands-on learning. This nature play experience takes place outdoors in all types of weather. Ages 0–Pre-K with caregiver.

Friendly Crow (AKA Feeding The Birds)

Saturday, December 7th // 1:00 pm

Every winter our Nature Center builds a bird feeding station to help the wintering bird population. Why do we call this experience “Friendly Crow?” A friendly crow (you) learns to feed nearby birds! Our feathered friends may even land on your hand! All ages are welcome, please bring winter gearing including snow pants and a winter hat.

Fire Up Winter

Saturday, December 21st // 1:00 pm

Join us around our fireplace in celebration of the first day of winter! Cozy up with a cup of hot cocoa, stories, and games.

Care of Magical Creatures

Saturday, December 28th // 10:00 am

Our creatures have been petrified! Help us find them all in this Harry Potter inspired scavenger hunt.

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Spider's Free Sport- fishing Clinic

Saturday, October 5th

11:00am-1:00pm Basic Fishing Skills

1:30-3:30pm Basics of Fly Fishing

BYOT (Bring Your Own Tackle), limited supply available. No freshwater fishing license required for this event. Meet down at the Nature Center dock. This program is supported by the Barbara and Daniel Butts Enrichment Fund.



41st Annual Autumn Festival

Saturday, October 12th

10:00am-4:00pm

Join us at the Nature Center for this family-friendly fall day! Come enjoy Westy's Live Birds of Prey, Jefferson County Sheriff's K-9 Unit, scarecrow building contest, pumpkin painting, demonstrating craftsman, pony rides, petting zoo, 50/50 raffle, nature-themed carnival games, craft & food vendors, live music, and more!

Admission: Children (12 & under): \$1 or free with non-perishable food donation; Adults \$3; Military & Seniors \$2

Holiday Bonanza

Saturday, December 14th

10:00-3:30pm

We invite you, and your family, to come spend the day at our winter market! Enjoy live music, holiday crafts, local artisans, raffles, and food vendors including homemade baked goods and Driftwood BBQ. It's a great way to kick off the holiday season!



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:
Nature Center 8am-4pm
Trails open sunrise to sunset



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**