



Winter/Spring 2007

A NEWSLETTER

from the

CAPE ANN VERNAL POND TEAM

Website: www.capeannvernalpond.com

Email: cavpt@yahoo.com

THE CAVPT IS A HOPELESSLY NON-PROFIT VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO VERNAL POND CONSERVATION AND EDUCATION SINCE 1990.

Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team Board Members

Since our last newsletter, CAVPT has become a real live grown-up corporation with 501(c)(3) non-profit tax status and a genuine board of directors. Without further ado, please meet the board members.



President Rick Roth

Rick, 54, works on Cape Ann as a carpenter. He has had a lifelong interest in wildlife, especially reptiles and amphibians, and works in the spring as a field herpetologist. Rick has been a member of the New England Herpetological Society for over 20 years, serving as director, treasurer and president. He is a founding member of CAVPT.



Vice President Nick Taormina

Nick, 34, is a carpenter. Nick came in contact with CAVPT 6 years ago while researching his undergraduate thesis, which included vernal pond studies at Lesley University. Since then, he has been very involved with a variety of CAVPT projects, including spear-heading the annual CAVPT yard-sale fundraiser effort for the past 3 years.

Treasurer Ileen Graham

Treasurer and Webmaster for the team, Ileen is also an insurance agent and bookkeeper. Ileen created the CAVPT website. She was an important player in gaining the Team its non-profit status and completed all the paperwork to obtain the articles of incorporation. She's helped out at countless meetings and programs, and also happens to be the computer systems specialist for the team.



Secretary Nancy Olson

Nancy has been acting team secretary for the past several years. She has had a number of careers from lead paint inspector and wedding photographer to her current position registering patients at Beverly Hospital. Nancy has been involved with the team since 1992. She has recruited many field trip participants and team members, including her daughter and granddaughter.



Director Nathan Mineo

Nathan, 28, works full-time for The Trustees of Reservations co-managing the Cape Ann properties. He holds a BS degree in biology from UMass Boston. Nathan has been an active CAVPT member for 7 years, involving himself in countless vernal pond programs and field trips. In addition, Nathan co-founded Kestrel Educational Adventures and is still very involved with the organization.



Director Cora Hawks

Cora has been a resident of Cape Ann for most of her life. She has had many diverse careers which include preschool teacher and drapery manufacturer. At present works in the book publishing industry. Cora has always enjoyed being outdoors (former Girl Scout and assistant leader as well). She was introduced to the Cape Ann Vernal Pond team in 2000 and has been a member ever since.

Kestrel Educational Adventures Update

by Jessica Kagle

Kestrel Educational Adventures was founded by CAVPT members in an effort to introduce Ponds in the Classroom workshops to schools. PIC workshops combine vernal pool ecology with field trips and interactive activities. Kestrel is now an independent, incorporated non-profit offering several types of ecology workshops to schools throughout the North Shore. 2006 was a year of experimentation and expansion for Kestrel. New programs were introduced to schools and new schools began participating. Kestrel brought programs to 51 school groups for a total of over 1,000 students!

This year has brought several advancements for Kestrel, including the implementation of our first fall *Forest Connections* workshop series, the hiring of two permanent staff members, completion of the incorporation process, and grant awards to date of \$18,000.

Get Your Feet Wet:

Peeper Monitors Needed

by Teri Dunn

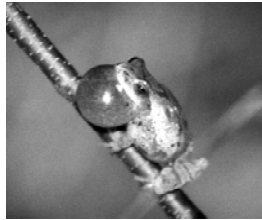
The Friends of Wachusett Mountain (FWM) recently asked if some of us would be willing and able to pay extra attention to the spring peepers this year. They are embarking on what they believe is the first-ever statewide “concentrated survey.” FWM is hoping to get a lot of data from a few locations—call intensity, temperature, precipitation, and so forth. They are really interested in data from Cape Ann because one of the hypotheses they are testing is that coastal peepers get going earlier than inland and mountain peepers, thanks to the ocean’s “thermal buffering.”

Ideally, they would like to get at least 15 consecutive days of data though more (up to a month’s worth) would be better. Admittedly, that’s a tall order, but perhaps CAVPT members or anyone else interested can band together and share the data-collection duties. Please get in touch soon if you’d like to pitch in.

It’s not often we get to participate in a scientific study that is expected to yield worthwhile results in its first season. Of course, going forward, this program has the potential to teach us other things about our favorite lusty little frogs, including whether their numbers are declining and which environmental factors affect their concerts.

For more information, please visit their website:

www.friendsofwachusett.org



Ileen Graham shows a milk snake to Katie Cochand, Niki Bothwick, Jenny Cochand, Bella Mastendino and Sarah Stanton from Manchester Brownie Troop 85 on a Vernal Pond field trip at Ravenswood Park.

CAVPT Update

CAVPT has recently become incorporated and received its 501(c)(3) status from the IRS, which means we are a registered non-profit organization. We would like to thank Ileen Graham and Dennis Carew for all their help with the paperwork to make this happen.

Most larger grant-makers fund only 501(c)(3) organizations, so this status makes us eligible for a greater pool of grants. It also means that donations to CAVPT are tax-deductible.

We have been in the process of pursuing more grants to expand the team’s capabilities, and have just started working with grantwriter Tori Rosati. Tori has just completed a grant application requesting funds for new field trip supplies that will speed up the pond certification process. The grants committee has recently found some new grants that we hope to have in the mail in the next couple months. We also hope to pursue more funding for educational programs.

The membership program is almost complete and the applications for membership might be in the mail by April. This program would allow people to support the Team financially and receive some additional perks like the newsletter in your hand, discounts on products at the CAVPT online store, and of course a free membership sticker with membership.

Your membership donation is tax-deductible.



Sam Bevins and Nadine Oliver volunteer at our snake program at Halibut Point State Park with Jasper the boa constrictor.

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

*The list of people to thank is too big to print all the names.
We know who you are.
You know who you are.
And that's all that matters, really, isn't it?
Thank you.*

Last Year We...

- *Presented Vernal Ponds at:*
Sawyer Free Children's Library
Schooner Adventure Lecture Series
Jane Goodall's *Roots & Shoots* Program
at Drumlin Farms
- *Led Daytime Field Trips for:*
Manchester Cub Scouts
Manchester Brownies
Manchester/Essex Conservation Trust
....and a few others....
- *Led our usual nighttime field trips*
- *Participated in the Gloucester Pride Stride*
- *Held our annual Yard Sale Fundraiser*
- *Had a wicked-scary pumpkin-carving session at the Red Barrel Pub in Essex*
- *Presented Snakes of Massachusetts and the World at:*
Manchester Public Library
Earthfest at Lynn Woods
Rockport Elementary School
Sawyer Free Children's Library
Biodiversity Days at Stage Fort Park
Riverfest, Concord, MA
Bottume House, Middlesex Fells
Halibut Point State Park
Maudslay State Park, Newburyport
Legend of Don Disisco, Huntington, VT
Great Brook Farm, Carlisle, MA
and in Manchester for the Cub Scouts
- *Participated in Science Night, Bowditch School in Salem MA and the Science Picnic at the Salem Willows*
- *Non-Toxic Landscape and Gardening Fair at Gloucester High School*

CREDITS FOR PHOTOS

Gail Smith, Ron & Karen Camille, Sharron Cohen, Nathan Mineo, Rick Roth, Tony Murray, Julie Lisk and Alex Moore. Salamander drawing by Curtis Sarkin

CALENDAR of Upcoming Stuff...

Snakes at Toad Hall Bookstore, Rockport
We'll be there Saturday March 24th, 2-4:30 pm

Earth Day at Cox Reservation, Essex,
Essex County Greenbelt,
Manchester/Essex Conservation Trust
Saturday, April 21st Vernal Pond Exhibit

Earth Fest at Lynn Woods
Saturday, April 21st, Time TBA
Snakes of Massachusetts & the World

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 more exhibit listings
check out our website at
www.capeannvernalpond.com

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 at cavpt@yahoo.com



Julia Camille introduces our hog nose snake at Maudslay State Park in Newburyport.

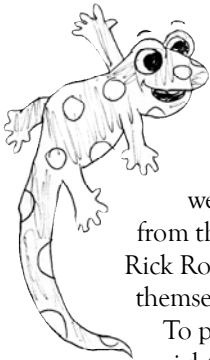


Return Service Requested

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

Did You Know?

High-Diving Salamanders by Nathan Mineo



A typical vernal pond often resembles nothing more than a big puddle on the ground. The land slopes gently down to meet the water's edge, allowing easy access for all the eager amphibians wishing to breed. We do, however, encounter that rare vernal pond with steep, rocky slopes that plunge abruptly into the deep water. "How," you may ask, "does a salamander negotiate such a precipitous shoreline?"

At one such vernal pond, Stillington Pond in Ravenswood Park, with a steep ten-foot granite cliff, we found an answer. For years, team members would occasionally hear mysterious "plops" resounding from the darkness at the edge of this abandoned quarry where the cliff meets the water. Just two years ago, Rick Roth and Nathan Mineo discovered that the source of these "plops" were spotted salamanders hurling themselves off this cliff into the pond below.

To put this feat into perspective, consider that a full-grown adult spotted salamander may reach no more than eight inches in length. An eight-inch spotted salamander diving from a height of ten feet is equivalent to a six-foot human diving from a height of 90 feet. Humans do dive from this height during cliffdiving events in places such as Hawaii and Mexico, but they don't belly-flop like the salamanders at Stillington Pond.



Blanding's Turtle

CAVPT members, Nick, Rick and Nathan participated in a turtle survey project for Hyla Ecological Services in Haverhill last spring. We found, measured and marked twelve Blanding's turtles, a threatened species in Massachusetts. We also found snapping turtles, spotted turtles and approximately one zillion painted turtles. All turtles were released.

This newsletter is for Mary Roth, 1923-2006, who let me keep snakes in the house because "they're quiet," back when nobody's mother let them keep snakes in the house.

R.R.

