

# Comments on Connetquot



Published by the Friends of Connetquot River State Park Preserve

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year, Friends!

I can't believe that another year is behind us! 2023 was such an amazing year! We hosted so many fantastic programs in collaboration with NYS Parks, NYS DEC, Long Island Library Resource Council (LILRC), Keep Islip Clean, ORVIS and Save the Great South Bay. It's hard to pick my favorite event.

Perhaps the most impressive achievement of this year is the completion of the sorting of our 200 years of historic documents and acceptance into the LILRC Accessing Archives Program. The grist mill and tin ceiling final reports were submitted to Albany, which permits us to apply in the next round of state funding. In this round, we hope to secure funding for the major work needed to sustain the New Annex Building. 2024 WILL BE EVEN BETTER! NYS Parks Centennial Celebration plans are in the works. There's a list of some of the programs we will be hosting in this newsletter—and please keep an eye out for our emails as Celebration plans are announced.

Got a talent for advertising? Friends of Connetquot is looking for someone to join our Board as liaison to local media. We could really use a public relations officer for this coming year!

Last but not least, we thank all our Friends who supported our 2023 Gala! See page 2.

See you out in the park!

Janet

A Great Blue Heron visits Connetquot. Photo: T. Casey

Not yet a Friend of Connetquot? Please support our efforts to enhance our beautiful preserve.  
Visit our website, [www.friendsofconnetquot.org/join](http://www.friendsofconnetquot.org/join).

## Thank You, Friends!



Our deep appreciation to those of you who joined us at Oakdale's beautiful Snapper Inn for our annual FOC Gala on December 7. We hosted over 120 guests and raffled off thirty baskets of assorted goodies, five silent auction items and two exciting live auctions, whose winners were Todd Shaw, President of Save the Great South Bay, and our beloved Annie McIntyre.

Above: Board members, friends and honoree Sue Wuehler line up at a festive Snapper Inn. Left to right: Jerry Trapani, Tom Casey, Susanne Wuehler, Bob Labuski, JoAnn Carhart, Sandi Brewster-walker, John Remmer, Rita Trapani, David Reisfield, Richard Remmer, Janet Soley, Keith Snedecor, Carol Scialdone, Ritamarie Weigand, Craig Kessler, Glenn Reed.

*Photo: Josephine Reed*



Honoree Sue Wuehler gets a hug from FOC President Janet Soley.

*Photo: T. Casey*

### **Board of Trustees Executive Board**

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### **Mission Statement**

The Friends of Connetquot is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation, conservation and history of the 3,473-acre Connetquot River State Park Preserve. We work to help management protect a pristine environment and historic buildings and artifacts. We also support educational programs, fishing facilities and hiking and equestrian trails.

The records of the Friends of Connetquot can be viewed in our room at the Preserve. The New York State Office of Charities Registration holds copies of the annual charities reports required by law.

PLEASE NOTE: Automatic defibrillators are available in the administration office, the BOCES room, the main building and at the hatchery. Park staff is trained in their use.

For Emergencies in the Preserve: Call the New York Park Police at 631-669-2500.

Also notify the Entrance Booth at 631-581-1005.

**Friends of Connetquot Program Series**  
at Connetquot River State Park Preserve Clubhouse

*Lunar New Year Hike and Program*

*with Tom Casey*

*Saturday, February 10 at 11:00 AM*

Enjoy our two-mile hike with park staff on the yellow and red trails to and from the hatchery. Then warm up and celebrate the New Year with traditional refreshments as Tom Casey presents a program on the pine barrens ecosystem and Connetquot Park Preserve's place in it.

Tom, FOC's Secretary and newsletter editor, is a recovering teacher. He is also on the boards of the L.I. Greenbelt Trail Conference, the L.I. Pine Barrens Society, and Quogue Wildlife Refuge, and chairs the Pine Barrens Commission's Protected Lands Council.



*Pollinators and the Fun of Herb Gardens*

*Presented by Laura Klahre, Blossom Meadow Farm*

*Saturday, February 24 at 1:00 PM*

There are close to 450 different bee species in New York State, so why does everyone focus on the invasive, non-native honeybee?!? Join bee rancher, farmer, and award-winning jammer Laura Klahre, from Southold's Blossom Meadow Farm, for an eye-opening alternative pollinator discussion of Long Island's native bees, flies, wasps, butterflies and moths.

In our increasingly suburbanized landscapes, herb gardens serve as critical habitat for pollinators (food, shelter, and place to raise their young) as well as corridors to connect patches of natural habitat increasing gene flow, promoting reestablishment of locally extinct populations, and increasing species diversity within otherwise isolated areas. Native pollinators are not domesticated and need to be coaxed and managed to supercharge the pollination of your garden, farm and forest. Herb gardens are a great management tool!

Laura incorporated her farm in 2009. She specializes in growing organic berries to make award-winning jam (national Good Food Awards, International Flavor Awards, World Jam Festival) and raising mason bees for sale as cocoons. Blossom Meadow Farm practices Regenerative Agriculture to improve soil health and maximize seed set, resulting in consistent harvests of premium fruit each year.



*Fly Fishing Expo of Long Island*

*Saturday, March 16, 9:00-4:00 PM*



Come visit us at the Expo! This year FOC will be a presenter as well as offering show specials at our Booth! Stop by and say hello!

The Expo will take place at the Radisson Hotel in Hauppauge, on the north side of Motor Parkway between Adams Avenue and Moreland Road.

Lectures are free for members of Friends of Connetquot. Non-members pay \$5/person. Please consider becoming a member and enjoy our programming all year long. Seasonal parking rates apply. To register or to become a member, please visit [www.friendsofconnetquot.org](http://www.friendsofconnetquot.org).

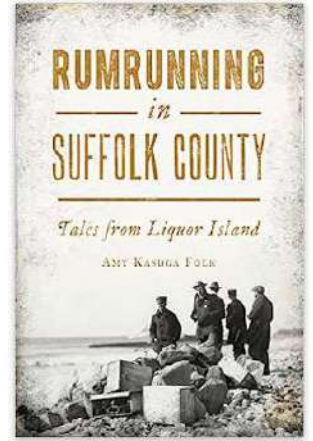


## Rumrunning in Suffolk County

Presented by Amy Folk  
Saturday, March 23 at 1:00 PM

Prohibition and rumrunning impacted the entire nation during the early 20th century. With its proximity to New York City, Suffolk County was one of the places that witnessed the struggle between federal agents and the liquor smugglers. The book *Rumrunning in Suffolk County* explores local rumrunning through documented accounts found in local newspapers.

Author Amy Kasuga Folk is the manager of collections for the Oysterponds Historical Society, as well as the manager of collections for the Southold Historical Society and the town historian for Southold. Folk is also the past president of the Long Island Museum Association and the Region 2 co-chair of the Association of Public Historians. She is the coauthor of several award-winning books focusing on the history of Southold.



## Upcoming Spring Programs

April 8 - Solar Eclipse

Look for details in our next newsletter and on our website, [www.friendsofconnetquot.org](http://www.friendsofconnetquot.org).

### Remember Liss

by Claire Bellerjeau

Saturday, April 27, 2024 - 2:00 PM

Hear the true story of the valiant venture of a Long Island slave girl from slavery to freedom during the American Revolution. If you saw the AMC TV series, *Turn*, you know many of the characters in Liss's tale: members of General George Washington's Culper Spy Ring; Robert Townsend, Benjamin Tallmadge and Abraham Woodhull. These brave Americans risked their lives by using drying laundry as signals and using invisible ink to pass information to Washington under the noses of British troops led by Captain Simcoe and General Andre. The ring spied on the British troops primarily here on Long Island from Setauket to Huntington to Hempstead and Manhattan. Liss was owned by British and Americans alike as there was no law outlawing slavery in New York until many years after the Revolution.

Claire Bellerjeau has been researching the Townsend family and those they enslaved for over seventeen years, including curating an exhibit on the Townsend "Slave Bible" in 2005. In 2015 she discovered a poem written by Jupiter Hammon, America's first published African American writer. She has developed educational programs on the subjects of slavery in New York and the American Revolution on Long Island and is creating a new curriculum to share Liss's story using primary documents from her research. A limited number of *Remember Liss* and Claire's new book, *Espionage and Enslavement in the Revolution* will be available for sale and to be signed by the author.

May 4 - I Love My Park Day

Look for details in our next newsletter and on our website, [www.friendsofconnetquot.org](http://www.friendsofconnetquot.org).

## What's Happening in the Park

Park Manager Jessica Anderson-Ruiz reports that 25,000 eyed Brook Trout eggs were delivered on December 10. Staff is excited to watch our new babies grow!

Staff has cleaned up the section of park north of Veterans Highway, removing over a dozen bags of litter and clearing trails to enable weekly monitoring of the area. Also, winter mowing continues on all fields and trails.

Park workers have witnessed river otters on trail cams at the hatchery. We are working on reenforcing the fencing around the ponds to try to eliminate their access.

Finally, staff is working on closing up and reenforcing the fence line from Church Street north to Connetquot High School. Illegal ATVs apparently have been using breaches in the fence line.

## Great Programs Offered by Connetquot State Park Preserve

Fee: \$4.00 per adult, \$4.00 per child, and children under 3 are free.

\$8.00 parking fee during the fee collection season.

Outdoor programs are rain or shine, so please dress appropriately.

**Reservations are required and are taken beginning 2 weeks prior to each program.**

To make a reservation, visit [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) and search [#NatureAdventure](https://twitter.com/NatureAdventure). (Notice that's "Ed," not "Ad.")

If you are unable to keep your reservation, please call or cancel so others may have the opportunity to attend. Please be prompt.

If others are waiting, your place may be given to them if you have not arrived when the program starts.

### \*\*\* *Historic Club House Tours* \*\*\*

First and Third Sunday of each month — 1:00–3:00 PM

Learn the history of the tavern and the high society club which shaped the Preserve into what it is today.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### [Tiny Tots Programs: Snowflakes](#)

Wednesday, January 10 — 10:00–11:00 AM

Enjoy short walks, story time, animal visitors, and crafts. For children ages 3-5.

#### [Bird and Breakfast](#)

Saturday, January 13 — 8:00–10:30 AM

A continental breakfast and short presentation on winter ducks followed by a guided walk through the preserve. Binoculars provided, or bring your own.

#### [Owl Pellets](#)

Sunday, January 14 — 1:00–3:00 PM

Owls are unique among the bird world! Using dissection tools, we will explore the diet of this nocturnal hunter.

#### [Tracks and Traces](#)

Saturday, January 20 — 10:00 AM–12:00 PM

Learn how to "read the signs" animals leave behind on a hike as we search for tracks and traces of the wildlife at the Preserve!

#### [Tiny Tots Programs: Animal ABC](#)

Wednesday, January 24 — 10:00–11:00 AM

Enjoy short walks, story time, animal visitors, and crafts. For children ages 3-5.

#### [Full Moon Hike](#)

Friday, January 26 — 6:00–08:00 PM

As the moon rises and lights up the night sky go on an evening hike through the Preserve as we look for our nocturnal neighbors.

#### [Tiny Tots Programs: Valentines Day!](#)

Wednesday, February 7 — 10:00–11:00 AM

Enjoy short walks, story time, animal visitors, and crafts. For children ages 3-5.

#### [Ice Candle Evening](#)

Friday, February 9 — 6:00–08:00 PM

We'll use hot wax and cold ice to create a unique candle for you to decorate and take home.

#### [Black History Month: Art of Alma Thomas](#)

Saturday, February 17 — 10:00 AM–12:00 PM

Recognized as a major artist of the 20th century, Alma Thomas used color and shapes in abstract ways. Paint with us in her style!

#### [Tiny Tots Programs: Counting 123](#)

Wednesday, February 21 — 10:00–11:00 AM

Enjoy short walks, story time, animal visitors, and crafts. For children ages 3-5.

Remember: Reservations taken on [eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com).

## Great Programs Offered by Connetquot State Park Preserve

### [Weather Wizards](#)

Thursday, February 22 — 10:00–11:30 AM

Ever wonder how a cloud forms or why a tornado starts? We'll uncover weather secrets with hands-on demonstrations and activities.

### [Hike to Hatchery](#)

Friday, February 23 — 1:00–3:00 PM

Learn the history of the Preserve's Trout Hatchery on a 1-mile hike up, then see the inner workings on a tour of the facility!

### [Deer Detectives](#)

Saturday, February 24 — 5:30–7:00 PM

Explore the ways of the white-tailed deer. Become a deer detective and search for clues the deer have left behind.

### [Women's History Month: Art of Georgia O'Keefe](#)

Saturday, March 2 — 10:00 AM–12:00 PM

Learn about the life of the influential modernist painter Georgia O'Keefe. And learn to paint your own work of art in her style.

### [Tiny Tots Programs: Sun Fun](#)

Wednesday, March 6 — 10:00–11:00 AM

Enjoy short walks, story time, animal visitors, and crafts. For children ages 3-5.

### [Solar Eclipse 101](#)

Friday, March 8 — 6:00–8:00 PM

Learn what a solar eclipse is, how best to view NY's upcoming eclipse safely, and make your own viewfinder to view a total solar eclipse.



### [Women in Space!](#)

Friday, March 15 — 6:00–8:00 PM

Learn about the women who made our space achievements possible. Then join us for some stargazing!

### [Leprechaun Treasure Hunt!](#)

Saturday, March 16 — 10:00–11:30 AM

Leprechauns hide their gold all over the forest for park patrons to find! Explore the Preserve and see what they left behind!

### [Tiny Tots Programs: Welcome Spring!](#)

Wednesday, March 20 — 10:00–11:00 AM

Enjoy short walks, story time, animal visitors, and crafts. For children ages 3-5.

### [Night of the Frogs](#)

Friday, March 22 — 6:00–8:00 PM

Frogs, toads, and salamanders wake up early! Explore the park at night in search of amphibians getting ready to welcome spring!

### [Holi T-Shirts](#)

Friday, March 22 — 6:00–8:00 PM

Holi, the Hindu Festival of Colors, marks the beginning of spring! Although we won't be throwing colorful powder, we will be creating colorful works of art on T-shirts to take home. All materials will be provided.

### [Solar Eclipse History](#)

Friday, March 29 — 6:00–8:00 PM

What would you do if the sun disappeared? Learn about how cultures around the world have experienced solar eclipses throughout human history.

Fee: \$4.00 per adult, \$4.00 per child, and children under 3 are free.

\$8.00 parking fee during the fee collection season.

Outdoor programs are rain or shine, so please dress appropriately.

**Reservations are required and are taken beginning 2 weeks prior to each program.**

To make a reservation, visit [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) and search [#NatureAdventure](https://twitter.com/NatureAdventure). (Notice that's "Ed," not "Ad.")

If you are unable to keep your reservation, please call or cancel so others may have the opportunity to attend. Please be prompt.

If others are waiting, your place may be given to them if you have not arrived when the program starts.

# History Project Report

by Ritamarie Weigand

On this past December 8, FOC received a donation, thanks to Bonnie and Ruben Friedman, of a Larkin desk, circa 1901, pictured right. This combination drop-down desk and bookcase was mass-produced and extremely popular in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The desk will eventually sit in an archival reference library FOC hopes to set up in the Clubhouse.

Buffalo entrepreneur John Larkin, incidentally, was the brother-in-law of Elbert Hubbard, who, among many other things, was influential in spreading the Arts and Crafts design movement in this country.

On January 5 interested members of the History Team will participate in a training session on the use of the Long Island Library Resource Council's overhead projector to be able to scan our oversized archived books for an eventual Friends of Connetquot River State Park Preserve page on the New York Heritage website site.

On December 15, Peter Gambitsky, Fireside Angler rare books dealer, gave the History Team a calibrated hygrometer, which measures the humidity in our FOC Office/Archive. The humidity measures within the "normal" range necessary for the preservation of our antique SSSC books.



In approximately eighteen months the History Team, with the support of the Board, Park management and staff, has managed to rescue our irreplaceable antique ledgers, journals and registers from continued deterioration in the third floor attic and preserve them in a light, temperature and humidity-controlled environment which should maintain them as they are for many years to come.

Photos: Ritamarie Weigand

## Going to the Dogs? Hope Not!

FOC Board Member Carole Scialdone asks that we join her in signing the attached petition against allowing dogs in Connetquot River State Park Preserve. Simply scan the QR Code to access the petition.

Two Long Island legislators; Senator Monica Martinez, D-Bay Shore, and Assemblyman Steve Stern, D-Melville, have introduced laws that would allow dog owners to bring their pets to *all* New York State parks (including beaches) except for the Adirondack and Catskill parks. This law is currently in Assembly Committee and will be voted on in January, 2024.

We believe Connetquot River State Park Preserve also needs to be excluded from this law. Connetquot was designated the first Park Preserve in New York State in order to protect the flora, fauna and wildlife that reside there. (It's also curious that the Central Pine Barrens, which enjoys the same status as the Adirondacks and Catskills, is not mentioned.) The Connetquot River ecosystem is vital to the welfare of the Great South Bay, and the Preserve is home to several endangered plants and birds. Historically, access has always been limited to hiking, fishing and equestrians. Rambunctious dogs can harm small creatures like fish, turtles, and other animals that inhabit the Preserve. Sad to say, irresponsible owners sometimes let their dogs off leash, creating dangerous situations for equestrians and walkers, not mention deer. They simply do not belong in our pristine Preserve.

Please help us exclude Connetquot River State Park *Preserve* from this bill, 2023-A6244B. We are hoping for more than a thousand signatures.



## The Centennial Challenge

Celebrate 100 years of New York State Parks with a fun, interactive Centennial Challenge, available at all of New York State's 250+ parks and historic sites. Parks has assembled a list of 100 tasks covering virtually every conceivable activity offered at these facilities, ranging from the strenuous to sitting under a tree and reading a book. Starting on January 1st, you'll have all year to complete 24 out of the 100 to earn a commemorative Centennial prize and have your name entered into a random drawing for one of 24 three-year Empire Passes and a Centennial swag bag!

You can download an app at <https://www.parks.ny.gov/100/challenge> to track of your adventures online, or you can download and print out the complete list at <https://www.parks.ny.gov/documents/100/OPRHPCentennialChallengeChecklist.pdf>.





## Board Spotlight: Glenn Reed

Glenn Reed joined the FOC Board as its new Treasurer this past November. Glenn is a Certified Public Accountant as well as a Certified Global Management Accountant, having spent his career in both Public and Private Accounting leadership roles from companies such as Ernst & Whinney to 800-FLOWERS, Nature's Bounty, and Vehicle Tracking Solutions. Most recently, over the past decade, he has operated a consulting business, Button Down Solutions, where he works with entrepreneurs and growing businesses to help them realize growth and scale through his accounting and advisory services. Glenn says, "I am excited to work with Janet Soley and all the members of the Friends and continue the good work of Bobby Ploetz, the prior treasurer, as the organization continues on its mission!"

Glenn was born in Southside Hospital and grew up in Commack and Stony Brook. He and his wife Josephine have lived Islip Town over the past 30 years, raising 3 sons (all Eagle Scouts, one of who did his service project here at Connetquot), and serving in volunteer roles across many local organizations including The Suffolk County Council Boy Scouts, Catholic Health Services (Good Samaritan Hospital), as a School Board member, The Beacon House in support of veterans, among others.

Glenn attended Ward Melville High School and later Boston College, where he received a degree in Management. Always having a passion for education, Glenn is currently taking advantage of his "over 60" status by auditing a European History class at Stony Brook University. Glenn and Jo have a passion for the outdoors, including year-round hiking and tending their lawn, garden and trees at their home. An avid photographer, you will often see Glenn taking photos with his phone or his black and white camera.

Welcome aboard, Glenn!



## HOOF BEATS

by Carole Scialdone



This year's color-filled fall foliage certainly did not disappoint. Stunning shades of golden yellow, tange orange and flaming red filled the treetops, creating a spectacular backdrop for all of our trail rides and photographs. Connetquot's equestrians can't get enough of the breathtaking views throughout our park. Unfortunately, autumn never lasts long enough. Mother nature flips a switch and in comes winter's cold, blustery temperatures. The deer and turkeys are out foraging for another meal to bulk up for the frigid days ahead. Our horses sense the change and add a little extra jig to their gait. The trees lose their leaves, and we are left with a crunchy blanket of leaves on the ground beneath our horses' hooves. At least it's not snow yet.

We enjoyed a very mild winter last year, with barely any icy snow and no frozen ground. I know lots of horsemen and women who are hoping for the same this year. Unfortunately, the Farmer's Almanac is predicting below average temperatures for January and February with lots of snow, slush and ice. Let's keep in mind, however, that the Farmer's Almanac's overall accuracy for winter weather predictions is only 80%. So there is still hope for a bearable winter season this year. Our horses will appreciate not having icy paths to trek.

The Park staff has been working hard removing the downed trees and branches, adding sand to the muddy areas of the trails, repairing gates and generally tending to the trails to keep them safe for all. We appreciate their efforts and dedication to the park and its patrons.

The 2024 Connetquot Annual Bridle Path Permits will be available for purchase beginning in December. Please visit the Park office to purchase yours if you plan to ride in the park. Day Permits will also be available.

Here's wishing everyone a happy and healthy holiday season. Enjoy life's adventures, ride with passion.

Photo: Frannie Anne



# Duck Hunting Exhibits

by John Remmer

When the State took over the South Side Sportsmen's Club and it became the Connetquot River State Park, a great many items that had been associated with the Club resurfaced as well-intentioned donations. Most of these items found their way into the Billiard Room in the Clubhouse. Two of these items were duck boats: one an open water layout boat, or scooter, which had been used on the Great South Bay, and the other a "grass boat" for hunting in the marshes along the edges of the river and bay. These had been used by Francis Low, a Club member.

In addition to duck shooting on the Club property, some of the members also hunted in the nearby marshes as well as the open water of the Great South Bay. The two duck boats offered the opportunity of explaining these alternate methods of sport, which were also popular with the local residents. This thought prompted the desire to set up exhibits on the second floor of the Clubhouse.



The rooms that were selected, because of their size and location, are just at the top of the main staircase. The first room is on the south side overlooking the front lawn, and the second room is on the north side looking toward the maintenance barn. Both rooms had been water damaged and were badly in need of repair. The State team arrived and did a great job of repairing the damage (left), including removing the old wallpaper and painting the walls and ceiling.

When the rooms had been repaired, the boats were moved up into them. The scooter was set in the front room, and along with appropriate decoys, such as broadbill duck decoys, which could help to illustrate a rig used for open water shooting. Other pertinent equipment might be included

in the display along with photographs and explanations.



Left:  
Repaired south  
room with scooter

Right:  
Moving the grass  
boat into the north  
room on the second  
floor



The grass boat was placed in the north room with plans to put it in a marsh setting. Appropriate decoys, such as black duck, would be included. The focus of the room will be the role that Club members played in the development of waterfowl conservation.

How to implement these ideas presented the next challenge, and we invited outside expertise to offer their concepts. On-site meetings were held with three artists: Molly Lenore of Moey, Inc.; Mike Walsh of Mike Walsh Taxidermy; and Roby Braun, of FX R. Braun, LLC.

The artists suggested using photographic murals for the background in the rooms. This challenge was thrown at photographer and FOC past president Bob Labuski, who electronically stitched together photos that he has taken of the bay. We printed a small sample that looked promising.

Craig Kessler, a former Club guide and Regional Director for Ducks Unlimited, joined us in these meetings and pledged his assistance in arranging the displays. He has also offered to help collect appropriate decoys and other items for each of the exhibits, with the possibility of a video for the Bay Room. The Marsh Room features a grass boat that was used locally for black duck hunting. Craig contacted Francis Low's daughter, who contributed five of his black duck decoys for the exhibit.

After several meetings with Molly and with Roby, we selected Moey to implement the Marsh Room diorama.

We came to an agreement with Moey on the financing and began planning the details. Part of the agreement was that we would do the carpentry. This included the platforms which would support the boat and their modules for the water and the marsh levels. The pictures on the next page show this work.

## *Duck Exhibits (continued)*



Left:  
Laying out the framework  
for the platforms



Right:  
Marsh boat platform and  
refinished floor

While the platform was under construction, Moey sourced the materials for the marsh grass and began the layout for the mural. The mural artist came out to Oakdale, and we provided a boat trip around the Connetquot River and over to Captree Island so that he could see for himself the region with its early winter vegetation. He then created a rendering for our review.

After the platforms had been constructed, the Moey team visited to make detailed measurements for the modules and the mural frame; (a) the mural to be suspended on an aluminum frame which will curve around the back corner and must be securely supported, and (b) the acrylic water surface to meet the side of the boat accurately, which required templates to be made on this visit.

With the Moey team in high gear, we considered what to do with the rest of the exhibit room. We removed the old linoleum floor, and a floor refinisher volunteered to strip the remaining glue and the existing finish and apply a sealer/stain followed by two coats of epoxy. This work included the entrance hall. Our thanks to Todd Robertson of South Shore Hardwood Flooring.

Moey returned in October with a team that installed the wrap-around mural on a frame, as well as acrylic water and synthetic vegetation. They also installed track lighting on the ceiling and speakers that add sounds of wind, water, and ducks. We then constructed a railing along the front of the display, and plan to install some explanatory signage on three of the posts.

Cabinets on the wall opposite the diorama contain the electronics as well as storage. Pictures on the wall offer explanatory text. Because this room was intended to focus on the conservation efforts of the hunting members of the Club, the display on the walls described the parts that the members had in the formation of Audubon, Ducks Unlimited and the Migratory Bird Act (and Stamp Act).



The almost-finished marsh diorama, waiting for signage. *Photos: John Remmer*



## Historical Bits

by Bob Giffen

### The Kamloops Rainbow Trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss kamloops*)

In December of 2009 all the trout in the hatchery on the Connetquot River were eliminated by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation because of the fish virus IPN. The young fry were destroyed and the adult trout dumped into the river below the mill into the tidal area of the river. There were three species of trout at the hatcheries at that time, brook, rainbow and brown trout. The rainbow trout originally came from the western state of California where they are native. They originated from the first (1872) United States Government Hatchery on the McCloud River in Northern California. This Rainbow trout was the main genetic variety that existed at the hatchery as far as I know.

Then in 1967 at the suggestion of Gil Bergen, the then Superintendent of Connetquot River Club Inc., and the former South Side Sportsmen's Club of Long Island (1866–1963). The Club Fish and Game Committee under the Chairman Francis Low purchased Kamloops Rainbow Trout eggs from a hatchery in the western State of Washington. The Kamloops Rainbow Trout originated in Kamloops Lake, British Columbia, Canada. This fish was known for its fighting ability when hooked, as it tailed across the water trying to throw the hook. It was also known to grow quickly and eat heartily of other small fish. The Kamloops Rainbow also can grow up to thirty pounds in the right environment. According to Gil Bergen, the largest trout ever caught in the Connetquot River was a leviathan 19 lb. 8oz. and was probably a Kamloops Rainbow. With the Connetquot River flooding into the salty Great South Bay and then the Atlantic Ocean, a trout could eat and grow to an enormous size in this environment.

The Kamloops Rainbow were originally kept separate from the other strain of Rainbow trout at the hatchery. Because of the successful first year hatch and the great growth of these trout by their second year, they were released into the waters of the Connetquot River at about one and a half pounds each. These fish proved to be superb and really took to a cast fly and gave a spectacular fight, jumping and tailing across the water.

I told my former boss Al Keller, the state of New York's fisheries biologist, all about these great rainbows. Because of the large population of Kamloops Rainbows in the hatchery, Al approached Gil Bergen, who decided as an experiment he would give Al 150 Kamloops to stock in Wildwood Lake in Riverhead, Suffolk County, to see how they would do in this deep, stratified lake. This body of water stayed cold at certain depths during the hot summer months. Al got feedback from anglers soon after the opening of trout season saying that this was the best fishing ever on Wildwood Lake. Some of the fish survived the spring, and in the cooling weather of the fall some of the Kamloops, when caught, had nearly doubled in size. To me these rainbow trout were the absolute best fish for put and take fishing. Later this strain of rainbow was mixed with the other strains at the hatchery.

## ORVIS: GENEROUS AGAIN

Orvis of Westbury has once again selected the Friends of Connetquot to be their partners for their "Giveback Days" event. The outdoor retailer challenged its customers to give back by donating \$10 or more to Friends of Connetquot. In appreciation of the donation, donors received a \$10 Orvis Savings card. This year, Orvis presented a check to FOC President Janet Soley for \$1,400. Orvis commits 5% of pre-tax profits to protecting and sustaining the natural world, not only now, but for all who follow.

FOC is sad that the Westbury store is closing. We had a great time working together. We look forward to the opening of their new shop elsewhere on Long Island.

Left to right: store manager Fred Versaci, employee Ed Tateosian, FOC's Janet Soley, and fishing manager Chris Vlachic. *Photo: Lucien Baranov*





Visit us at [www.friendsofconnetquot.org](http://www.friendsofconnetquot.org)



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Connetquot enjoyed a spectacular autumn, captured in the photos above by Rick Matteson.

## The End

A survivor of Thanksgiving struts in the park.  
*Photo: Carole Scialdone*



The Friends of Connetquot thanks Parks and Trails New York and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation for their support of our efforts.



**Parks, Recreation  
and Historic  
Preservation**