

# NEWSLETTER

Winter Issue

DECEMBER 15, 2018



## CELEBRATING A HALF CENTURY

August 14th, 1969 the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center was dedicated in honor of an intelligent, passionate, trailblazing naturalist. Minna, a person who lived with and loved nature and the River, not only protected the habitat around her, but taught others to love and to appreciate it, as well. Our founders chose to honor her unrelenting, positive spirit, and were committed to carrying on her mission of understanding, conserving, and educating.

For 50 years, the Nature Center has provided high quality nature education to thousands of school children, families, and campers. The recent partnership between the NYS Office of Parks,

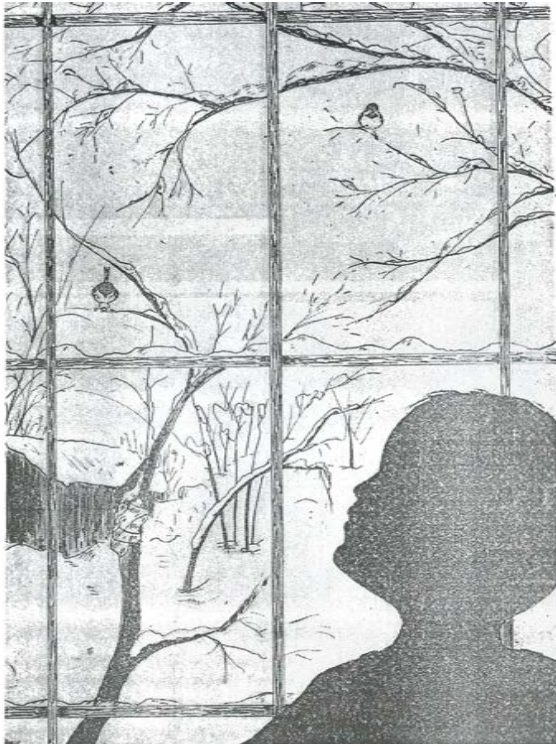
Recreation, and Historic Places and the Friends of the Nature Center to renovate and to rehabilitate the Nature Center is a terrific example in today's world of the power of individuals coming together for a common cause.

Although the Nature Center didn't officially re-open until June, over 36,000 people visited the Nature Center in 2018... up ten thousand visitors from the previous year! We led over 350 educational programs, and over 40 school field trips. Your support is working; thank you!

Now, with a state-of-the-art Nature Center, a dedicated staff, and a growing membership we are better served to continue Minna's mission than ever before - we hope she would be proud.

# THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON SERIES - ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED JANUARY 22, 1949



## Chickadees and Nuthatches Add Cheer

By Mrs. James A. Common

Chickadee and Nuthatch  
"Piped a tiny voice nearby,  
Gay and polite, a cheerful cry –  
Chick chick a dee-dee! Saucy note  
Out of a sound heart and merry throat  
As if it said, "Good day, good Sir!  
Fine afternoon, old passenger!  
Happy to meet you in these places  
Where January brings few faces."  
-Emerson

When snow has fallen on top of snow covering deeply the brambles, thistles, and nettles of summer swamp lands, and there comes along a bright sunny day, we strap on our snowshoes feeling like conquerors and traverse the smooth carpet of white over places impassable at any other season.

A short distance from the city is a cedar swamp snuggled in a valley between a hill and

an expanse of marsh dense with shrub growth. It is a lonely spot far from the road and can be visited in winter only with snowshoes or skis, and not at all in summer. There is ever the feeling of life in the deep silence of a winter swamp, a rustling of evergreen boughs, soft thuds of snow sliding from off overladen branches and the gay inquiry of chickadees! Rollicking through the woods they come, closer all the time, propelled by insatiable curiosity. Soon a bevy of them appear in a cedar close at hand, look us over with beady black eyes and seem to be discussing our presence with each other. Satisfied, off they go, their notes coming to our ears from far up the swamp. We always think of this bit of wild land as the home of the chickadees.

Our chickadee has three songs and there is no resemblance between them. He says his name clearly in a low tenor, "Chick-a-dee-dee," one of the deepest pitches of birdsongs. In February he begins to whistle his mating call "Phee-bee," a two note sound easily imitated. Then there is the questioning tinkle, a conversational monologue as though the bird was talking to you.

Each of the winter birds has certain special likes in foods. Sunflower seeds are the specialty of the chickadee. He will eat also dried pumpkin and squash seeds and peck some of the suet which is tied to a branch ready for the woodpeckers. If he finds no seeds at hand he will call, but if you fail him a single day you will probably lose your chickadee boarder for that winter. His quest is food and he remains only where it is plentiful.

Now the chickadee has a chum, a bird a little larger, of much the same coloring, but triangular shaped rather than circular. The chickadees and the nuthatches hunt together all winter, probably because their food tastes are similar. The bill of the nuthatch is very strong. With it he can crack open hard-shelled nuts. Acorns and beech nuts are his favorite



# THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

## THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON SERIES (CONTINUED)

food in the woods, but he soon learns to enjoy squash, peanuts, and sunflower seeds from the sill.

Although hatching a nut must take almost as much strength as a woodpecker uses when pecking into a tree trunk for borers, the nuthatch does not brace himself with his tail as a woodpecker does. In fact he is just as likely as not to be standing head downward above his food as to be whacking at it from below. A nuthatch runs up and down and around tree trunks with the utter unconcern of a fly on an apple, head up, head down, it is all the same to him.

The chickadee eats his sunflower seen in a

very different way. He will take a seed in his bill, fly to a handy twig, place the seed beneath his toes and whack off the outside covering. The without dropping the seed, he will face the other direction and whack off the rest of the covering. He then eats the kernel and then comes back quickly for another. Usually six to eight seeds suffice him for a meal; he never stores any as the nuthatch does. He does not mind being watched, and he will take food as readily from an outstretched hand as from the sill. To have a wild bird drop onto your hand and pick a seed from it is an unforgettable experience. No other thrill is just like it!

*Reprinted with permission from the Watertown Daily Times.*



Andrew Kane

*A Chickadee rests on a branch during a chili January day.*



Kimberly Cullen

*A nuthatch stops at a Nature Center feeder.*

### FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

BirdNote is a fantastic program aired on public radio stations across the country. They use film and sounds from the acclaimed Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Enjoy this short video on Chickadee calls and consider this website for more birding information.

<https://www.birdnote.org/video/2012/04/song-and-calls-black-capped-chickadee>

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



Andrew Kane

# THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

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## FROM THE DIRECTOR

Exposure to Nature and the chance to play outside is so important for our mental and physical health, regardless of age. In our society, people so often become isolated from one another and the outdoors; that isolation is to our detriment. At the Nature Center, we strive to bring people together and get them outside by offering interdisciplinary programs designed to reach people of different ages, abilities, and interests. Maybe you will come to learn how to take better photographs or to listen to one of our Clarkson seminars. Perhaps you'll join us for a campfire or a North Field Loop Trek. Whatever your interests, you will likely find a program that suits you at some point throughout the year.

Teaching someone to value nature, engage in outdoor recreation, and become a better steward of the world outside their front door, is our mission at MAC Nature Center. If you come to the Nature Center and learn to love hiking, birding, canoeing or just sit on a rock and really listen to your surroundings. That love might encourage you to protect and conserve resources closer to home that may seem less pristine. Maybe you will fight to save the wooded lot behind your house from development or spend a Saturday in spring picking up trash along your street. Helping to awaken a sense of wonder and awe for the environment around us is why working at the Nature Center is one of the best jobs one can have.

So, this winter when you begin to suffer from cabin fever, come out to the Nature Center. We'll welcome you inside and chat a while before sending you out on a favorite trail. Ring in the New Year by joining us for our First Day Hike. Learn how your senses adjust to the dark by heading on a moonlight hike in January, February, or March.

Otherwise, this winter, in order to better accommodate our guests, we have created new winter programming on Saturdays at 10am (the type of program offered will vary so call in advance for additional information). Or perhaps, you would rather try your hand at making a pack basket at our annual pack basket workshop in March; Kim Cullen and her mother Sue Chapman are expert weavers! They will keep you well entertained and send you home with a beautiful basket you made yourself.

If you go outside and start exploring, you will never be disappointed. There will always be something that will surprise you and new things to see and hear. So grab a friend this winter, go outside and use all your senses to explore the wonders of the natural world that is just waiting for us to come and enjoy it!

- Molly Farrell, Environmental Educator II



# THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Friends of the Nature Center are joining an exciting partnership with Save the River and TILT, allowing these river stewards to share their expertise with the Girl Scouts. The program at the Nature Center will allow Girl Scouts to have authentic environmental experiences as they work to earn merit badges. This year's goal is the Habitats badge. TILT leaders will present about being a good land Steward; Save the River will lead a shoreline clean up; and the Nature Center will host a hike. Once again, we are proud to partner with such wonderful organizations, all coming together to serve the community.

- Heather White, Education Committee Chair



## THANK YOU NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERS:

Linda McCullough	Dexter, NY
Dawn Rusho	Clayton, NY
Louise Strayer	Tuscon, AZ
Leslie and Rick Tolmen	Chesterland, OH
Dorian Bembenista	Orchard Park, NY
Margaret and Al Crenshaw	Washington, DC
Kerry Roberge	Wellesley Island, NY
Vickie Schneider	Caledonia, NY
Sarah Elliott	Roslindale, MA
Mary Langan	Fayetteville, NY
Allan Newell	Hammond, NY
Allison Stevens	Portland, ME
Diane Heath	Wellesley Island, NY
Jill Bouvier	Elbridge, NY
Bess and Peter Carl	Manlius, NY
Thomas and Leah Neely	Redwood, NY
Mary Allis Latt	Salem, SC
Audrey Tripp	Hartsville, SC
Mary Allis Latt	Salem, CT
Mark Walcyk	Watertown, NY
Brad & Mary Jean Jones	Wellesley Island, NY
Steve Pullinger	Palmyra, VA
Brian and Kate Breheny	Clayton, NY
Stan and Barbara Eldridge	Watertown, NY
Susan and Harold Johnson	Watertown, NY

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

Matthew Elliott

*President*

Barb Eldridge

*Vice President*

Andrew Kane

*Treasurer*

Joe Leskoske

*Secretary*

Sue Johnson

Chase Miller

Heather White

Jonathan White

Stefanie Kring

Susan Mowers

JR Miller

Jeff Weldon

Jeff Hanna

Taylor Robbins

### **Park Employees**

Steve Cline

*Park Manager*

Josh Dunlap

*Assist. Park Manager*

Molly Farrell

*Nature Center Director*

Kimberly Cullen

*Program Coordinator*

### **Friends of the Nature Center Employees**

Darlene Sourwine

*Volunteer Coordinator*

Mary Jean Jones

*Bookkeeper*



# THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER



## 40TH ANNUAL AUTUMN FESTIVAL

October 6<sup>th</sup> began with a steady rain in the morning....and persisted throughout the day. Over 700 people participated in this year's Autumn Fest despite the cold, wet weather.

A HUGE thank you is extended to our Nature Center volunteers - this event would not be possible without you! It must be noted, they were extremely well-organized thanks to our dedicated staff. As always, the Wellesley Island State 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) and their assistance with parking was most appreciated.

Thank you 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 to musicians and so much more.

The Autumn Festival provides critical monies for high quality programs and for the purchase of supplies throughout the year. Please take notice of the generous businesses that sponsor Autumn Fest and support them!

Next year's Festival will be Saturday, **October 12<sup>th</sup>**...Save the Date!

- Lynn Morgan, Volunteer





# THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

## IT TAKES A VILLAGE!

Autumn Festival obviously celebrates nature and the Fall, but it also celebrates community. The Nature Center and our environmental programming depends upon the kindness and benefaction of the River community.

Please take note of our sponsors who helped support this years Autumn Festival!

**D.A.K. Design & Constructing**  
**Mike Simpson – The Clipper Inn**  
**Sam's Club – Watertown**  
**Griff's Beverage Center – Watertown**  
**Comfort Inn & Suites – Watertown**  
**Heath Photography – Redwood**  
**Arsenal Wine & Liquor – Watertown**  
**Kinney Drug – Alexandria Bay**  
**North Country Seed & Feed – Alex Bay**  
**Walter H. Bisnett Corp. – Watertown**  
**Watertown Savings Bank – Watertown**  
**AmeriCU Credit Union – Watertown**  
**Price Chopper – Alexandria Bay**  
**Citizens Bank of Cape Vincent -**  
**LaFargeville/ Cape Vincent**  
**Gouverneur savings & Loan Assc.,**  
**Caskinette Ford – Carthage**  
**Clayton Shurfine Supermarket**  
**Great American – Watertown**  
**92.5/104.5**  
**Impossible Dream**

We appreciate your generosity!

**Thank you!**





# THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

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*Kimberly Cullen*

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

We are very fortunate to have so many wonderful volunteers. It's obvious they take pride in each task they perform for the Nature Center and it helps out so much. Our Autumn Festival is an annual event that is almost completely volunteer dependent! It's a day when everyone comes together to make a family-focused, fun and successful day. We would like to thank all the volunteers who, once again donated their time for this event; we couldn't do it without you!

I would also like to include a "thank you" to all our volunteers who give their time and donate their skills to the Nature Center both year around and seasonally. Whether you are a baker, gardener, program assistant, receptionist, store clerk, maintenance, or any other skill donated....I am grateful to all of you!

If you would like to join our Nature Center volunteer team, whether it's for an hour or an entire day, daily, weekly or even monthly - any time donated is greatly appreciated. Please give me a call, so we can fit our variety of tasks with your skills and talents.

- 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!



## Critter Kids- Oh Christmas Tree!

Finding the perfect Christmas tree is always a fun tradition!



Whether you buy one at a store or cut one yourself, it is always important to pick the best tree.



Take a look at your tree at home!

What kind of tree do you have?

Red Cedar



Hemlock



White Cedar



Blue Spruce



Douglas Fir



Red Pine



White Pine



Did you know ...

Christmas trees are called conifers. Conifers are also known as evergreens. They are named evergreens because they stay green all year.

Keep this page and use it the next time you explore the woods. Even use it this summer!

Ready, set, **EXPLORE!**

Written by, Kimbrie Cullen

# THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

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WINTER PROGRAMS 2018

315-482-2479

## **First Day Hike**

*Tuesday, 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 rent a pair from the Center. A free giveaway from NYS Parks will be given out while supplies last! We will hike for no more than 2 miles over easy terrain.

Call to Preregister

## **Super Science Saturday at Jefferson Community College**

*Saturday, February 2nd  
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 2nd  
10am-4pm*

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.

## **March Pack Basket Class**

*Saturday, March 30th  
9am*

Learn to weave a traditional pack basket from start to finish. The cost of the program includes all materials. Each participant will leave with a completed basket. Participants are encouraged to bring a bag lunch. Preregistration is required by calling the Nature Center at 315-482-2479.

\$65 for members, \$75 for non-members

## **Saturday Adventures**

*Saturday, January 5- Saturday, April 20th  
10am*

Every Saturday this winter when we do not have another program scheduled, we will be holding a 10am program. The program type and theme will vary. Programs will include: guided hikes, Trail Tales (story time), and crafts. Call ahead to find out what we have planned each week and join us for a Saturday Adventure!

## **Guided Moonlight Hike**

*Saturday, January 19th,  
Friday, February 15th,  
Saturday, March 16th  
7pm*

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. We encourage you to try walking by moonlight alone, but you can bring a flashlight with a red light (or with the light covered with red cellophane) if desired. Please do not use white lights as it interferes with the development of night vision. Registration is required and space is limited. Please call for additional information or to preregister.

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

## **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

## **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.



# THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

## 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.

## OAK AND HICKORY MEMBERS

- **Limited edition plate depicting the Narrows as seen from Eel Bay**
- **Hand painted, hand thrown plate from the talented artists of St. Lawrence Pottery**
- **Renew your membership at the Oak or Hickory level to receive your plate**
  - Oak and Hickory members may purchase additional plates (for gifting) for \$75
- **Call the Nature Center store for more information (315)482-2479 or stop by!**



### Friends of the Nature Center Member Benefits

- Quarterly Newsletter
- Discounts on most programming fees
- Oak/Hickory levels receive hand-painted limited edition 50th Anniversary Commemorative Plate
- 10% Discount at our gift shop

☐ Birch (\$25)

☐ Oak (\$125)

☐ Other Amount:

☐ Maple (\$75)

☐ Hickory (\$250)

\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I would prefer the newsletter online ☐

I would be interested in volunteering ☐

# THE MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

## **Art For Nature**

*Thursday, June 20th*

The second annual plein air event builds upon the success of last year's affair supporting the Friends of the Nature Center and local artists.

Artists begin painting scenes from around Wellesley Island in the morning. In the afternoon, supporters attend a cocktail party in the Cross Island Farms edible garden.

Call or email Jan Byington if you are interested in painting at 315-783-6404 or [byingtonjan@gmail.com](mailto:byingtonjan@gmail.com).

## **Night for Nature**

*Thursday, July 11th*

Bring your dancing shoes to the popular July fundraiser at the Nature Center.

A portion of this year's event will support the Ken Deedy Environmental Internship.

The silent auction contains a 4-night cruise aboard the Celebrity Infinity ship - relax in your ocean view room. Provided by Econotravel, Watertown

***Special Thanks to  
Watertown Savings Bank  
Our 2019 Lead Sponsor!***

## **Autumn Festival**

*Saturday, October 12th 2019*

Join us at the Nature Center for this family friendly fall day. Come enjoy craft and food vendors, live music, farm animals, arts and crafts, a scarecrow contest, birds of prey demonstration, dog sled demonstrations, and more.



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**