

A NEWSLETTER

from the

CAPE ANN VERNAL POND TEAM

Vernal Pond Patch Program

by Chris Wood

Madison Turner is not your typical 10 year-old. Even though she is young, Madison has attended CAVPT field trips for over seven years. With this experience, combined with an aptitude for learning, she has been able to answer questions presented by field trip attendees. Her mother and grandmother are also team members—that's three generations. It was her grandmother, Nancy Olson (CAVPT secretary) that got Madison out on that first night-time field trip; ever since, she's been hooked.

Madison explains that she loves animals and it's a great opportunity to help them. She goes on to say that everything in the ecosystem is related and she cares about them all. We need more young woman and men like her out there.

Gloria Parsons and her leader scouts, with some initial help from CAVPT, worked to create the first Girl Scout Vernal Pond Patch Program. The idea behind the patch program is to familiarize the girls with vernal ponds, and explain some of the reasons why their conservation is important. The patch program requirements include a field trip to a vernal pond and identification of its animals. Madison is one of 12 girls in the state to have earned her vernal pond patch.

The future looks good with Madison on our side. She has been getting her schoolmates and fellow Scouts interested in vernal pond conservation. She hopes to continue to spread the good word about vernal ponds in the future. Oh, by the way, she's currently working on her first book, which is about wolves—we look forward to seeing it on the shelves.

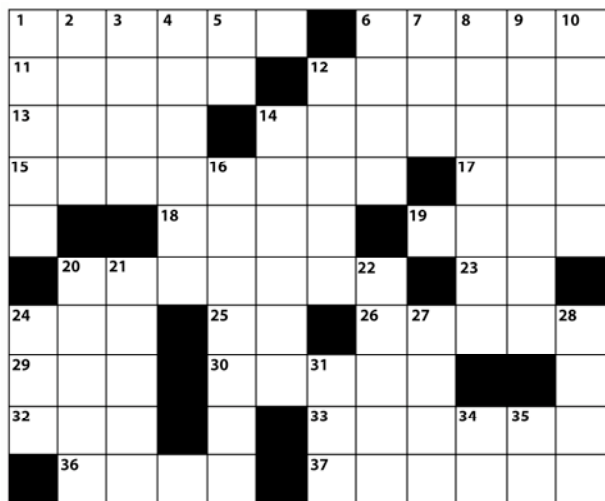
Madison



Patch



To view scout patch requirements please visit:
www.capeannvernalpond.com
and click on the vernal pond patch link (highlighted in yellow).



Crossword Puzzle by Isabel Natti

Across

- 1 Spring
- 6 Harbors have them
- 11 Perfect
- 12 Expenditure list
- 13 Chair
- 14 Turtle trap bait
- 15 Beavers have a reputation for it
- 17 Gov't board at Logan
- 18 Not common
- 19 Vernal pond tool
- 20 Little frogs
- 23 Not from
- 24 Memorable time
- 25 California city
- 26 High school kids
- 29 Negative
- 30 Set into
- 32 Fawn's mom
- 33 Big rare birds
- 36 Type of amphibian
- 37 Come out

Down

- 1 Go see
- 2 Mythological garden
- 3 Books let you do it
- 4 Includes all life
- 5 Capp or Roker
- 6 Hide underground
- 7 Strange
- 8 Shake up
- 9 Water surface has it
- 10 Rob
- 12 Less covered
- 14 Water collector
- 16 Young tree
- 20 Absolute assurance
- 21 Consumer
- 22 Saunas have it
- 24 That's all
- 27 Not center
- 28 Some replies want it
- 31 Pollinator
- 34 Not Kit, nor BR
- 35 For example

Kestrel Educational Adventures Update

by Jessica Kagle

2005 - What a great year for Kestrel Educational Adventures! In our fourth year providing Ponds in the Classroom workshops, we were able to serve every fourth grader in the Gloucester public schools, as well as many other schools throughout Cape Ann. We worked with a total of about 850 students at 10 different schools and 2 scout troops. Blessed by grants from KeySpan Energy, the Gloucester School Connection, and Manchester Essex Conservation Trust, we have gone from a volunteer organization with a two person staff, to having four instructors, an animal care specialist, and a Program Director. As a result of the grants, all of the groups that were unable to pay received free or discounted programs. Every one of the 4 new instructors hired last year received rave reviews from the students and classroom teachers.

Looking ahead to our 2006 teaching season, we have added several new programs, including a general forest ecology workshop and an after school conservation club, which will involve projects such as pond certification. We have already received spring program requests from most of our regular schools, as well as two that are new to us this year. We are planning to acquire some very special new animals that most of the students will have never seen before.

We are very excited to have already received a \$5000 grant from TD Bank North and a donation of Quick Books Nonprofit accounting software from Mark Buckley, the VP of Environmental Affairs for Staples. Thank you!

Please visit our newly updated website, where you can see photos of our students in action or download our new program brochures. www.kestreleducation.org

News: We have a part time job opening for a program instructor. Please contact Jessica for the complete job description. To expand our programming and continue to offer fee waivers, we have begun asking for private as well as corporate donations. If you would like to make a donation, please contact Jessica. We are also developing an email and regular mailing list—members will receive Kestrel newsletters and updates. Please spread the word. Contact Jessica at (617) 290-2258 or jessica@kestreleducation.org

Thanks to: Beth Swan for volunteer graphic design, Tori Rosati and Cynthia Nichols for grant writing, Torey Adler for web design, Margo Flowers and Ken and Ronnie Kagle for their donations, Chris Wood for much general help.



Here, Nathan Mineo checks a turtle trap with giddy anticipation. *"It's better than opening a Christmas present."*

Turtle Conservation

Many of you may remember that Rick took an assistant herpetologist position with Hyla Ecological Services in the summer of 04 where he participated in radio telemetry of spotted turtles. What you may not know is that his work with Hyla continued and expanded in 05; only instead of contracting just Rick, Hyla enlisted three other members of CAVPT to assist-Nathan Mineo, Jessica Kagle and Cynthia Nichols. This past summer, the focus again was on spotted turtles. Thirty turtle traps were set in swamps and vernal ponds within the Manchester/Essex area. The traps were checked every other day and every catch was recorded. The spotted turtles were marked for identification and some were radio tagged. Hyla used the data we obtained to delineate a rare species habitat



Vernal Pond block print by Isabel Natti
Available at Sarah Elizabeth's Block Printers at
Whistlestop Mall, Rockport, MA

Field Trips

Rainy nights and flashlights
Every spring CAVPT members lead nighttime field trips
to the ponds to see the amphibian breeding activity.
Check your flashlights, get new batteries and put
your rain gear on the hook by the door.
To avoid habitat destruction and critter disturbance,
we limit the number of participants on each trip.
We also ask that you leave your dog at home.

Interested? Email us

Thank you to all CAVPT members and friends who participated or helped out last year

Toad Hall Bookstore
The Trustees of Reservations
New England Herpetological Society
Manchester / Essex Conservation Trust
Noel Mann and The EnTrust Fund
Nan Andrew, Leo D. Allen
Wendy Antrim, Tony & Margo Ashdon
Mac Bell, Ken & Elana Brink
Dennis Carew, Joe Christian
Alex Eisenzopf, Ben Flemer
Margaret Flowers, Kevin Gilligan
Ileen Graham, Cora Hawks
Martha Hoar, Jessica Kagle
Ramona Latham, H.A. Lind
Greg Mertz, Jenn Mineo
Maria & Nathan Mineo
Isabel Natti, Cynthia Nichols
Nancy Olson, Gloria Parsons
Mary Reilly, April Ridlon
Amy Sklivas, Ralph & Dorothy Silvis
Gregg Smith, Holly Tanguay
Nick & Leah Taormina
Madison Turner, Dan Wells
Brian Whitaker, Dez Whitney
Ben Wildrick, Peter Willet
Chris Wood

Big Grant

Special thanks to Cynthia Nichols and the EnTrust fund.
Cynthia wrote the grant and EnTrust awarded us \$5,000.
The money is earmarked for a new computer, some related
equipment and part of the 2006 budget, which includes,
for example, the cost of printing and mailing this newsletter.

Answers to Crossword Puzzle

1	V	2	E	3	R	4	N	5	A	6	L	7	B	8	O	9	A	10	S
11	I	D	E	A	L	12	B	U	D	G	E	T							
13	S	E	A	T	14	S	A	R	D	I	N	E							
15	I	N	D	U	16	S	T	R	Y	17	T	S	A						
	T				18	R	A	R	E	19	P	A	I	L					
		20	P	E						22	S			23	T	O			
24	E	R	A			25	L	A		26	T	E	E	N	S				
29	N	O	T			30	I	M		31	B	E	D						
32	D	O	E				N			33	E	A	G		34	L	E	S	
		36	F	R	O	G				37	E	M	E	R	G	E			

CALENDAR of Upcoming Stuff...

Schooner Adventure Natural History Lecture Series
March 15, 7 pm, Sawyer Free Library, Gloucester
Vernal Pond lecture by Rick

League of Women Voters'
Non-Toxic Landscaping and Gardening Fair
Saturday, March 25, 9am - 2pm
Gloucester High School Field House
We'll be there with a few critters

Walk for us in the Gloucester Pride Stride

Look for us at River Fest in June

CAVPT Yard Sale Fundraiser
Look for it at the end of May
If you have items to donate (please, no TVs or
computers), email us at cavpt@yahoo.com
or call Rick 978-281-3480

For more information and latest updates check out our



Cynthia shows our Bullsnake to the crowd at Halibut Point State Park in Rockport at our Snakes of Massachusetts and the World program last year.

Last Year's Events

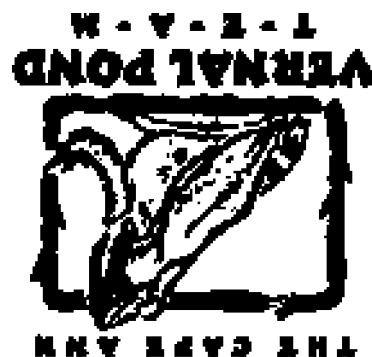
Vernal Pond Certification Workshop at Appleton Farms in
Ipswich. Video, slides, critters field trip.

CAVPT members presented
Snakes of Massachusetts and the World at:

Earth Day at Lynch Park in Beverly
Earth Fest at Lynn Woods
Rockport Elementary
Sawyer Free Library
Halibut Point State Park
River Fest in Concord

We led our usual nighttime field trips and a daytime
field trip for Manchester/Essex Conservation Trust.

We raised over \$1000 at our annual yard sale.



Return Service Requested

Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team
P.O.Box 12
Rockport, MA 01966



Did You Know?

Did you know that marbled salamanders (*Ambystoma opacum*) exhibit parental care? Amongst the many species of mole salamanders, this sophisticated evolutionary adaptation is found in only the marbled salamander. Come fall, females construct a cavity under debris in the basin of a dried vernal pond where they deposit their eggs. There the eggs and mother stay for one to three months until the pond fills again, causing the eggs to hatch. Experimental evidence suggests that the presence of the female during the one to three month interval increases hatchling success. Selective pressures, such as predation and fungal infestation, may have caused the evolution of this parental behavior. For more information just type "parental care in marbled salamanders" into Google.

Main source: Croshaw, Dean A. and Scott, David E. 2005. Experimental Evidence that Nest Attendance Benefits Female Marbled Salamanders (*Ambystoma opacum*) by reducing egg mortality. *American Midland Naturalist* 154:398-411

This newsletter is dedicated to the memory of Rick and Mary Stafford of Allston, MA who both passed away in 2005. They were the backbone of the New England Herpetological Society for many years. Without their support, the Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team would not exist.

We also dedicate this newsletter to the memory of Marianne Edwards of Rockport, MA who died last summer. Marianne was a founding member of the Friends of Halibut Point State Park. She was a great supporter of national and state parks and a good friend of our team.



Hatchling baby spotted turtle