



Winter/Spring 2016

A NEWSLETTER

from the

CAPE ANN VERNAL POND TEAM

Website: www.capeannvernalpond.org

Email: cavpt@yahoo.com

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

We started with nothing and we still have most of it.

History of Spring Pond Woods Advocates

By Leslie Courtemanche and newsletter staff

In 2008 word got out that the City of Salem changed its zoning ordinance amendment and a large parcel of land was to be developed for a Super Walmart and Lowe's Home Improvement. This area, known as Spring Ponds Woods or Camp Lion, loved for many generations by local people who had assumed that it was protected from development, organized a network of communications regarding public hearings. When the Salem Planning board met, citizens and local politicians who opposed the project were in attendance.

Many of us banded together and we discovered each of us had something different to offer in working towards our common goal

of saving our local environment. A sub-group would conquer the field investigation, and so, attended an "Introduction to Vernal Ponds" and a Vernal Pool certification workshop presented by the Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team.

Starting on April 5, 2011, Katerina Panagiotakis, Leslie Courtemanche, Calvin Anderson and Rich Randall began the vernal pool explorations. We were able to observe and document the abundance of life including but not limited to, red spotted newts, fairy shrimp, diving beetles and chorus of wood frogs and spring peepers. We then submitted a Vernal Pool Observation Form to the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program.

5 Vernal pools are now certified. We were also able to observe and record various Species of Special Concern which can be used to delineate and protect Rare Species Habitat.

Shortly thereafter came the announcement the Lowe's was closing 20 stores in 15 states and the development project was not going forward.

We hope in the future, Spring Pond Advocates may become a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and gain many more members who are passionate about the environment.

For more information on Vernal Pool Certification or Rare Species Habitat go to: mass.gov and search for Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program.

CAVPT is always encouraged to see groups in other communities come together to preserve wetlands, wildlife habitat and open space.



Photo credit - Katerina Panagiotakis

CAVPT members joined the Spring Pond Advocates to help out with vernal pool certification

FROM THE WAY BACK MACHINE....

This is a Blandings turtle that was captured in 2006 during a project for Dan Wells and Hyla Ecological Services. CAVPT members, Nick Taormina, Nathan Mineo and Rick Roth participated in this survey.



25th Anniversary Benefit Concert and Silent Auction

How did 25 years go by so fast.....!

*The Treehouse Charlatans kicked off the music. The Fools rocked the house!
We had a great crowd and there was lots of action at the auction and raffle table.*

We'd like to thank everyone for their generosity and support, making this a successful and fun event.
Thank you Peter Hackel for showing us the ropes of the concert business.

Check the CAVPT website and Facebook for 2016 concert info.

Our concerts
have it all...



Fun!



2 Rick Roth's...am I seeing double?
L- Gloucester Rick Roth of CAVPT
R- Rick Roth (Littleton, MA) www.thecreatureteachers.com



Vinnie the woodchuck finishes his
banana which put him in a party mood



Auction!



Special Thanks to Our Generous Sponsors

New England Herpetological Society
Cape Ann Savings Bank
Natti Tree & Landscape, Inc.
TD Bank

Geoffrey H. Richon Construction
Mile Marker Restaurant & Bar
Good Harbor Graphics
Blewater Graphic Design



Photo credits: Beverley Harden, Karen & Ron Camille
Illustrations by Ollie Balf

Fundraising

Amazon Smile

In this day and age of virtual technologies, donating to your favorite charity is easier than ever. Most of us frequently make purchases through Amazon. It's fast, convenient, and can be done pretty much anywhere at any time with your smart-phone. Thanks to Amazon Smile, when making your online purchases you can choose a favorite charity and Amazon will donate a percentage of your total to them at no cost to you.

Please support what we do and consider selecting the Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team as your charity of choice.



GOT CLUTTER?...GET YARD SALE

Our yard sale is a tremendous fundraiser for us! Fundraising is an ongoing project, but an event such as this brings in money that isn't earmarked for specific uses as are most grants. This money can go directly to overhead expenses such as rent, insurance and animal care.

So...start getting ready for the big event...clean the closets, garages, storage units and sheds and set aside everything for us! Drop your stuff off at St. Peter's parking lot (Rogers St., Gloucester) on Saturday May 28 between 7:00 and 9:00am. The rain date is June 2, same time...same place. When it gets closer check your emails and Facebook for the latest info.

We are joined in this event by our sister organization Kestrel Educational Adventures. Your donation benefits two great non-profit conservation groups on Cape Ann.

Oh...and by the way, this is a wonderful opportunity to volunteer! An hour or two gives a break to someone who started the day early.

Please no TVs, Computers, Mattresses or Junk.

Thanks again to Mac Bell for donating the great location!

Pride Stride

Since 2007, CAVPT has been participating in the Gloucester Pride Stride. This event is known for helping nonprofits raise funds so they may continue improving the lives of not only local citizens but the world. If you'd like to make a donation or get a pledge sheet to help out not only CAVPT, but many other wonderful nonprofits, please visit the Gloucester Pride Stride page at: www.gloucesterpridestride.com

Grants & Donations

In 2015 We Received Grants From:

- New England BioLabs Corporate Donations, \$2,000
- Cell Signaling Technology, \$3,000

Thanks to everyone who responded to our annual appeal with generous donations, and to those who donated throughout the year.

Special thanks to,

- William Taylor
- Anne Rosenfeld

We are proud, and oh so grateful, to have over fifty volunteers generously donating their time and energy to make CAVPT grow and flourish.

Maritime Gloucester

Maritime Gloucester is happy to support vernal ponds and their crepuscular activities through use of our bulk-mailing permit. We invite you to immerse yourself in our locally-stocked aquarium, relax with our beautiful harbor views, learn a little something in one of our fun and informative programs, and more. Open Memorial Day through October at 23 Harbor Loop, Gloucester. www.maritimegloucester.org.



Last Year We...

- Led our usual nighttime vernal pond field trips
- Certified another 15 vernal ponds
- Presented "Intro to Vernal Ponds" at:
Cape Ann Discovery Center at Ravenswood Park, Gloucester
- Presented "Snakes of New England and the World" at:
Essex Library
Crane Estate (The Trustees of Reservations), Ipswich
Riverfest, Great Meadows, Sudbury
Sawyer Free Children's Library, Gloucester
Summer Fun - Rockport High School
Halibut Point State Park, Rockport
Sustainability Fair, Saltonstall School, Salem
- Presented Snake Exhibits at:
Cape Ann Farmers' Market
Manchester Library Book Sale
Gloucester Sidewalk Bazaar
Gloucester Block Party
Maritime Heritage Day, Gloucester
Petco Reptile Rally, Gloucester
- Presented Vernal Pond/Snake Exhibits at:
Gloucester Sustainability Fair,
Gloucester High School
- Visiting Scientist Day at:
O'Maley Middle School, Gloucester
- Hosted Wicked Scary Pumpkin Carving Event:
The Get Outside Center, Gloucester



Snake drawing by Ollie Balf

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.

The CAVPT newsletter committee is powered by



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The Future of CAVPT

We've come along way...but we're not anywhere near done yet.

We need to:

- Get paid staff
 - Make better use of our Main Street location, The Get Outside Center
 - Do more and better programs
 - Do more conservation: vernal pool certification and rare species habitat
 - Get serious about our fundraising

The real goal is to open a Nature Study Center on Cape Ann with:

- Live animal and other exhibits
- On site and off site presentations
- Field trips to nearby wildlife habitats
- and more.....

Certification Report

2015 was another productive year for vernal pond certification. Data was collected from pools and will be submitted to the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) for certification. Thanks to Matt Burne for his expertise with the on-line certification process and Dan Wells for locating ownership of the land where pools were found. Colleen Anderson, Nick Taormina, Richard Roth, and Ben Alger, a student from Manchester Essex Regional High School's Green Team, did this year's fieldwork.

Pool certification is a time sensitive process in that viable amphibian egg masses, which are the most commonly used biologic evidence used to certify a pool, are only found for a short period of time in spring. If you are interested in protecting a pool please let us know so we can scout it in advance to be prepared for this window of opportunity. We are always looking for interested candidates to fill the ranks of our certification team. If you think you have what it takes or know of a potential Vernal Pool for us to certify email us at: capvt@yahoo.com

Turtle Trapping

The CAVPT conducted another Blanding's Turtle Survey in a freshwater swamp in West Gloucester in June of 2015. Traps were set, baited, and checked daily for a period of 21 days. Blanding's turtles *Emydoidea blandingii* are listed as Threatened under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act and there are on-going efforts to find and protect Blanding's habitat. There have been historic sightings of this reptile on Cape Ann. Although 2015's survey was unsuccessful in trapping this elusive solitary animal, additional potential habitat was scouted for future surveys. They have a dark body, a bright yellow throat, and can grow up to nine inches long. If a sighting is made, photograph to confirm identification and notify the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program.



Photo credit - Nick Taormina

2 cranky snappers from 1 trap

FEATURED CREATURE

Marbled Salamander

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Ambystoma Opacum*

SIZE: Adults: 11 cm (4 in)

LIFESPAN: 8-10+ years

RANGE: Eastern United States: Southern New England to Florida and as far west as Illinois and Texas.

DIET: Larvae take small aquatic animals (zooplankton), adults take terrestrial invertebrates, such as worms, insects, centipedes and mollusks (snails, slugs), larger individuals will take eggs and larvae of other amphibians.



DESCRIPTION:

- **HABITAT:** Damp woodlands, forests and places with soft, wet soil. They are secretive, spending most of their life under logs or in burrows.
- **ABUNDANCE:** Uncommon, not found on Cape Ann. A Threatened Species in Massachusetts.
- **BREEDING:** During the fall the adults migrate to dry vernal ponds. Eggs are laid singly in shallow depressions beneath surface materials. Females may brood eggs which usually hatch in fall or early winter when submerged.
- **SIMILAR SPECIES:** Other mole salamanders including spotted and blue spotted.
- **COMMENTS:** Has a stocky build, boldly banded. Female's bands tend to be grey while those of the male's are mostly white. Nocturnal, not poisonous like other salamanders.

Charlie Farren

Look for a benefit concert this year featuring Charlie Farren, of Farrenheit and The Joe Perry Project. This will be an acoustic performance in an intimate setting. It will be a fun show and a great way to support your favorite Vernal Pond Team.

Details when we get them at the Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team Facebook page and our website - capeannvernalpond.org



Don't miss any of our exciting upcoming events!
check out our website at:

www.capeannvernalpond.org
and Like Us  on Facebook

If we value wildlife, we must protect vernal ponds.....

What a CAVPT membership offers:

- A really neat CAVPT car decal
- Subscription to our annual newsletter
- Email updates of vernal pond activities and events
- Guided field trips to local vernal ponds
- The satisfaction of knowing you are helping preserve these unique and vital habitats

Our programs & activities include:

- Vernal pond certification
- Exhibits & presentations
- Daytime & nighttime field trips
- Certification workshops
- Posters
- "Vernal Ponds" video
- Website: capeannvernalpond.org
- Scout patch program
- Snakes of New England & the World

Salamander linoleum cut by Isabel Natti

For school programs, including Ponds in the Classroom, contact our sister organization, Kestrel Educational Adventures: www.kestreleducation.org.



Photo by Colleen Anderson

A field trip to vernal pools at Agassiz Rock in Manchester, MA for Ramona and The Trustees of Reservations.

The funding for our programs is provided by:

- Corporate gifts
- Grants
- Sale of our merchandise
- Donations from community members like you
- Memberships

CAVPT thanks the following organizations and foundations for their generous support over the years:

The EnTrust Fund • The Norcross Wildlife Foundation • GoodSearch
New England Herpetological Society • Sweetwater Trust • TD Bank
Toad Hall Bookstore • Gloucester Cultural Council • Sam Park & Company
New England BioLabs • The Bellevue Fund • The William P. Wharton Trust
New England Grassroots Environment Fund • Cell Signaling Technology

Support the Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team. Become a member or renew today!

The Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team is a non-profit volunteer organization dedicated to vernal pond conservation and education since 1990. Our focus is vernal ponds. The issue is the preservation of wildlife habitat, which ultimately is about the health of the planet.



Photo by Lysa Leland

At the Cape Ann Farmers' Market everyone enjoyed meeting our live snakes and painting wooden ones with the crew from Cape Ann Art Haven.

CAVPT is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization
your contribution is tax deductible

www.capeannvernalpond.org

Name _____

Street _____

City, State, Zip _____

(address required if paying by credit card)

Phone _____ Email _____

☐ Send me email updates about field trips and events

☐ Yes! I'd like to be a volunteer

☐ Lifetime Membership \$200

Annual Membership

☐ Individual \$20 ☐ Family \$35 ☐ Junior (under 16) \$10

☐ Additional donation \$ _____

☐ Check enclosed: \$ _____ Payable to: Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team

☐ Charge my credit card (Visa, MC, Amex, Discover)

CC # _____

exp date ____/____ CVV code (on back of card) _____

Signature _____

(required if paying by credit card)

Please detach this form and mail with your donation to:

Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team

P.O. Box 12, Rockport, MA 01966



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

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Block print by Isabel Natti

The Need for Protection...

The temporary nature of vernal ponds often belies their importance. Countless plants and animals live in vernal ponds. Insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals visit to drink, feed, breed and nest. Some species, such as spotted salamanders, wood frogs and fairy shrimp are totally dependent on this habitat.



Photo by Nathan Milne

How to Protect...

The best way to protect vernal ponds is to own the property. The next best way to protect them is to certify ponds with the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program. Certification application reports include photographs, maps and field observation forms. To learn more go to www.capeannvernalpond.org or check out the Vernal Pool Association's website at www.vernalpool.org



Monarch print by Isabel Natti

Come see us this spring! CAVPT leads nighttime field trips to witness the annual migration and breeding of wood frogs and spotted salamanders...see inside, or our website, for more details.

