



Newsletter No. 31

Spring 2015

Erie National Wildlife Refuge Summer Fest 2015

We hope to see you at the this year's Summer Fest. The event features free admission, handicapped parking and access, and fun for everyone in the family. This year we are working on having a food vendor available but the details haven't been completely ironed out yet. We are also hoping to provide Hay Ride Tours of the ENWR.

The "Passport Program" will give kids a chance to earn a prize just for participating in all required activities. This year's prize is new and improved and will offer lasting enjoyment to young nature enthusiasts.

All activities will be based on a "Nature Myths" theme. Activities will include a Sun Catcher Craft, Face Painting, a Notebook Craft, Fishing Casting Practice, Archery, and as always bring your camera for the Photo Opportunity.

Many outside groups will be partnering with the ENWR to provide displays and activities all day as well, including Audubon PA, French Creek Valley Conservancy, Pitt Ecology Lab, Western PA Conservancy, Crawford County Conservancy, and the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. This year's live animal display will be provided by All God's Creatures Reptile Education and Rescue.

All entries to the "Trash to Treasure" Contest will be on display at Summer Fest as well. This a fun contest and the resulting entries are always interesting and imaginative!

A "Silent Auction" has been held at Summer Fest the last few years. This is an opportunity for you to help the Friends of ENWR support Summer Fest so please take the time to look at the items offered and maybe even place a bid.

Summer Fest is always held the last Saturday in June which is the 27th this year. The event is open from 10:00AM - 4:00PM at the Refuge's Activity Center on Wood Duck Lane in Guys Mills, PA. This is an "Rain or Shine" event and while most activities are under a tent or in a building please consider the weather when dressing for the event. Sponsored by the Friends of ENWR.

Two contests going on at the ENWR right now! See inside for info.

Trash to Treasure Contest



Rescue some trash from the recycling bin or the garbage and make it into something pretty or useful. Bring it to the refuge to display and maybe win a cash prize. 1st place in each division, Age 17+, Age 13 – 16, Age 9 – 12, and Age 8 & Under, wins a cash prize. Entries must be submitted by June 12th and the winners will be announced June 27th at Summer Fest.

The rules are fairly simple: The major component of each entry should be something previously used that would normally be thrown away or recycled after they are used. Entries must have been created within the dates: 06/13/2014 - 06/12/2015.

Judging criteria may include originality and creativity, durability, suitability to purpose, and quality of craftsmanship, artistic merit, and "How much did it save the planet?". Sorry the judges' decision is final.

Entries will be on display at Summer Fest and then at the refuge until the week of July 13th.

Entries must be turned in to the Erie National Wildlife Refuge, 11296 Wood Duck Lane, Guys Mills, PA 16327. Call (814) 789-3585 if you have questions.

15th Biennial Nature Photo Contest

In 1987, the Presque Isle Audubon Society (PIAS) initiated a formal relationship with Erie National Wildlife Refuge (ENWR) under the National Audubon Society's "Adopt A Refuge" program. It co-sponsored the first biennial nature photo contest with the refuge that year in an effort to keep the local community involved in the refuge.

Fast forward to 2007 and the ENWR is hosting the Eleventh Biennial Nature Photography Contest. For the first time, the contest is co-sponsored by the Presque Isle Audubon Society and the newly formed Friends of Erie National Wildlife Refuge.

That year 132 photographs were entered. Photos were judged in three major categories, Plant Life, Wildlife, and Landscape. In addition, a special award was presented for the best photo taken on the ENWR. Approximately 70 people attended the reception. Guests viewed all the entered photos, watched the awards ceremony, and had the opportunity to talk to judges about nature photography tips and techniques. An evaluation of the contest resulted in several suggestions for improving the contest itself, and nature photography opportunities on the refuge.

During the last contest held in 2013 the judges had the difficult task of choosing 11 winners and 10 honorable mentions from the 151 photos entered in the ENWR's Nature Photo Contest. The contest continues to award First, Second and Third place ribbons plus cash prizes for the top winners in the categories of Plant Life, Wildlife and Landscape. In addition ribbons and cash prizes are also awarded for the Best Photo Taken on the ENWR and for the Best Student (under 18) Photo.

The Friends of ENWR and PIAS continue to co-sponsor the Biennial Nature Photo Contest and we hope the 2015 edition will be just as successful as those in the past.



Campaign to Save Beleaguered Monarch Butterfly

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service launched a major campaign aimed at saving the declining monarch butterfly.

The Service signed a cooperative agreement with the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), announced a major new funding initiative with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), and pledged \$2 million in immediate funding for on-the-ground conservation projects around the country.

Introducing the new initiatives at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. were Service Director Dan Ashe, U.S. Senator from Minnesota Amy Klobuchar, NWF President and CEO Collin O'Mara, and NFWF representatives.

Monarchs are found across the United States. While they numbered some 1 billion in 1996, their numbers have declined by approximately 90 percent in recent years. The decline is the result of numerous threats, particularly loss of habitat due to agricultural practices, development and cropland conversion. Degradation of wintering habitat in Mexico and California has also had a negative impact on the species.

“We can save the monarch butterfly in North America, but only if we act quickly and together,” said Ashe. “And that is why we are excited to be working with the National Wildlife Federation and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to engage Americans everywhere, from schools and community groups to corporations and governments, in protecting and restoring habitat. Together we can create oases for monarchs in communities across the country.”

The memorandum of understanding between NWF and the Service will serve as a catalyst for national collaboration on monarch conservation, particularly in planting native milkweed and nectar plants, the primary food sources in breeding and migration habitats for the butterfly.

The new NFWF Monarch Conservation Fund was kick-started by an injection of \$1.2 million from the Service that will be matched by private and public donors. The fund will provide the first dedicated source of funding for projects working to conserve monarchs.

From California to the Corn Belt, the Service will also fund numerous conservation projects totaling \$2 million this year to restore and enhance more than 200,000 acres of habitat for monarchs while also supporting more than 750 schoolyard habitats and pollinator gardens. Many of the projects will focus on the I-35 corridor from Texas to Minnesota, areas that provide important spring and summer breeding habitats in the eastern population's central flyway.

The monarch may be the best-known butterfly species in the United States. Every year they undertake one of the world's most remarkable migrations, traveling thousands of miles over many generations from Mexico, across the United States, to Canada.

The monarch's exclusive larval host plant and a critical food source is native milkweed, which has been eradicated or severely degraded in many areas across the U.S. The accelerated conversion of the continent's native short and tallgrass prairie habitat to crop production has also had an adverse impact on the monarch.

The monarch serves as an indicator of the health of pollinators across the American landscape. Conserving and connecting habitat for monarchs will benefit other plants, animals and important insect and avian pollinators.

A new Web site -- <http://www.fws.gov/savethemonarch> -- provides information on how Americans can get involved with the campaign.

Psssst!

Keep up-to-date and in touch with us:

Board of Director's Meetings
3rd Monday of the Month
6:30pm at the ENWR Headquarters
(Check website or call (814) 789-3585 just in case of change.)

On Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/FriendsofENWR/>

On our Website:
<http://www.friendsofenwr.org>

Friends of ENWR
c/o Erie National Wildlife Refuge
11296 Wood Duck Lane
Guys Mills, PA 16327