Forty BKAA members attended this year’s annual meeting, held once again at the Phillipstown Community Center. President Paula Medley began with a moment of silence in honor of Lorraine Haring, our Membership Chair and Corresponding Secretary, who recently passed away. Next were introductions of Kathy LaBuda, Sullivan County Legislator, and Bill Herrmann, who was running for Mamakating Supervisor.

Following these preliminaries were presentations: Bob Anderberg, Vice-President and General Counsel of the Open Space Institute excited listeners with his account of the efforts of OSI and other supportive groups in creating a Shawangunk Ridge Greenway from Port Jervis to Rosendale, just south of Kingston. A large map pinpointed OSI Protected Lands and Farms, forming a band of green spaces "interwoven" with already existing preserves such as the Shawangunk Ridge State Forest, Sam’s Point, Minnewaska State Park, and Mohonk Preserve. Bob spoke of continuing efforts to expand the Shawangunk Ridge Greenway, such as filling in gaps around the Wetlands and perhaps acquiring the 7 Peaks site.

Paula introduced the next presenter, H. Neil Zimmerman, President of the Friends of the Shawangunks and its land-trust affiliate, the Shawangunk Conservancy, by emphasizing how crucial organizations like OSI and FOS are in helping the BKAA fulfill its own mission to protect the wetlands. Neil spoke on the longstanding and ongoing efforts to save Joppenbergh Mountain in Rosendale, involving not only FOS and Shawangunk Conservancy, but also the Rosendale-based Friends of Joppenbergh and eventually Wallkill Valley Land Trust, which will oversee its management as a park preserve, once the purchase is funded.

Paula gave updates on BKAA's continuing advocacy in regard to Yukiguni Maitake, 7 Peaks, Commerce Park at Wurtsboro Airport, and the Bashkerkill Subdivision.

In introducing Maryallison Farley, speaking on the Nature Watch Program, Paula pointed out that BKAA's educational initiatives serve as a vitally important corollary to our advocacy efforts; and unquestionably, the Nature Watch Program is one of our most effective educational activities. Maryallison and Patricia Diness currently share leadership for the program which has been ongoing for 9 years. Some 40 volunteers participate every year for 10 to 12 weeks during the spring and summer months. And while the inception of the program was originally inspired by the
BKAA’s 40th Anniversary
Need Volunteers & Old BKAA/Basha Kill Photos & Memorabilia by Paula Medley

A retrospective, highlighting major BKAA milestones and featuring wetlands images through the years, is planned for next summer. This event will be one of several held in 2012, commemorating the BKAA’s 40th anniversary, a significant achievement for an all-volunteer organization. We anticipate partnering with the Mamakating Historical Society in producing an impressive show.

Its success, however, depends upon the generosity of members and friends willing to loan their BKAA/Basha Kill treasures for others’ enjoyment and enlightenment. If interested in joining this exciting venture, contact BKAA via email — info@thebashakill.org; snail mail — BKAA P.O. Box 1121, Wurtsboro, NY 12790; or voice mail — Paula Medley 845-754-0743. Presently, we need to know only the type and amount of material potentially available. We will not take possession of anything at this point. An anniversary committee will review and organize and present submissions. We hope to have many participants!

A committee will be formed to organize all functions celebrating the BKAA’s 40th anniversary in 2012. Besides the historical retrospective, several other activities have been discussed and are likely prospects. The BKAA board will determine committee members, who will work closely with organization leaders throughout the year’s festivities. If interested, notify the BKAA, via the contacts outlined above. We look forward to a great response!

Mail Bag
Dear BKAA,
Re: “Birds of Sullivan - A Photographic Exhibition”
This was a wonderful success as an event to stimulate beginner interest in birding and the Bashakill! Thanks for contributing.

Cheers, Lisa Lyons
Morgan Outdoors

Written on Membership application:
We love Maine, but many years of birding at the Bashakill keeps it in our hearts.

Phyllis Coelho
Belfast Maine

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Basha Kill Area Association, Inc., P.O. Box 1121, Wurtsboro, NY 12790
President: Paula Medley -- Vice-President: Anita Altman -- Treasurer: Monique Lipton
Corresponding Secretary/Membership: Marcia Briggs Wallace -- Recording Secretary: Susan Erny
Board Members: Jackie Broder -- Fred Harding -- Bill Lucas
Jon Reed -- Marcia Briggs Wallace
Newsletter Editor: Buff McAllister -- Publicity: Susan O’Neill

Mission Statement: Since our founding in 1972, our mission has been to protect the Basha Kill Wetlands and surrounding area from ecological degradation, to promote education and respect for the environment in general, and to preserve the beauty of the area.

We welcome new members who are interested in protecting the environment.
Dues are $10.00 per person per year.
BKAA is a non-profit corporation, and donations are deductible to the extent allowed by law.
website: www.thebashakill.org
39th Annual Meeting (continued from page 1)

appearance of a nesting pair of bald eagles, it has grown to encompass all species populating the Wetlands. Powerful spotting scopes have facilitated the activities of the volunteers. More broadly, as she noted, one cannot overestimate how valuable direct experience with the wetlands and its wildlife has been.

Maryallison, Patricia, and Nature Watch volunteers have also been active in collecting data on the number of Nature Watch participants who patronize local businesses and restaurants, data that has been important in showing local politicians that this cherished natural resource provides economic benefits to the community. Maryallison concluded her remarks with an account of the rescue, rehabilitation, and successful release of a young eagle at the Bashas Kill, featured in the Autumn 2011 Guardian.

Perhaps the most daunting advocacy challenges now facing the BKAA and all other environmentally concerned organizations in our region are the threats posed by (1) casino development, and (2) gas drilling and fracking.

Dave Colavito, who makes invaluable contributions to the BKAA with his regular updates on both in the Guardian, gave the audience an informative overview of the DEC’s 1100-page Draft SGEIS (Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement) This can be read in its entirety as an “action alert” on the BKAA web site; and Paula can provide hard copies for those who are interested. Dave urged the audience to make public comments either in writing or at a public hearing. He also recommended the organization Catskill Citizens for Safe Energy as a good source of information for those interested in remaining informed and involved.

The next item of business was the election of officers and board members. The slate, presented by Catherine Abate, included: Paula Medley, President; Anita Altman, Vice-President; Monique Lipton, Treasurer; Marcia Briggs Wallace, Membership Chair and Corresponding Secretary; Susan Erny, Recording Secretary; and Jackie Broder, Fred Harding, and Jon Reed, Board Members. As there were no nominations from the floor, the slate was unanimously approved.

Always a high point of our annual meetings is the recognition of outstanding service on the part of BKAA members and volunteers. Bob and Marilyn Fiore were recognized for the absolutely fabulous lunches they put together every year for our spring clean-up event. And they don’t stop with the lunch; all leftovers are transported and contributed to local food pantries.

Hattie Grifo, former BKAA Board Member and current Director of the Cragmoor Free Library, was recognized for her vitally important service, coordinating our on-line "action alerts" and the e-mailing of the Guardian to members who wish to receive it electronically.

Matt Migliaccio, President of the Phillipsport Community Center, accepted an award recognizing PCC members for generously hosting our annual meetings and supporting our organization in other ways. Each honoree received a beautiful, inventive, “custom-designed” and framed certificate created by Paula’s sister, Sue Grabowski.

Finally, the Elizabeth Pollock Great Blue Heron Award was bestowed posthumously on Lorraine Haring, remembered at the start of the meeting. This award, a framed photograph of a blue heron taken by Gary Keeton at the Bashas Kill, is our highest honor; it has been given on only four previous occasions. Lorraine’s husband, Vic Haring, accepted the award after Paula eloquently and movingly spoke of Lorraine’s service to the BKAA.

The annual meeting closed with a bit of light-heartedness—a “door prize raffle,” much to the delight of the successful ticket holders. Among the door prizes was a stunning mirror, in a gold-leafed, hand painted frame, which was won by Catherine Abate. In an inspired and memorable moment, Catherine turned and presented the mirror back to Paula, in recognition of the extraordinary service she performs as President of the BKAA every day of the year. Thank you Catherine! And, of course, thank you Paula!

Thanks are also due to Bill Lucas, our PCC liaison, Mike Medley, and Jon Reed for their work in setting up for the meeting the day before, to Jackie Broder and Monique Lipton for handling reception and registration, to PCC and BKAA member Alva Jones, for contributing a delicious homemade dessert to our refreshment table, and to Susan Erny for partnering with me in planning, purchasing, setting up and clearing up all the other refreshments.
2012 Calendar of Events  (meet at Haven Rd (Rte 209 side) parking lot unless otherwise indicated)

Saturday, January 21, 10am
Cross Country Skiing with Mike Medley
Flat terrain on D&H Canal towpath great for beginners and intermediates. Dress in layers; bring water. Lasts at least 3 hours. Weather permitting. Call Mike to register and/or check snow conditions at (845)754-0743.

Sunday, February 12, 10am
Take Your Valentine Cross Country Skiing with Mike Medley
Enjoy the Basha Kill’s beauty once again on the D&H Canal towpath. Dress in layers; bring water. Excursion lasts at least 3 hours. Weather permitting. Call Mike to register and/or check snow conditions at (845)754-0743.

Saturday, March 24, 8am
NEW! Wonderful Waterfowl with John Haas
(Alternate date, Sunday, April 1 if a late deep freeze).
You will see an array of migrating waterfowl and learn to differentiate between the many species who stop here on their way north. Boots may help as we also will walk the Birch Trail (can be wet this time of year) from South Road boat launch to see ducks, geese, mergansers from this productive locale. Call John to register and/or check outing’s status at (845)888-0240.

Saturday, March 31st, 9:30am- noon
Nature Watch Training
Come to this training to learn about bald eagle biology and the Basha Kill ecosystem so you can volunteer with the Nature Watch Program. If you love the Basha Kill and like to talk with people, this program is for you! Includes a variety of presentations with slideshow on wildlife/plants and explanation of the program. After training, you sign up for three shifts (three hours each) on Saturdays and Sundays from mid-April through early July. Call Maryallison Farley at 845-888-0261 to register.

Saturday, April 14, 7:45pm
Star Walk with Bob Fiore
(Rain date Saturday, April 21)
Very dependent on weather! Call Bob to register and/or check trip’s status at (845) 498-9001.

Saturday, April 21, 9:30-10am
(Registration and site assignments)
31st Annual Basha Kill Clean-up
Celebrate Earth Day! Enjoy a walk and fresh spring air while ridding the wetlands of debris. Garbage bags provided. Wear boots, work gloves, and insect repellent. Bring chairs as lunch, supplied by the BKAA, will be eaten alfresco in the Haven Road DEC parking lot (209 side); also event’s registration site. BKAA merchandise will be on sale and door prizes awarded. Call Paula Medley at (845)754-0743 for further information.

Weekends from
Saturday, April 21 through Sunday, July 1
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Nature Watch at the South Road Boat Launch
Join trained BKAA Nature Watch Volunteers at South Road boat launch to learn more about many residents of this amazing wetland. View the nesting bald eagles and other birds. Equipped with two powerful spotting scopes and lots of information, the volunteers will help you get to know the Basha Kill a little better. Bring your children, other family members and friends of all ages for some fun in the outdoors! Call Maryallison Farley at 845-888-0261 or Patricia Dines at 845-386-5024 for more details.

Saturday, May 5, 8am
Spring Bird Migration with John Haas
Join John Haas at parking lot at Orchard and Stop Sign Trail--South Road side to view spring migrants, ranging from Warblers to Vireos, Orioles, and more. We begin our walk here, then move to the Nature Trail off South Road, past the main boat launch. Call John to register and/or for more information at (845)888-0240.

Saturday, May 19, 10am
Hike to Gobbler’s Knob with Mike Medley
Enjoy views of a beautiful 650-acre Shawangunk Ridge property, which is also site of the proposed Basherkill Subdivision. The hike gains 450 vertical feet from the parking area to the Knob, which is almost 1,000 feet high. Wear comfortable, sturdy shoes; bring water. Trip takes two hours. Meet at South Road fishing platform (Westbrookville end). To register or for more information, contact Mike at (845)754-0743.
Sunday, May 20, 10am

**Spring Wildflowers with John Kenney**
See first blossoms of the season. Call John to register and/or for more details at (845)436-6046.

Sunday, June 3, 10am

**Happy for Herps with Bill Cutler**
Join herpetologist Bill Cutler on a search for amphibians and reptiles. Kids as well as adults love learning about them. Call Bill to register and/or for additional information at (845)807-0291.

Saturday, June 16, 10am

**History of D&H Canal with Gary Keeton**
Join Gary for a walk through time. Ever wonder about local stone walls and foundations? Curious about how people farmed the rocky soils or the relationship between the Bash Kill and Pine Kill? Oh, and learn about the canal, too! Meet at the DEC access road on Route 209 across from the Pinekill Deli in Westbrookville. Contact Gary at (845)386-4892 for particulars.

Saturday, June 24, 10am

**Blooms and Butterflies with John Kenney**
See the next wave of wildflowers and a beautiful array of butterflies. Call John to register and/or for further information at (845)436-6046.

Tuesday, July 3, 8:30pm

**NEW! Moonlight Canoe/Kayak Adventure with Scott Graber and Mike Medley**
Experience the Bash Kill from a unique perspective! Must bring your own vessel. Meet at South Road Boat Launch. Register and check trip’s status with Mike at (845)754-0743.

Saturday, July 14, 8am to 10am

**NEW! Natural History Walk with Jack Austin**
Stroll 2-3 miles on level terrain with naturalist Jack Austin as you see and listen to what is nesting, growing, and maturing in mid-summer. Wear good walking shoes as there may be wet areas and bring insect repellant. Meet at the Stop Sign parking area, off Haven Road (South Road side). For information, contact Jack at (845)856-0706 or cell at (845)649-8720.

Saturday, August 4, 10am

**History of the D&H Canal with Gary Keeton**
A reprise of the June walk. Meet at DEC access road on Route 209 across from the Pinekill Deli in Westbrookville. Contact Gary at (845)386-4892 for details.

Saturday, August 11, 6am

**Sunrise Walk with Gary Keeton**
Rise and shine! Enjoy the Bash Kill’s wonders from a different view. Call Gary at (845)386-4892 for information.

Saturday, September 1, 8:15pm

**Moonlight Walk with Gary Keeton**
Amble along Haven Road and the Railroad Trail. Enjoy moonrise over the ridge as you discuss the area’s natural history. Contact Gary at (845)386-4892 for additional facts.

Saturday, September 22, 10am

**Cano/kayak the Bash Kill with Scott Graber and Mike Medley**
Join naturalists Scott and Mike for a late season venture on this first day of autumn. Bring your own vessel. Meet at the South Road Boat Launch. Call Mike at (845)754-0743 to register and for more details.

Sunday, September 30, 9:30am

**Hike the Shawangunk Ridge with Mike Medley**
Moderately difficult hike, lasting 4-5 hours. Wear comfortable sturdy shoes and bring water and lunch. Meet at the D&H Canal Kiosk at the Pat Moore Memorial Picnic Grove on Sullivan Street in Wurtsboro. Must register by calling Mike at (845)754-0743.

Sunday, October 7, 9:45am

**NEW! Hike the Minisink Trail at Huckleberry State Forest in the Town of Greenville with Mike Medley**
Join Mike on a beautiful 5-mile loop hike on the Shawangunk Ridge. Wear comfortable sturdy shoes and bring water and lunch. There are two ways to reach the trailhead. 1. Travel independently. Find directions to the trailhead and the hike’s description on the NY/NJ Trail Conference website, www.nynjtc.org - type “Minisink Trail” in the site’s search box. 2. Carpool or travel in a caravan led by Mike. Meet at South Road fishing platform (Westbrookville end) at 9:00am. Absolutely must register for this trip by calling Mike at (845)754-0743.
Gas Drilling Update by Dave Colavito

The Delaware River Basin Commission’s (DRBC) vote on regulations to govern gas drilling in the Basin has been postponed from November 21, 2011 to a date as yet to be determined. Indications suggest DRBC – consisting of governors for the states of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware and a representative from the federal government – didn’t have the votes needed to pass those regulations. Delaware’s Governor, Jack Markell, made clear concerns that many of us have shared for some time. As a down-stream state for much of the gas development that could potentially occur in the Basin, he seems keenly aware that his state could be disproportionately affected from efforts to move forward in the midst of so many concerns and unanswered questions.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has been conducting a series of public hearings on their draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement for gas development with high volume hydraulic fracturing. The November 29, 2011 hearing sessions held in Sullivan County were well attended. It remains unclear when definitive actions beyond these hearings will be undertaken by DEC, but it’s safe to say that many comments will be received and will take time to process.

Emotions run high at these hearings – that’s expected and understandable. But actual testimony presented on the document itself was very much under represented. In my opinion that’s unfortunate, because in this instance substantial opportunities existed to point out deficiencies within the document. Emotional reactions may feel good and are an important part of the process, but neglecting to address actual content forecloses on important opportunities – something to perhaps keep in mind going forward.

DEC’s deadline for submitting written comments on the dSGEIS has been extended to January 11, 2011. As mentioned in prior Guardian updates, written comments can be submitted at one of the remaining public hearings, via the DEC web-based form, or snail mail. See DEC’s website for additional details.

New City for Mamakating by Anita Altman

There has still been no apparent action by Mamakating’s town government to fulfill its board’s directive, voted at a March meeting, to proceed with demolition of dangerous buildings on the former Homowack property. In response to concerns raised by local residents at a pre-election candidates’ meeting in October, all Town Supervisor Baird could respond was, “the lawyers are discussing.”

However, with the full knowledge of the Mamakating Buildings Department, the current owners have begun to remove the massive mold infestation, which was so graphically described more than 2 years ago in a newspaper interview with the Summitville Fire Chief. There has been no indication of what their current plans are for the building.

A keen-eyed neighbor flagged a notice of tax-non-payment for several of the smaller properties still owned by Ulster Mountain and Ulster River LLC. The Sullivan County Treasurer’s office advises that the companies will have until June to pay these back taxes, and that after that they will be put up for auction.

I am grateful to my two neighbors who were alert to activities affecting the former Homowack property, and who were in contact about it. If you learn anything or observe any activity regarding the former Homowack property, please do let us know by emailing: Valley209keeper@yahoo.com

Wurtsboro Renaissance by Jon Reed

Our last meeting for this year was held at Benny’s Cafe, 171 Sullivan Street, on Tuesday, November 29th. We elected officers for next year: President-Bill Maher, Vice-President-Lyman Holmes, Secretary-Pat Talbot, Treasurer-Georgia Rampe.

Our next meeting will be held at the same place, on Tuesday, February 28th at 6:30pm. All who are interested are invited to attend. This year’s project; marking the D&H Canal Path through the village, is about to be settled. It requires that the Town of Mamakating and Orange and Rockland Utilities agree on a few minor points along the route. They are in agreement and the completion should occur in the spring.

Come join us in February and help decide the next project.
Updates by Paula Medley

YUKIGUNI MAITAKE (YM): YM still has not submitted its building permit application nor the detailed construction drawings that must accompany it, thereby delaying earliest pilot plant groundbreaking to spring 2012. To facilitate communication of YM updates from Mamakating’s Building Department, consulting engineer Andy Willingham conveyed BKAA recommendations in the letter below, followed by the Building Inspector’s responses. The latter clearly underscores the Building Department’s obstructive approach and disregard for Mamakating residents’ concerns.

David Clouser & Associates

Ms. Mary Grass, Building Inspector
Town of Mamakating Building Dept.

Re: Review of Building Construction Drawings

Dear Ms. Grass:

As you may know, our office has been engaged by the Bashakill Area Association (BKAA) to review the building construction drawings with regard to the above mentioned Yukiguni Mushroom Plant Project. As we understand, the Applicant will likely be submitting detailed building construction drawings to your Department in the near future. Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL), our office hereby requests to obtain copies and provide a detailed review of the drawings subsequent to their submittal to your Department. The focus of our review will be the proposed Building’s design with regard to conformance with any conditions associated with previous project approvals.

We respectfully request the following tasks be completed [by] your Department:

Notification of both our office and the BKAA by your Department that the Applicant has submitted drawings or other information for review. I am the contact person from our office and Paula Medley is the contact person for and president of the BKAA. Mrs. Medley’s phone number is (845) 754-0743 and her email address is info@bashakill.org

A building permit not be issued until our office has conducted a detailed review of the drawings and formal comments have been submitted by our office to your department. We do not anticipate that our review and comment will take more than 2 weeks after receipt of the drawings.

We sincerely appreciate your assistance in this matter and look forward to our review of the drawings. Please don’t hesitate to call with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
Andrew Willingham, David Clouser & Assoc.

Text of email dated Tuesday, September 27, 2011

Hi Paula,

Per our phone call, it made sense to document our recent phone correspondence with the Mamakating Building Department for the record.

On 9/21/11, we received a photo copy of our 9/6/11 letter to Mary Grass of the building department with a note on the bottom that read "As per building dept. no application has been submitted as of yet" (copy attached). I couldn’t tell what the initials read, but the envelope return address was Town Clerk Jean Dougherty. After receiving this you decided that we should contact Mary Grass to remind her that we were not just requesting if Yukiguni had submitted an application, but we specifically noted in our letter that both our office and you would like to be notified in the future when an application has been submitted.

Mary Grass and I played a little phone tag this afternoon, then I finally spoke with her at about 4:15. I indicated our concern regarding future notification and the opportunity to review the plans and Ms. Grass replied that they were "very busy" and she couldn’t promise that she’d remember to notify us" when an application has been received. She said we were "welcome to FOIL in the future". I suggested that it might be easier for her to just notify us than for them to receive regular phone calls and letters from the BKAA or our office. She reiterated that they were very busy and seemed to make it clear that she wasn’t willing to notify us.

Andy

7 PEAKS, COMMERCE PARK AT WURTSBORO AIRPORT, and BASHERKILL SUBDIVISION: There is nothing new to report on these developments.
Local Artists’ Group Draws Inspiration From The Basha Kill

by David Munford

Local area artists and photographers have long sought their creative muses among the scenic wetlands and shores of the Basha Kill. The natural beauty of the Kill and surrounding area provides a veritable well-spring of subject matter and inspiration for the creative imagination. Given that, it’s not surprising that many members of the Wurtsboro Art Alliance are also BKAA members and supporters.

The Wurtsboro Art Alliance is a non-profit organization whose mission is “to encourage and promote art and artists from the regional area.” The WAA was formed in the spring of 2006 at the initiative of local resident and artist John Neilson. During the first year the group held its meetings and art exhibitions at the Valley Brook Inn, in Wurtsboro.

In early 2007 Mamakating Town Supervisor, Charles Penna, offered the WAA its own gallery space in the Parks and Recreation Department building located at 73 Sullivan Street in Wurtsboro. Through the combined effort and community spirit of the Mamakating Town Board, and generous funding by New York State Senator John Bonacic, the Wurtsboro Art Alliance Gallery was opened.

Since then the WAA has grown from its original six members to more than 50 current members. As an arts organization, we strive to “work together to provide the public with a dynamic and versatile presentation depicting the surrounding area and the world at large.”

That surrounding area includes the Basha Kill. In conjunction with the BKAA’s upcoming 40th anniversary next year, the WAA will be hosting events to help celebrate this amazing and unique habitat area that is located right here in our own backyard.

We are currently in the process of putting together our 2012 season schedule and are planning a series of artist field trips to the Basha Kill, in which groups of artists and photographers can work “en plein air” and explore the area’s abundant subject matter. The 2012 Wurtsboro Art Alliance exhibition schedule will also include a show dedicated to artwork inspired by the Basha Kill. It is our hope that presenting an art exhibit of the Basha Kill will help raise awareness and appreciation of this important local resource in addition to providing the enjoyment of beautiful and imaginative works of art.

As a local community based arts organization, we feel it is important to support other local businesses and organizations while helping to protect our unique and beautiful natural area. New members and inquiries are always welcome. For more information, visit: www.waagallery.org, or email: info@waagallery.org.

The Wurtsboro Art Alliance Gallery is located at 73 Sullivan Street, Wurtsboro, NY, and is open Saturdays and Sundays from 12-4 p.m., or by appointment. We are currently hosting our Annual Holiday Show, featuring an assortment of original works of art including: paintings, watercolors, ceramics, prints, note cards and more, all made by local area artists. The show runs through December 18th, after which the gallery will close for the winter and will re-open in the spring of 2012. Consider giving the gift of art this holiday season, and help support local artists!

David Munford is a BKAA member and President of the Wurtsboro Art Alliance. He can be reached at: 845-985-7663.

The author painting “en plein air” at the Basha Kill

Photo by Barbara Restaino

Contact the BKAA:
Paula Medley 845-754-0743 between 10 am & 8 pm
Email address: info@thebashakill.org
Website: bkaa@earthlink.net
Nature Watch Annual Fundraiser by Patricia Diness

The third annual Nature Watch fund raiser was a great success. Once again we were hosted by Paul Deninno, owner of the Basha Kill Vineyards. Paul is a generous supporter of the BKAA, and allowing us to use his delightful vineyard for this event is much appreciated. Paul also donates the wine-tasting costs, and this year even added his own oven fired pizza!

The highlight of the afternoon – other than the wine and pizza – was a presentation of live birds. Giselle Smisko of the Avian Wildlife Center in Wantage, NJ, brought several birds for the crowd to see up close and personal. These were all birds that can be seen at the Basha Kill (if you are lucky enough to spot them). A tiny screech owl kept an eye on Giselle throughout his program.

The red-bellied woodpecker gently pecked on her hand as she held it and fed it grapes. The bird’s incredibly long tongue would dart out and grab the grape, showing the audience how they extract insects from tiny crevices and holes in trees. Truly amazing! The Baltimore oriole (now known as a northern oriole) and a bluebird shared a cage companionably. The last bird that Giselle brought out was a red-tailed hawk. All of these birds have been rescued, and are unable to be released back to the wild. There were many questions, and Giselle had the answers and stories to back them up.

Giselle Smisko has the full attention of the crowd.

There were three raffle prizes this year. Two photographs of our fledgling eagle as she was released after rehabilitation for a broken radius. These were generously donated by Jim Carney and Linda Bartle. Linda also donated an original oil painting of a bald eagle.

The winners were all very thrilled with their prizes. The oil painting was won by a lady from England, who was very excited to be taking it home with her – especially as she got to meet the artist in person.

With close to 120 attendees, the vineyard was a busy place. In addition to the opportunity to get reacquainted with old friends, and meet new and interesting people -we raised $2,405 which will go into the general fund of the BKAA!

Watch future Guardian issues for news about next year’s Annual Fundraiser. We hope to see you there.
Thanks to fundraiser supporters!

Thanks to the following who attended this highly successful BKAA Nature Watch Fundraiser and/or purchased event raffle tickets. We regret any omissions or misspellings!

Jim Carney – Patricia Davis – Brad and Cathy Dawkins – Ralph Della Pia – Paul Deninno – Helen DePrado
David and Patricia Diness – Pat DiStefano – Gary Dodd – Connie Duquette – Maryallison Farley – Allan & Judy Frank
Mary Gabsky – Dave Goggins – Bill Graziano & Kirsten Gabrielsen – John H Haas – Mark and Lisa Hackett
Bob Halberstoldt & Cande Zaret – Fred Harding & Cindy Coker – Ed and Kate Fox
Eileen Lake – Mary LeBeau – Melinda Meddaugh – Michael & Paula Medley – Mitch Oppesnick
Phil and Bonnie Paterno – Jon Reed – Kevin Riehle & April Lapidus – JoAnne Rivera – Gloria Rothstein
Salvatore Tornabene – Joel & Cynthia Weintraub – Andy Weil & Eileen Haworth Weil – Walter Whitney – Matt Zietler

Summitville Hawk Watch 2011 by John Haas

The Summitville Hawk Watch conducted hawk counts from the Shawangunk Ridge from 9/1 through 11/4/11. We are located at the Fire Tower on Fire Tower Road in the town of Mamakating, overlooking Wurtsboro and the Bashakill WMA. Extreme weather conditions dominated much of the season and resulted in totals lower than half of our previous seasons. Rain was the major factor with most of September experiencing higher than normal rainfall. An unusual wind pattern followed the rain, resulting in many birds taking alternate migration routes. That said, we still had some interesting flights and good birds. Here is a chart of the totals of each species for the season.

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Don’t Forget! The BKAA email address is info@thebashakill.org
Looking Back, Looking Forward: Justina Burton  by Susan Erny

Justina Burton was an extremely active BKAA Board Member during a very crucial time: 1999 to 2001. In that period, Sol Kaufman’s 300-acre farm on Pennsylvania Avenue was up for sale, Mamakating’s Master Plan underwent major revision, a resort was proposed above Wurtsboro Hills, and Kohl’s planned to build a distribution center. Justina spent countless hours, along with other BKAA board members, in an effort to protect the fragile environment. In her own words, "The BKAA has evolved to reflect the times because the whole area is evolving." These two years proved to be a time of upheaval and transformation for the BKAA and Mamakating.

The Burtons purchased a weekend house in 1988 in Westbrookville. She and Mark quickly became acquainted with the Basha Kill and just loved its uniqueness. When one of BKAA’s Annual Meeting flyers caught Justina’s eye, she attended, then joined the association in 1988. In 1992 Justina retired as a data processing manager in Manhattan and Mark from building construction. They wanted a sunny spot where they could garden so they moved to a lovely hillside home on South Road. Justina’s heightened involvement began when she and Mark learned that Sol Kaufman, the elderly farmer from whom they had bought straw for their garden, could not continue to run his farm and wanted the land to be kept forever wild. Sol’s property borders the Kill. Justina fervently started to work with Open Space Institute, Trust for Public Land, Nature Conservancy and DEC to try to buy the farm to maintain its natural beauty. With this cause in mind, Justina attended some BKAA meetings and was signed on as a board member in 1999. Unfortunately, after months of planning and consideration of different options, it turned out that Sol’s cousins legally owned half of the farm and they chose instead to sell it for commercial development. It has not yet been developed.

Due to the changes in Mamakating’s proposed Master Plan, BKAA had a great concern for the property Kohl’s had purchased at the headwaters of the Kill. Justina and other board members attended Town Board meetings regularly. One of Justina’s roles was to coordinate different local groups to discuss the proposed Master Plan zoning: Yankee Lake Assn, Wurtsboro Hills Assn, Shawangunk Ridge Coalition, Friends of the Shawangunks, Ducks Unlimited, and NY Audubon Society. She also set up meetings with the Town Board and Supervisor Mary Barbulti to form a better working relationship with BKAA. In March 2000, Justina gave a presentation to the Mamakating Rotarians. She worked to spread the word to the public; she collected signatures on petitions. The Wurtsboro Hills resort did not come to fruition, though the Master Plan’s new zoning clearly provided for such a major resort.

Justina and two other members met with Kohl’s engineer to exchange ideas about the proposed development. Kohl’s complied with everything BKAA asked for such as a parking lot surface that would allow water to percolate down, special lighting fixtures to reduce “light pollution,” and restricting trucks from running while loading so that fuel and fumes were minimized. The result was that BKAA officially came out as “neutral,” to Kohl’s development plan.

Hundreds of townspeople attended the public hearings on the Master Plan and Kohl’s to voice opposition. The Board turned a deaf ear, adopting the Master Plan in March 2001 and giving Kohl’s approval to build. Many were disappointed. In July 2001 BKAA filed an Article 78 lawsuit against the Town for failing to fulfill the State Environmental Quality Review process with the Master Plan. While the judge did not rule in our favor, the suit made a strong statement to the officials of Mamakating that we were serious about protecting the environment. This was a period of turmoil and major change in Mamakating. Through it all, Justina was a true ambassador for the Basha Kill.

Sadly, it was during this time that Justina’s husband, Mark, became ill. In order to meet his health needs, Justina resigned from the BKAA Board, but still assisted our cause when she could. She continues to be a very caring, compassionate caregiver to her dear husband.

One issue near and dear to Justina’s heart is invasive species. Plant species such as Phragmites and Purple Loosestrife can have a devastating effect on an ecosystem. Justina was part of a BKAA committee that worked to remove invasives along Haven Road. It was unsuccessful. Justina notes that invasive species are in many ways harder to deal with than development.

Justina has always been the kind of person who, when she sees a problem, she wants to help. The BKAA has been very fortunate to be on the receiving end of that helpful spirit. We are grateful to Justina for her enduring commitment to the Basha Kill.
BKAA Participates in Rotary Community Day by Monique Lipton

The Wurtsboro Airport was a hub of activity on Saturday October 8th for the Drive In/Fly In Breakfast and Community Day sponsored by the Mamakating Rotary Club. After the recent rains and floods experienced in the area, the warm and sunny weather enticed many to check out the event. Local community groups, like the BKAA, along with the VFW, Boys Scouts, and Mamakating Library were represented, as were several area businesses.

I spoke to Terry Stiano, Vice President of the Mamakating Rotary Club about her organization and the Community Day. As she explained, Rotary is an international group comprised of local chapters of business owners and professionals. Although the organization consists of business owners and professionals it is not directly involved in promoting the commercial activities of its members. This, I was told, is the function of the local Board of Trade. Rather, the Rotary Club meetings and sponsored service projects facilitate networking opportunities for members. Terry Stiano also explained that Rotary’s main purpose is to provide humanitarian service to local communities and around the world.

Locally the Mamakating chapter has been involved with the Boy Scouts and with projects at the Mamakating Park. I was particularly struck when I learned that one of the major international projects currently supported by Rotary Clubs worldwide focuses on enabling communities to have access to clean water, especially in lesser developed countries where access to clean water is now limited. I found this to be so interesting since, as everyone knows, one of the goals of the BKAA is to preserve the wetland environment of the Basha Kill and to monitor the health of the water there. Who knew that 2 such different groups - the BKAA and the Rotary Club - would both be involved in projects focusing on clean water?

So, the Mamakating Community Day not only provided an opportunity for residents to get acquainted with area businesses and organizations, it also allowed local groups to learn more about each other. And since everyone’s ultimate goal is to be a positive force in the community perhaps the more that is shared and learned, the more mutual goals can be achieved.

BKAA Member Catherine Abate and members of local Boy Scouts troop visit with BKAA President Paula Medley during Community Day event. Photo by Monique Lipton

Kohl’s and the BKAA Collaborate on Basha Kill Cleanup by Paula Medley

Despite showers signifying Hurricane Irene’s approach, twelve employees of Kohl’s Distribution Center in Wurtsboro joined a dozen BKAA members to rid the wetlands of noxious debris on Saturday, August 27.

Kohl’s involvement emanates from the company’s Associates in Action program, whose mission states, “We believe that everybody has the ability to make a difference. Our associates are making a difference in the lives of children by volunteering for youth serving nonprofit organizations and environmental initiatives that benefit youth serving nonprofit organizations. When a minimum of five associates from one location volunteer at least three consecutive hours of their time with a qualifying organization, Associates help the nonprofit earn a grant,” in this case, $500.00 for the BKAA! The BKAA meets Associates in Action criteria, because we are a nonprofit fostering children’s environmental awareness through myriad educational venues.

Jim Eggleton, a Kohl’s supervisor and an invaluable facilitator, was the liaison between the distribution center and the BKAA. Other Kohl’s participants were: Karl Dymond, Martin Feery, Taylor Frank, Scott Frost, Bill Kinne, JoAnn Koch-Quon, and Johnny Valentin. BKAA volunteers numbered Linda Lou Bartle, Jackie Broder, Stephen and

(continued on page 13)
Kohl’s & BKAA on Cleanup (continued)

Susan Erny, Fred Harding, John Lavelle, Monique Lipton, Bill Lucas, Michael and Paula Medley, and Jon Reed.

Within three hours, significant refuse was collected and recycled. Special thanks to Thompson Sanitation of Rock Hill for again donating an enormous dumpster and later removing it. Additionally, kudos to Linda and Jackie for conducting activities, including a scavenger hunt, for several Kohl’s employees’ children.

This was the first time our group has cooperated with a local business in this manner. It likewise was the initial Basha Kill visit for some Kohl’s participants, who hopefully will return to the wetlands and enjoy hiking, fishing, boating or birdwatching.

Many thanks to the hardworking, committed Kohl’s volunteers and to Associates in Action, which was the catalyst for this undertaking. Kohl’s and the BKAA are part of the same community and, as such, will seek future opportunities to unite in common efforts.

A Girl Scout Troop’s Journey

by Stacey Vendy, Girl Scout Troop #658

Brownie Troop #658 was scheduled to meet with Mike Medley from the BKAA on October 2, 2011 to hike the Basha Kill and learn about the wetlands, watersheds, and wildlife that inhabit this area. Due to excessive flooding, it was unsafe to hike around the Basha Kill as originally planned. Instead, the Troop gathered at the Pat Moore Memorial Picnic Grove on Sullivan Street in Wurtsboro, NY.

The Girls in Troop #658 are starting their Wonders of Water Journey. A Girl Scout journey is a new way that girls can experience Scouting. The journey, which follows a designated theme, usually lasts over several sessions or meetings, and gives the Brownies the opportunity to earn four awards. I asked to meet with Mr. Medley because I believe an outdoor learning experience increases respect for nature, provides hands on learning opportunities, and builds a sense of belonging to one’s community.

Mr. Medley enticed the girls by having them sit around a table covered with “props” to support his presentation. Panoramic photos of the Basha Kill, snapping turtle shells, animal skulls, and pictures of the variety of animals that inhabit Basha Kill covered the table. In interviewing the girls afterwards, I found that they unanimously thought one prop was best; a book about birds that allowed the user to hear actual bird calls!

During Mr. Medley’s presentation we learned what a wetland is, and how it can provide a habitat for fish, plants, and animals. We learned how wetlands improve water quality, and replenish ground water. We also learned how human activities directly impact the health of wetlands. Most importantly, we learned how we can love and respect water by recognizing it as an invaluable, natural resource that WE all need to protect and keep clean.

Mr. Medley also prepared a scavenger hunt along a wooded trail by the D & H Canal. The girls had to locate a variety of Basha Kill themed prizes, such as small wooden bird houses, animal pens, small animal/bird figurines, and educational cards. The girls tore through the woods leaving no leaf unturned (literally!!!)

The girls gained valuable knowledge about the Basha Kill and surrounding wetlands, and their time with Mr. Medley provided them with important information for their Wonders of Water Journey. Brownie Troop #658 would like to extend our sincere thanks to Paula and Mike Medley and BKAA.
Fall Canoe/Kayak Trip by Scott Graber

This year, the autumn BKAA canoe/kayak paddle was held on September 11 - a bit earlier than normal. Sixteen inquisitive members attended the annual event and were rewarded with great weather and plenty of water. The prior two weeks had brought heavy rains and regional flooding from two tropical storms – evident by the partially submerged main boat launch’s parking lot. It was estimated that water levels were almost two feet above normal as seen by the submerged - but normally floating – vegetation.

The Bashakill’s high water allowed a great opportunity to paddle into stretches of the marsh that are normally inaccessible from a boat in mid-September. Typically, the only route of navigation is through the always-present and predictable “main channel”. Accordingly, trip leaders Mike Medley and Scott Graber decided to guide the group northward along the eastern shore for a change of scenery. Soon after, a sharp turn was taken directly toward the west side’s well known “snag area” which is home to an Osprey nest.

It wasn’t long before a gorgeous Osprey appeared overhead and then descended to one of the snags near the nest. Paddlers who brought binoculars were treated to a nice view of the bird. Since nesting activities are over by this time of year, it’s likely that this bird was simply hanging around one of its familiar and favorite locales. But, as is often the case, it was two adult Bald Eagles who stole the day’s bird show. The eagle pair perched close to the “nest island” and allowed a fantastic view for all. It’s possible that this was the best look that any of the BKAA’s canoe trips had yet experienced of this extremely popular bird.

Unlike this past April’s trip, the sounds of red-winged blackbirds and tree swallows were noticeably absent. Most of these birds had already left for the season. Yet, throughout the morning, flurries of wood ducks were seen in hurried flight. Small groups of Mallards and Black Ducks also made quick appearances in the distant sky. At least three or four Great Blue Herons made appearances as well – with one individual offering a rather close up peek. And as the group paddled back toward the boat launch, other bird species were soon spotted. A Pileated Woodpecker flew overhead uttering its flight chatter. A few moments later, an unexpected Belted Kingfisher was silently perched in a tree along the eastern shore.

Several paddlers commented on the Red Maples along the shore. Their red and orange colors added authentic fall highlights to the day. As always, Mike Medley explained the ecological importance of the Bashakill and some of the challenges this amazing wetland currently faces from proposed nearby development.

In case you missed this year’s great day on the Bashakill, we plan to once again offer this outing next September. And a different twist on this always-popular event is being planned for early July – so stay tuned!

This photo shows the area behind the large island; it was easily accessible and our group was treated to viewing our eagle pair quietly without disturbing them.

Photo by Linda Lou Bartle

Wurtsboro NY: An airplane, above hangar at right, takes off from Wurtsboro Airport in this view from atop the Shawangunk Ridge at the hike on 9/18/11.

Photo by Tom Bushey
Sullivan County Examined by Marcia Briggs Wallace

Two well-attended public gatherings, tasked by organizers with examining the assets and needs of Sullivan County, took place in close succession early in September. The first, billed as a “focus group” around the theme “what inspires you about Sullivan County” and hosted by the Sullivan Renaissance, the Sullivan County Division of Planning, and the Economic Development Corporation, took place on September 7 at the CVI Center in Ferndale. Around 50 people took part, including Jackie Broder and me, representing the BKAA. The second, publicized as a “public forum” or “community workshop” and sponsored by the Mid-Hudson New York Regional Economic Development Council, was held at the Bethel Woods Center for the Arts on September 12. More than 100 people participated. I represented the BKAA.

Sullivan Renaissance Director, Glenn Pontier, called the Ferndale meeting to order and after brief introductory remarks, turned the proceedings over to Luis Aragon, Commissioner, Sullivan County Division of Planning and Environmental Management. Mr. Aragon set the tone for the evening straight away by asserting: we are not here to complain; we are here to focus on what is inspirational and positive. Accordingly, he asked every attendee to answer the following questions: what brought you to Sullivan County and why do you stay? He then called upon each and every person to respond. Significant for both Jackie Broder and me, was the fact that the majority of the respondents emphasized the clean air, water and the natural beauty of the region as inspirational. Next up was Karen Fisher, owner and president of a locally-based advertising and communications firm, who distributed “assignments” to each of nine tables at which participants were seated, assignments such as “design an ad to inspire someone wishing to start a new business in Sullivan County” and “design an ad to inspire a Sullivan County resident who feels negative and wants to leave...to stay.” Magic markers and large pieces of paper were everywhere in use. When the results were shared, it became apparent that all the slogans (“come for a weekend, stay for a lifetime,” for example) seemed to speak to the theme for the meeting—“what inspires you about Sullivan County.”

Shawangunk Ridge Hike by Mike Medley

On a clear, warm September Sunday morning, ten hikers met at the Pat Moore Memorial Picnic Grove in Wurtsboro to begin a four hour trek along the Shawangunk Ridge. Eight participants were newcomers and two were returnees. Tom Bushey, photographer for the Times Herald-Record was a welcome addition and took many photos on the trip (including one featured with this article on page 14).

The hike’s trailhead is at the parking area near the VFW hall (old railroad station) halfway up the Wurtsboro hill going toward Bloomingburg. White trail blazes led us onto the aqua marked Shawangunk Ridge Trail heading north. A series of moderate elevation gains brought us to interesting views of the 209 valley. From rocky outcroppings, we gazed down on the Bash Kill, Kohl’s, Wurtsboro Airport, Yukiguni Maitake site, and distant hills. Gliders from the airport were constantly being towed and released, and we witnessed their silent flights at relatively close range.

We enjoyed a quick lunch at our turnaround point (where the ridge was on fire two or three years ago) then commenced our return. Everyone was enthusiastic about our outing and really appreciated the scenery. Happily, we completed our excursion without any disastrous incidents!
Earth Day in Autumn: Live Well Be Well
by Rachael Broder, Age 12

On September 18, 2011, my mom, my sister and I went to the Harvest Festival at Bethel Woods. The theme of that day was Earth Day in Autumn: Live Well Be Well. At this festival, there were many things to do and many things to look at.

The Earth Day theme attracted many environmental groups to the festival. The groups included Delaware Highlands Conservancy, Catskill Mountain Keepers, Catskill Citizens for Safe Energy, Bethel Concerned Citizens, NYSERDA, Sustainable Sullivan, Environmental Advocates of Ny, and Damascus Citizens for Sustainability. Many of the groups, including Damascus Citizens for Sustainability, were concerned with Hydraulic Fracturing.

Other groups at the festival included Radio Catskill WJFF 90.5 FM and National Park Service Upper Delaware. The National Park Service was concerned about water safety and encouraged people to wear their life jackets. They also had a large display about wildlife found on the Delaware River. Our own Paula Medley and Marcia Briggs Wallace represented the BKAA at a lovely table full of maps, photos, newsletters, and merchandise. We also have some new members!

There was a Farmer's Market and a Craft Village at the festival as well. The Farmer's Market had produce, baked goods, honey, maple syrup products, and much more. At the Craft Village there were many jewelry, and fine art vendors, including a vendor selling clothing made from Alpaca wool. A craft tent was available for children to do various projects. There was a hay maze and a corn maze, too.

There was an assortment of other vendors, activities, and entertainment. Free yoga classes and health advice was available. Visitors were entertained by various music groups. Delaware Raptors Center was present with a program called Close Encounters with Birds of Prey. Many food vendors were there as well. I personally, had a delicious personal brick oven pizza from Benji and Jake's Pizza. I also had a delicious homemade Italian ice from Corrente's Italian Ices.

I had a wonderful time at the festival. I learned a lot and loved watching the Birds of Prey program. Bethel Woods did a wonderful job with putting on this festival. I would definitely come back next year.

Update on Jack Orth Memorial BKAA Scholarship by Jon Reed

There were no applicants for our scholarship in the Fall Semester. Fortunately we have the Spring Semester coming up beginning January 25th and we also have a new President of SUNY Sullivan. Bill Murabito. Although there on an interim basis, he is all for revitalization. Part of that includes some new policies regarding admissions and scholarships. His method is to use the scholarships as part of the admissions process to help gain good students who might not otherwise be able to attend. A proposal is being prepared for the BKAA Board's discussion.

Many Thanks to Recent Donors

Donations in Memory of Lorraine Haring:
Arlene Borko — Susan & Stephen Erny — Janina & Thomas Kelly — Nicholas & Patricia Salamone
Tree & Shrub Walk by John Kenney

Once again nature has shown us who is in charge. The hurricane Irene and the tropical storm Lee were reminders that nature rules—may it ever be so.

On Sunday morning, October 2nd, the participants were greeted by a flood that reached the parking area on Haven Road. This curtailed my walk to the immediate area.

As people gathered around I showed them a number of different acorns from the oak dominant forest we would be exploring. The red oak has a very shallow cap which usually separates when it falls to the ground. The black oak acorns have a cap that extends about halfway up the nut and usually remains attached when it falls. The chestnut oak, found on higher ground, has an acorn that separates upon impact with the ground. An interesting thing about chestnut oak acorns is that soon after hitting the ground they send out a tap root searching for a place to take root. They do not need to be buried like other acorns.

We noted the prevalence of oaks in the area. Their leaves were still mostly green. They are one of the last trees to lose their leaves; some remain on the tree all winter long. In late autumn you can look at the ridge and pick out the oak forests because they are the ones still holding leaves.

Conifers were also present: white, scotch and pitch pine and eastern hemlock were representative. Scotch pine identifiable by smooth orangish bark on the upper parts of the tree, has needles in bundles of two. Pitch pine has two needles per bundle while white pine has five.

Soon we came upon a common, but fascinating plant of the understory—witch hazel. This plant is easily identifiable by its asymmetrical leaves and distinguishable fruit pods. After the leaves fall in autumn the fruit pods pop their seeds out up to 20 ft. away. Now, in October and November the plant flowers. The narrow yellow petals look like broken plane propellers. This late season blooming has earned it the colloquial name “winter bloom.” An extract of the bark has long been used medicinally.

Upon our return to the parking lot we discussed the assaults on our forests by infestations and a warming climate. Nature is very resilient, but the pace of change has quickened and it is yet to be seen if nature can adapt as quickly.

Water Testing Committee
by Jackie Broder

The John Winkler Memorial Water Testing Committee has been meeting to test chosen sites. Those who have volunteered have been contacted and will be meeting with the committee in the near future. It is still not too late to volunteer! If you are interested, please call Jackie at (845) 888-4917.

Welcome to New Members!
Connie Duquette — Larry Litchfield — Jane Gordon
Keith Hengerle — Maryann Sabia — Nick Salamone
Kathy Scullion — Jeffrey Slade & Ruth Diem
Susanne Spring

Tell a Friend about the Basha Kill Area Association, Inc.
Have your friends fill out this coupon for membership or more information. P.O. Box 1121, Wurtsboro, NY 12790

Yes, I'm interested in the environment and wish to become a member of BKAA. Enclosed is:

______$10.00 for membership ______Other donation ______Please send more information.

Name__________________________________________Phone____________________

Address__________________________________________Email ___________________

(for action alerts)
Lorraine Haring - In Memoriam
by Paula Medley

It is with profound sadness that the BKAA announces the passing on September 19 of longtime board member, Lorraine Haring.

Recognizing her outstanding service to the organization and environment, the BKAA was to have conferred its highest accolade, the Elizabeth Pollock Great Blue Heron Award, upon Lorraine at its Annual Meeting on October 15. While not to be, Lorraine knew of this honor and was thrilled, realizing it validated years of environmental activism (bestowed posthumously and accepted on his “honey’s” behalf by husband Vic). Ironically, this award was conceived in 1997, Lorraine’s initial year on the board.

Throughout most of her fourteen-year tenure, she executed the demanding board responsibilities of Membership Chair and Corresponding Secretary. Newcomers were introduced to the BKAA via her “welcome” packets and donors received heartfelt thank you notes. Lorraine’s ongoing correspondence personally connected many to the BKAA.

She delighted in enrolling new members. Here, her zeal meshed perfectly with incomparable salesmanship to produce optimum results. After conversing with Lorraine at venues like Wurtsboro’s Founder’s Day and Ellenville’s Blueberry Festival, most prospective subscribers quickly filled out membership applications. They dared not do otherwise!

As an environmental advocate, Lorraine truly excelled. Passionate about preserving her beloved wetlands, she lobbied this view at countless public hearings on Mamakating’s Master Plan, Yukiguni Maitake, 7 Peaks, and other critical issues, often while experiencing impaired mobility and breathing. Fearless, Lorraine was the BKAA’s official “greeter” at contentious meetings where, unafraid, she foisted “No Mushroom Plant” buttons and position papers on both supporters and adversaries. The latter sometimes changed their attitudes after encountering a challenging Lorraine. She also wrote numerous letters to the editor, expressing displeasure at a developer’s or politician’s anti-environmental stance. Through myriad battles, she maintained her fighting spirit and optimism.

Suffice it to say that Lorraine’s legacy of excellence serves as a worthy benchmark for the rest of us to emulate.

A BKAA Member’s Taste of Alaska
by David Tancredi

Last August, Bill Streeter of the Delaware Valley Raptor Center, led a small group, including BKAA members Jim Carney and his grandson, James, me and my wife, Roberta Christy, on a ten-day journey through Southeast Alaska and Denali, terminating in Fairbanks. The following are a few thoughts on the high points of our trip.

As I was getting into a van in Juneau on a cold and rainy day, I was wondering what was I thinking when I signed up for the “bike and brew” tour which features a 9-mile bike ride and a tasting of Alaskan micro brewed beers. My thoughts were “couldn’t we just do the brew part?” This idea became even stronger when I was peddling thru cold and heavy, and getting heavier, rain. Even my “waterproof” watch had shut down due to too much water. Not only was I now freezing and wet, I didn’t even know what time it was.

The tour got more intense as we all got into the rhythm and momentum of cycling in the elements. There is a point one reaches in cycling where you no longer are thinking about cycling. You and the bicycle have basically become one entity.

I couldn’t see much because it was too gray and misty. I remember getting to the top of a big hill and starting down the other side. That’s when it happened. The Asians call it a “satori” or enlightenment. Einstein would have called it a “breakthrough.” I have no words to describe the raw and awesome beauty of Mendenhall Glacier. Maybe one would be “endless.” It seems that it was always there and always will be. It was like some benevolent, loving great, great grandparent who sees time and the world through a different lens, and is there, standing calm and strong, assuring you that the world is really after all, a beautiful and loving place.

That evening we headed for our whale watch, driving past the Mendenhall Glacier. The ice of the glacier was blue, almost cobalt blue. Our tour guide explained that it was blue because there was no air in it, unlike the “white” ice in our freezer. Summer is whale feeding season in Southeast Alaska. Amazingly, we witnessed the humpbacks repeatedly “bubble-net feeding.” This is a strategy by which a group of whales dives together, creating bubbles and high pitched sounds. The herring are herded together by this and are driven to the surface where one of the whales, (continued on page 19)
Taste of Alaska  *(continued)*

jaws open, breaches to capture as many herring as it can swallow. A humpback can consume a ton of herring a day. The sight of eight to ten whales surfacing together is a picture I will never forget.

Juneau is a city where you can drive around in a car but not leave by car. It is surrounded by impenetrable mountains and the sea. At last, a place that defies industrialization. The area retains its primal quality.

My next awesome experience was Denali National Park. The park has been described as a “living tapestry.” It is one million acres and has been inhabited by Alaskan natives and other people for 11,000 years. Currently, it is a wildlife refuge. No cars are allowed in the park so these animals roam freely and are unafraid.

We were lucky enough to see all of the largest animals that live here - the “big five.” A mama grizzly bear and her two second year cubs, foraging in a meadow; a bull moose looking for his evening meal; a sleeping grey wolf; myriad Dall sheep, grazing high on the mountainside; and a magnificent antlered caribou who seemed as interested in us as we were in him.

Each day and every passing minute in Denali, new designs emerge, even while the underlying patterns remain the same. Nature’s process in Denali reminds me of what the painter, Willem DeKooning once said, “You have to change to stay the same.” Denali does just that in its state of constant flux and underlying order.

There is so much more one could say and write about Alaska but I come back to, there really are no words to describe this living and breathing fabric called Alaska.

A blue sky
A powerful mountain
Running water
Calm stillness.

Come to Alaska and experience this cosmic force.

DEC Contacts:
Forest Ranger: Jason Seeley 845-240-6792 (cell)
Environmental Conservation Officer:
Tim Canfield 845-733-4669

Yukon Territory, Canada -- left to right - Jim Carney - Edward-Kerry Nix - Deb ( tour bus driver) Bill Streeter - Roberta Christy - David Tancredi - Jim Schulz

Photo by Jim Carney
The Compost Crusade by Kelley Edkins

I never knew what composting was until 2002 when I became a Master Gardener at Cornell Co-op. It was a one-day crash course. My teacher introduced me to composting and I knew then that everyone should be doing this.

I was born on Staten Island and when I was seven my mom brought me to the new mall built in 1975. Across from the mall was a pile of materials surrounded by hundreds of birds. I asked my mom what it was and she replied without remorse that it was a landfill and that is where our garbage goes. I did not understand why we had so much waste and why they would build it on a beautiful shoreline--where we all swam.

Since then I became conscious of my own waste stream and tried not to throw away anything. My nanny was an avid gardener and I am grateful for her lessons on being kind to our earth. In the 80’s there was a movement towards recycling, and I won a poster contest sponsored by my school -- Fallsburg High School.

It’s hard to believe that I was still throwing out my food waste even though I was recycling. Composting is extreme recycling. Unfortunately, composting is a lesson that was never learned in our public schools.

We must make a paradigm shift and realize that our food waste is a valuable resource. Composting is a natural process that has been occurring since the beginning of time. The leaves from the trees fall to the ground which is fed to the earth and broken down by the decomposers — worms, nematodes, slugs, ants, sow bugs, millipedes; pick up a rotting log and you will see them. Those bugs help break down our waste and turn the waste into a perfect soil.

As a professional gardener, I go to different venues teaching the methods of composting. It’s a simple science: 4 carbons to 1 nitrogen. Carbon is anything brown and bulky -- woodchips, sticks, hay, paper, dry leaves, dryer lint. Nitrogen is green and wet including meat. I say anything goes that will decompose. I am an extreme composter—I want to keep it out of a landfill. Take a drive on Route 17 and count the number of trash trucks riding on our highways. It is a disgrace to the human race the amount of waste we accumulate. People are starving and we are throwing away food. It just does not make any sense.

If you are interested in learning more about composting contact your local Cornell Extension or go to thecompostcouncil.com. There are many books on the subject; my favorite is The Rodale Book of Composting. Composting is free, it saves you money on your trash bill, builds your soil with valuable nutrients, helps reduce greenhouse emissions, makes food for birds and is the easiest way to be green.

Believe it or not, Wal-Mart has jumped on the compost crusade and is delivering 10,000 lbs of food waste per week to my Bee Green community compost site in the Town of Fallsburg, Now that is a paradigm shift!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEGAL FUND ACCOUNT</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance from October 15, 2010</td>
<td>$2895</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Winkler Estate Bequest</td>
<td>$17,744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various Personal Donations</td>
<td>$2800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Income</td>
<td>$20,544</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenses:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repayment of Anonymous Loan $6000 &amp; $200 interest</td>
<td>($6200)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Clouser &amp; Assoc. Engineers</td>
<td>($3929)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Expenses</td>
<td>($10,129)</td>
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| Net Income | $10,415 |
| Balance October 14, 2011 | $13,310 |
## GENERAL FUND ACCOUNT
October 16, 2010 - October 14, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INCOME</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dues</td>
<td>$5,847</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
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<td>Memorial Donations (in honor of Toni Garrett &amp; Lorraine Haring)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Winkler Estate Bequest (total $24,633 less $17,744 contributed to Legal Fund)</td>
<td>$6,889</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraiser (Total $2,335 less event expense of $163)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kohl’s Clean-up Day Contribution ($500 less event expenses of $156)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Port-a-Potty Contributions</td>
<td>$150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field Guide Sales</td>
<td>$302</td>
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<td>North Country Books (Winkler)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Merchandise Sales</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Income</td>
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<table>
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<th>EXPENSES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guardian Printing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Printing/Copies/Office Supplies, etc.</td>
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<td>Postage, Postal Fees</td>
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<td>Water Testing &amp; Purchase of Water Testing Equipment</td>
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<td>Insurance</td>
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<td>Repayment of Loan from Come Clean Account</td>
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<tr>
<td>T-Shirt Purchases</td>
<td>($688)</td>
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<td>2 DEC Campers Expense less campers’ contributions of $50 per camper</td>
<td>($600)</td>
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<td>Arrow Web Site</td>
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<td>Port-a-Potty</td>
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<td>Nature Watch Expenses</td>
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<td>Annual Clean-up Expenses</td>
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<td>Purchase of Life Vests</td>
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<td>Membership Fees - Other Organizations</td>
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<td>2010 Annual Meeting</td>
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<td>NYS Sales Tax</td>
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<td>NYS Department of Law</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>($67)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Expenses</td>
<td>($19,704)</td>
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</table>

Net Income                                  $2,534  $2,534

Balance at October 14, 2011                  $8,003

## "COME CLEAN" FUND ACCOUNT
Balance from October 15, 2010 $2861

| Repayment of Loan to General Fund           | $1000  |
| Wurtsboro Beautification Expenses          | ($1375) |

Balance at October 14, 2011                  $2486
Thirty-ninth Annual Report of BKAA, October 2011
by Paula Medley, President

Although this was not a high profile advocacy year, the BKAA availed itself of every occasion to promote the wetlands and our organization, which ultimately enhanced networking, outreach, and strengthened educational programs.

BKAA Board: After several stable years, our board suffered a major loss in the recent passing of longtime Membership Chair/Corresponding Secretary, Lorraine Haring, who would have received the BKAA’s highest honor, the Elizabeth Pollock Great Blue Heron Award, at this year’s annual meeting. Board member Marcia Briggs Wallace, who had already “shouldered” most of Lorraine’s duties, will officially take over Lorraine’s positions. Jodi Rubenstein, one of our most passionate Yukiguni opponents, is leaving the board; we commend her tremendous advocacy and support.

Developments in the Bash Kill Watershed: A poor economy undoubtedly thwarted activity with 7 Peaks & Bashkill Subdivisions and Commerce Park at Wurtsboro Airport. The preceding are only temporarily halted, however, and will likely resurface when financial conditions improve. Meanwhile, there was limited action with Yukiguni Maitake and the Homowack. Gas drilling and casinos are two industries that will generate regional repercussions, including impacts on the Bash Kill watershed, if approved.

Yukiguni Maitake (YM): On September 6, 2011, BKAA authorized our consulting engineer, Andy Willingham of David Clouser and Associates, to send a letter to Mamakating Building Inspector Mary Grass, requesting that the following be completed by Mamakating’s Building Department: 1) Notify David Clouser and the BKAA when YM has submitted detailed building construction drawings or other information for review. 2) Allow the BKAA’s engineer to scrutinize the drawings and proffer formal comments to the Department prior to issuance of a building permit.

Homowack (aka Ahaves Chaverin Gemilus Cheged Inc.)
- Winter 2010-2011 - Despite Mamakating Town Board’s official order to mitigate the dangerous conditions existing on that portion of the property still owned by Ulster Mountain LLC, the town has not enforced this mandate.
- March 1 - The Town Board voted to demolish the derelict buildings.
- May 12 - Paula Medley represented the BKAA at a ZBA public hearing, where property owners requested a variance to allow use of the first floor of the three story hotel for a residential girl’s camp. Variance was denied, effectively closing the facility until further notice. There has still been no action taken on the deteriorating structures.

Gas Drilling: BKAA Board voted to oppose fracking. Utilizing the Guardian and Alerts, the BKAA continued to apprise members of latest developments. On August 13, BKAA and Cragsmoor Association co-sponsored two talks on gas drilling and fracking at Cragsmoor Free Library.

Casinos:
- February 12 - Marcia Briggs Wallace and Monique Lipton represented BKAA at a meeting sponsored by Casino-Free Sullivan County.
- Shortly after that meeting, the US Bureau of Indian Affairs and Department of the Interior rejected the Stockbridge - Munsee Indian Casino proposed for Bridgeville.
- June, 2011 - Larry Echokwah, head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, announced the rescission of the 2008 rule restricting off-reservation Indian casinos to close proximity of their existing reservations. In Sullivan County, plans of several tribes, who had desired very far-off reservation casinos could be reactivated.
- Amending the State Constitution to allow legitimization of commercial non-Indian casinos, although a rigorous effort, is being explored by some casino proponents.

Lobbying to Insure Greater Disclosure: On January 13, 20, July 7, September 8, 15, Jon Reed and Paula represented BKAA at Sullivan County Legislature meetings to advocate for increased public accountability by county agencies such as the Industrial Development Corporation (IDA), as well as all elected Sullivan County officials.
Networking: BKAA carefully nurtured new contacts and constantly revitalized connections with long-standing friends and supporters. These priceless collaborations, with their myriad resources, positively influenced BKAA accomplishments.

- As BKAA's representative, Jon Reed provided inestimable assistance to Wurtsboro Renaissance.
- BKAA continued its affiliation with the Sullivan County Visitor’s Association, whose website and publications highlighted BKAA programs as well as the wetlands resource.
- BKAA maintained its presence in the Shawangunk ridge Coalition (SRC).
- BKAA continued participation with the Orange County Open Space Alliance.
- BKAA joined Friends of the Environment, a regional environmental group.
- BKAA networked minimally with politicians this year.
- BKAA enjoyed consistent backing and encouragement from loyal supporter Sullivan County Audubon Society along with Audubon New York and its grassroots coordinator, Laura McCarthy.
- Friends of the Shawangunks, NY/NJ Trail Conference, and Phillipsport Community Center also were crucial BKAA proponents.
- On behalf of the BKAA, Paula mentored environmental groups and individuals on an as-needed basis.
- Dave Colavito consistently pressed county agencies and officials to introduce greater transparency.
- October 17, 2010 -- Michael Medley and Paula attended Friends of the Shawangunks Annual Meeting and presented updates on Yukiguni Maitake and 7 Peaks.
- December 9 -- Michael and Paula represented BKAA at Sullivan County Visitors Association’s (SCVA) Annual Meeting and Holiday Celebration at the Monticello Raceway and Racino.
- December 16 -- Jackie Broder and Paula attended a meeting on connectivity at Norrie Point State Park, sponsored by SRC, Shawangunk Ridge Biodiversity Partnership and DEC.
- March 4, 2011 -- Jackie represented BKAA at Sullivan County’s Not-for-Profit Leadership Summit 2011, held at Bethel Woods.
- April 11 -- Andy Garrison, Gary Keeton, and Marcia Briggs Wallace attended an informational meeting before Deerpark’s Town Board, on expansion of the Delaware and Hudson Canal Towpath in the Town.
- May 11 -- Michael and Paula represented BKAA at SCVA’s Annual Literature and Brochure Exchange at Sonoma Falls, Mursston.
- June 3 -- Jack Austin, Andy Garrison, Michael Rider, Michael and Paula, attended a ceremony transferring property owned by NY/NJ Trail Conference to DEC for incorporation into Huckleberry State Forest in Greenville.
- June 7 -- Jackie and Paula attended a program honoring Laura Heady with Mohonk Consultations’ 2011 Environmental Distinguished Achievement Award.
- June 15 -- Alva Jones and Paula attended a “Coffee Hour” for Sullivan County non-profits held at Cornell Cooperative Extension.
- June 24 -- Marcia and Paula attended the opening reception of “Birds of Sullivan County - A Photographic Exhibition” at Morgan Outdoors in Livingston Manor.
- August 27 -- BKAA partnered with Kohl’s Distribution Center in Wurtsboro to clean the Basha Kill wetlands. BKAA participants included Linda Lou Bartle, Jackie, Stephen & Susan Erny, Fred Harding, John Lavelle, Monique Lipton, Bill Lucas, Michael and Paula, and Jon Reed.
- September 7 -- Jackie and Marcia represented the BKAA at a focus group entitled “What Inspires You About Sullivan County?,” sponsored by Sullivan Renaissance, Sullivan Planning and Environmental Management, as well as Sullivan Economic Development Corporation.
- September 12 -- Marcia participated in another focus group centering in Sullivan County’s assets/issues, sponsored by the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council and held at Bethel Woods.
- September 19 -- Michael and Paula attended a Wurtsboro Board of Trade mixer at Giovanni’s.

Town of Mamakating Meetings: Town, Planning, and Zoning Board meetings were attended on an as needed basis.
Come Clean -- 2011 Project by Cathy Dawkins & Patricia Diness. In keeping with its environmental beautification mission, Come Clean targeted a business property in the Village of Wurtsboro for a custom garden makeover -- the building on Sullivan Street housing the Laundry, Catskill Soap Co., and the Custom Tailor Shop, directly across the street from the Village Veteran’s Park.

The Come Clean Team visited the site, assessed site characteristics, existing plants that could be integrated into the revised garden plan, water needs and availability, and general layout. It then purchased and planted new herbs, shrubs, grasses, and annuals. During the planting activities, the team realized that the exterior of the Laundry serves as a community gathering area. The master plan was quickly modified to include a bench for people to enjoy the garden without trampling the plants. The garden has drawn many positive comments and smiles and the bench is used extensively.

The project was funded by existing grant money. The total was $1308.05 for: rain barrel, hoses and planters for $162.27; manual labor for $350; garbage bags for $5.28; bench and plants for $413.00; buckets, bucket hangers and hanging planters for $85.15; sand for $12.96; mulch for 77.48; bluestone for $165.00; and drains/plumbing supplies for $36.91.

Local Environmental Activities:
  • February 12 - Nature photographer Gary Van Houten presented a slide program entitled “Four Seasons at the Bash Kill” as part of Wurtsboro’s Winterfest. BKAA partnered with Friends of the Mamakating Library on this.
  • April 11 - Celebrating National Library Week, Hattie Grifo read “A Wetland Walk” and discussed the wetlands ecosystem with a kindergarten class from Wurtsboro’s Emma Chase Elementary School.
  • June 2 - In another event at Emma Chase, Michael educated Webelo Scouts about wetlands ecology in order to help them meet requirements for their naturalist badge.
  • July 9 - Anita Altman and Gil Kulick, Ray DePrado, Monique, Michael and Paula, Jon, and Marcia, participated in Wurtsboro’s Founders’ Day.
  • October 2 - Michael explained the importance of wetlands to a girl scout troop from Bloomingburg and later conducted a scavenger hunt at the Pat Moore Memorial Picnic Grove in Wurtsboro. (Heavy rain had flooded Bash Kill trails, rendering them impassable.)
  • October 9 - Monique, Jon and Paula represented BKAA at the Mamakating Rotary sponsored “Community Day” carried out at the Wurtsboro Airport.

Campers: Joseph Harding from Long Island and Nora Brusinski from Westbrookville received almost full BKAA scholarships for NYS DEC Environmental Camps. First-time participant Joseph attended Camp DeBruce in Livingston Manor and returnee Nora stayed at Camp Colby in Saranac Lake.

Jack Orth Memorial BKAA Scholarship: Although there were several eligible candidates, this report “went to press” without knowing whether any students applied for this year’s scholarship.

John Winkler BKAA Water Testing Program: Thanks to a bequest from long-time supporter and author John Winkler, BKAA improved water surveillance capabilities by buying updated equipment that analyses 4 independent water qualities: dissolved oxygen, temperature, conductivity, and pH, on site. Chair Jackie Broder, and volunteers Stephen Erny, Fred Harding, and Michael Medley, evaluated 6-8 sites every few weeks. This group will be expanded in the future.

DEC Update:
This year, the BKAA renewed its five year Adopt-A-Natural Resource contract with DEC, enabling us to hold an annual cleanup, retrieve water samples, and offer onsite educational ventures.

Basha Kill Walks and Educational Programs: These activities are crucial components of the BKAA’s core mission, which teaches others about the value of the Basha Kill, Shawangunk Ridge and surrounding areas, along with ways to safeguard these resources.
• Jackie established the BKAA’s educational agenda for 2011 and assembled the experts who implemented it. Heavy precipitation cancelled or severely curtailed “Spring Wildflowers” and “Blossoms and Butterflies” with John Kenney as well as “Fall Warblers” with John Haas.

• Our season began with Michael Medley leading cross-country ski outings along the D & H Canal towpath in January and February with 19 total participants. Bob Fiore’s “Star Walk,” taught 16 about constellations; Scott Graber and Michael piloted a huge spring canoe/kayak flotilla with 42 vessels; John Haas, took 20 on a “Peak Bird Migration” amble; Bill Cutler introduced 5 visitors to amphibians and reptiles; Michael led 9 hikers up Gobbler’s Knob and another 10 in late summer along the Shawangunk Ridge; Gary Keeton was most prolific, educating over 20 on two walks about D & H Canal history, as well as a moonlight excursion with 30-40 individuals, and a sunrise adventure with 3 early risers; Our fall canoe/kayak event, led again by Scott and Michael, included 10-12 craft; finally, John Kenney led 6 on his tree and shrub walk.

• October 29 - Two groups of 30 children (1st, 2nd, and 3rd graders) from the Homestead School in Glen Spey were escorted on a Basha Kill tour by Jackie Broder and Michael.

• April 16 - BKAA launched its 29th Annual Basha Kill Cleanup with 65 volunteers.

• May 25 - Ed Morse and Michael introduced Leadership Sullivan Class of 2011 members to the Basha Kill via a talk, enhanced by Jim Carney’s photographs, and an on-site visit.

• August 12 - Michael toured the wetlands with two families from Pennsylvania and Switzerland.

Nature Watch 2011 by Maryallison Farley. The 9th year of this volunteer program wrapped up over July 4 weekend, and was a resounding success. 40 volunteers interacted with 1,391 (up from 1102 in 2010) visitors at the boat launch site on South Road during our 12-week season on weekends from mid-April through the first weekend of July! These are not the only recreational users of the Kill; there are many other entry points, as well as other days and seasons when we are not collecting numbers.

Volunteers provided visitors with information about the Kill’s plant and animal residents, focusing on the resident bald eagle pair and the nesting ospreys, in addition to information about local businesses and other area points of interest. I can’t say enough about the Nature Watch volunteers. They come to the Basha Kill from the immediate area but also from points far and wide — Stone Ridge, Parksville, Liberty, Woodridge, Pine Bush, Port Jervis, Barryville, Pennsylvania, and even one from Long Island. These folks love the Basha Kill and love interacting with visitors to the wetland.

The highlight of this season was the capture and rehabilitation of the Basha Kill immature eagle who had injured herself when first fledging. A team effort, most especially by Bill Streeter and his staff at the Delaware Valley Raptor Center, but also including Gene Weinstein, John Haas, Michael Rider, Patricia Diness, Linda Lou Bartle, Louann Lewis and me, rescued her. After 5 weeks of rehab, Bill released her back to the Kill where she has been occasionally seen. Meantime, the ospreys raised and fledged three young this year.

Another highlight this year was the training for volunteers in March which kicked off the program. A group presentation by naturalist Gary Keeton, Basha Kill birder John Haas and photographer Jim Carney was the centerpiece. The two BK experts shared valuable information about the wetland ecosystem as they worked from Jim’s beautiful photographs.

At the end of September, Nature Watch enjoyed its 3d successful fundraising social with Paul Deninno at Basha Kill Vineyards. Due to Paul’s generosity and excellent wines, the enthusiasm of some 120 attendees and a wonderful presentation with live birds by Giselle Smisko of the Avian Wildlife Center in Wantage, NJ, we raised $2,405 for the BKAA general fund. Kudos also to photographers Linda Lou Bartle and Jim Carney, who donated prints of this year’s immature bald eagle to the raffle. Linda Lou also donated one of her bald eagle paintings. These raffle items raised $455. As winter comes on, Patricia Diness and I, who head up the Nature Watch Project, look forward to next year’s season with our outstanding group of volunteers. Special thanks to our project partners, the Eagle Institute and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.
Other Outreach Events:
- April 19 - BKAA celebrated Earth Day at SUNY ORANGE in Middletown. Paula attended.
- April 29 - Paula represented BKAA at Monticello High School Eco-Club’s sponsored Earth Day/Arbor Day Festival.
- June 4 - Jon and Paula worked on BKAA’s behalf at the Earth and Water Festival held at Thomas Bull Memorial Park in Montgomery.
- September 18 - Marcia, Jackie, and Paula represented BKAA at “Earth Day in Autumn” at Bethel Woods.

Workshops:
- December 13 - Jon and Paula attended a conference on “Water Resources and the Regional Economy” at SUNY New Paltz.
- February 26 - Cathy Dawkins, Patricia Dines, and Jon attended workshops at Sullivan Renaissance’s Winter Expo, held at the CUI building in Ferndale.
- April 10 - Jackie and Paula attended a Mohonk Consultations’ forum entitled “Communities in Transition-Local Strengths, Local Resilience.”

Field Guide to the Basha Kill: “The Basha Kill Wetlands: a Field Guide” is a crucial publication educating readers about the wetlands and generating excitement about this unique ecosystem. Guides can be purchased at the Bashakill Vineyards and Canal Towne Emporium in Wurtsboro; Morgan outdoors in Livingston Manor; an information venue on the Palisades Parkway, and online. Publications are also available at all Sullivan County Libraries, Cragsmoor Free Library, Port Jervis Free Library, and SUNY ORANGE.

BKAA Brochure: This brochure persists in being the most widely utilized BKAA public relations tool and, as such, possesses outstanding value for the organization. It will undergo a third printing soon and hopefully include a detachable membership form.

Membership Chair/Corresponding Secretary, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer: These key Board functions were competently executed by Lorraine Haring, Susan Erny, and Monique Lipton. Thanks for an amazing commitment of time and energy. We also gratefully acknowledge the sensitivity, compassion, and reliability displayed by Marcia Briggs Wallace, who assumed membership chair responsibilities during Lorraine’s illness.

Publicity/thebashakill.org/Alerts/Facebook/The Guardian:
- The BKAA recognizes Susan O’Neill’s ongoing dedication as our public relations guru, writing and distributing all press releases.
- Our website, www.thebashakill.org, produced by Arrow Web Designs, and the Alerts, were supplied updates on BKAA programs, and general news as well as rapidly galvanizing members when faced with impending threats. Thanks to Maryallison Farley for being BKAA’s contact with Arrow Web. Kudos to Hattie Grifo for excellently administering Action/Information Alerts.
- A personal debt of gratitude to Jon Reed for fielding all BKAA emails, thereby keeping Paula “in touch” with the world (whether she liked it or not)!
- The BKAA is now part of the Social Network, having a Facebook page ably administered by Linda Lou Bartle.
- Special appreciation to Liberty Press for managing the Guardian’s online operation.
- Buff McAllister’s value as Editor of the Guardian, a role she has tirelessly assumed for over 20 years, was inestimable. Buff not only edited and typed many articles, “putting the whole newsletter together,” she has also directed the mailing process. Her responsibility was magnified by the Guardian’s prominence as the BKAA’s primary connection to our members.

BKAA Consultants:
- Since most projects that had consumed BKAA resources were on hiatus this past year, the BKAA experienced minimal contact with our “technical team” except for engineer Andy Willingham, whose efforts relating to Yukiguni Maitake were unfailingly excellent.
Do You Know a Boy or Girl From 12-17 Years of Age Who Would Like to Attend an Environmental Camp for One Week This Summer?

The Basha Kill Area Association (BKAA) is sponsoring three children for one week each at a NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Camp during the summer of 2012.

Camp choices include:
Camp Colby (Saranac Lake)
Camp DeBruce (Livingston Manor)
Camp Rushford (Caneadea)
Pack Forest (Warrensburg)

BKAA will pay $300.00 of the total camper's fee ($350.00) for each child selected. Primary requirements are that campers be between 12 and 17 years old and be interested in the outdoors.

Types of Camper Experiences
Campers 12-14 years old
Teen Ecology Camp 15-17 years old

To Apply:
Please have the interested child send us a letter with the following information:
1. Why you are interested in the environment.
2. Your name and names of your parents or guardians
3. Your address and phone number
4. The grade you are in and which school you attend

Send your letter to:
Paula Medley, BKAA President, P.O. Box 1121 Wurtsboro, NY 12790
or email: info@thebashakill.org

We must receive your application by February 1, 2012

WHO WE ARE:
The BKAA, formed in 1972, has 600 members who are dedicated to preserving the wonderful 3000+ acres Basha Kill wetlands and surrounding areas in the Town of Mamakating, New York.
In This Issue:

Report and color photos from the 39th Annual Meeting on front page
Check out the list of events for 2012, including 4 new walks starting on page 4
Updates on proposed developments starting on page 6
See how local artists get inspiration from the Basha Kill on page 8
Color Photos from live-bird presentation at Nature Watch Annual Fundraiser on page 9
Justina Burton on Looking Back, Looking Forward on page 11
Memoriam for long-time board member Lorraine Haring on page 18
Taste the glories of Alaska with Dave Tancredi on page 18
Crusading for compost on page 20
BKAA 39th Annual Report starting on page 22
Camper Application on page 27

-------------and MUCH MUCH MORE-------------------