

Comments on Connetquot

Published by the Friends of Connetquot River State Park Preserve

VOLUME 30 NUMBER 3 Fall 2025



Photo credit: (Left) Serina Oliver and (Right) Patrick Hein

Hello Friends!

Fall has finally arrived and I couldn't be happier! As much as I will miss the sand between my toes and the ocean lapping at my ankles, fall brings a breathe of freshness that makes me feel alive! And it seems as if the chill in the air has awakened the Preserve! Visitors are returning to enjoy a walk in the woods, the plants and animals sense the change that's coming and are making changes of their own.

But please don't think that Connetquot was silent throughout the summer! Just admire the cover photos! The pathway to the Grist Mill is a great improvement due to the efforts of Scout Jace Quinn of Scout Troop 76. The beautiful Compass Rose artwork is the skilled artistry of Serina Oliver but there's more about these new additions to read about in the newsletter.

It seems that changes are all around us this time of the year! Although, we hate losing her, Park Manager Jessica is now the Director of Recreation Services! We wish her the best in this new position and hope that she will visit us often!

Programs, lectures and the annual GALA have been scheduled and I hope to see you at one or ALL of these fantastic events!

Come out and enjoy the beauty of fall at Connetquot!
See you out there!
Janet Marie

What's Happening in the Preserve

By Connetquot Park Assistant Manager Ryan Albinski

Compass Rose Mural – Serina, dedicated staff member of Connetquot and extremely talented artist, has completed the restoration of the Compass Rose displayed on pavement by the Main Pond and Grist Mill providing our patrons a sense of direction as they begin their travel. It is a work of art, come see for yourself!

Upgrade to the Grist Mill entrance - Boy Scout Troop 76 provided another improvement to the park for a troop member's Eagle Scout Project, this time improving ADA access to the Grist Mill. They removed the existing large stone ground coverage and replaced with crushed bluestone.

Hatchery Updates - with the heat of summer past us, the fish are very happy with normal river temperatures. Matt Caputo, Hatchery Manager, has been stocking regularly.

Hatchery Boat House – Now open for kayak rentals for fishing and observation of wildlife at Deep Water Pond.

Hydration Station Donation – A lifelong patron has decided to honor their late parents by donating a combination water bottle filler and fountain to the park. The fixture will replace the existing water fountain at the hatchery restroom and offer patrons an opportunity to hydrate sustainably.

Red Trail Boardwalk Update – Contractors visited the Red Trail for a pre-bid meeting in order to make assessments in preparation for their bids. Estimated completion of the project is early June 2026.

Slab Bridge Update – State funding has been approved to install a steel grate bridge to replace the metal slabs covering the sink hole on the Red/Blue trails just east of the Main Pond bridge. Regional Engineering Department is designing plans for a selected contractor to fabricate the bridge.

Collins Crossing Update – Staff continue to inspect the area and remove loose concrete while we await DEC permitting approval to remove the deteriorated concrete along the bank edge and replace with new.

Ladies Sitting Room Update – The soon to be reading room/meeting space is cleared of office furniture and other items. Park staff are in the process repairing the walls and ceiling.



BOARD SPOTLIGHT MELISSA HUNT

Hi! My name is Melissa Hunt. I am honored to be elected to the Friends of Connetquot Board of Directors as the Secretary. While my predecessor, Tom Casey, is greatly missed and could never be replaced, I'm grateful for the opportunity to continue his work in this position.

I worked at Connetquot River State Park Preserve as an Environmental Educator for 8 years. Teaching others about the Preserve and its many unique qualities has brought me so much joy. While I've moved on to another career path, I am forever grateful for the experience and all the lessons in nature I learned from the Preserve.

As a native New Yorker, I strive to protect our natural resources in every day life. I am currently renovating two fixer-uppers, with my husband and rescue dog, while practicing preservation on both properties. I'm constantly inspired by all the beauty New York has to offer and I'm honored to be a part of preserving Connetquot River State Park Preserve.



The Compass Rose

By Serina Oliver



I wanted to submit a story about the murals that were just painted here at Connetquot River State Park Preserve. We had restored a beautiful compass rose originally designed by park worker Inga Becker and Linda Kasten. The mural has been eroded and faded away for over a decade now leaving nothing but a faint blue circle. However, it remained a memorable piece to the patrons who've been attending the park for decades. Over the month of August of this year, I restored it by digitally color matching paints, drawing out measurements, and free handing all the designs.

I've had to redesign the fish and deer from scratch because the photos referenced were a bit too grainy to use. Finally, on 9/14/25 I was able to complete and seal the piece in the pavement to be enjoyed by all our patrons who visit the park and look over our beautiful main pond.

I hope you all enjoy the artwork as well and for taking the time to read this. May it guide you well through our lovely forests and trails.

Editors Note: Serina is just one of the many employees that make this Preserve the amazing place it is. Please stop and say hello to the many employees in Green garb. Introduce yourself!

Wellness Challenge

New York State Parks

ARE YOU UP FOR THE CHALLENGE?

Governor Kathy Hochul has invited all New Yorkers to participate in a 2025 wellness challenge offered by New York's State Parks. The New York State Parks

Wellness Challenge is to encourage holistic wellness: mental, physical, intellectual, spiritual, social, occupational, financial and environmental wellness. Are you up for the challenge? Every month, Friends of Connetquot will post challenges that you can complete at Connetquot. Have you started the challenge? Download the Challenge App or a hard copy of the challenge and join in the fun! Complete 25 activities and receive a special edition sticker.

Here's some for the Fall and Winter!

Stay Curious

- ☐ Visit one of our historic sites and release your inner curiosity. Read the literature. Take in the layered history of New York State!

You're a Catch

- ☐ Fishing is known to be a quiet and relaxing sport. Find a peaceful area that allows fishing and cast a line. (Don't forget to bring your fishing license!)

One Step at a Time

- ☐ Take a casual stroll at your local state park or historic site and keep track of your steps. How many steps did you take?

Nurture in Nature

- ☐ Attend an educational event or program at one of our nature centers. Where did you go and what did you learn?

First Day Hikes

- ☐ Start your New Year off right by participating in a First Day Hike! Take a picture of you enjoying the outdoors on January 1, 2025 or 2026!

Take a Color Walk

- ☐ Select a color of your choosing and, as you walk, make a point to look for that color consistently.

Hoof Beats Summer Recap

By Carole Scialdone

Summer is defined as "a period of hot, usually sunny weather." Well, here on Long Island, we can add extreme humidity to that definition this year. While our horses enjoy leaving their paddocks and getting out on trail, not much helps us escape the wet, humid air. So, on those brutal days we take it very easy. Even a quiet walk through Connetquot is always enjoyable. The thick canopy provides protection from the hot sun so we tend to choose the trails with more shade during the summer; Brook, Indian Head, Westline, etc. Typically we ride for an hour and a half to two hours winding through the various trails. On the cooler days we can do a little more. One of the great things about Connetquot is the 50 miles of available trails to explore. You can go out every day of the week and pick a different route each day.

I think most will agree that one of the best parts of Summer is seeing all of the Park's wildlife. This is my favorite part. I love seeing all the frisky foxes and their kits, the deer with their spotted fawns, the groups of turkeys (called a rafter) and the lightning fast chipmunks zipping across the trail. We have to keep a watch out for the Eastern Box Turtles because they blend in so well with the brown leaves on the forest floor. There is a bull frog who says hello every time we pass his pond, a sweet swan couple who hang out by Bunces Bridge and the prehistoric looking snapping turtles in the big pond. Occasionally we'll witness a black racer stretched out across a sunny trail before slithering off into the woods. You just never know what you will be lucky enough to see.



There are lots of hikers, bird watchers, fishermen and photographers in the summer too. It's nice to see them enjoying the Park as well. We always stop to let them pet the horses, if they ask. Growing up around horses, it is hard for me to believe that so many have never seen a horse up close. Of course, I'm always happy to oblige especially since my horses love the attention!

When we finally decide to head back, we always stop at Collins Crossing to let the horses have a quick drink to cool down. They know they will get hosed off and turned out when we get home. They also know we are already planning our next Connetquot trail riding adventure for tomorrow.

A quick drink before we head home.
Photo by Kathy Schlosser



And the Winner is.....

Barbara Morrell of Great River!

**Thanks to everyone who participated
in One Day 3 Parks!**



History Team Update

By Ritamarie Weigand

Having taken the entire summer off for the first time in three years, there is very little to report at this time. The History Team met on October 3, 2025. At that time, discussion arose on the direction of the History Project for the coming year which is ripe with possibilities!

Of the original 200 boxes, only a total of 10 boxes of documents and artifacts originating from the South Side Sportsmen's Club remain. The History Team intends to inventory and archive each object. Each object in these boxes in some way, belong in the South Side Sportsmen's Club collection. The goal is to complete the review of these boxes in 2025.

Upon checking with the New York Heritage web site, only the original four books have been uploaded as of this weekend. The History Team has scanned and edited seven more books that are ready to be uploaded by the Long Island Library Resource Council. We have one more SSSC book to scan and edit to complete one SSSC Unit: "Hunting and Fishing, 1889-1960."

Another item discussed was scheduling time for the scanning team to return to LILRC and resume scanning. Estelle was gracious enough to volunteer to learn to scan. It should take approximately 2 days to scan our last remaining book for this collection.

As dedicated as it is, the History Team cannot do all the work without a few more committed volunteers. If interested, contact the Director of Historic Preservation, Ritamarie Weigand at 631-560-5731

Friends of Connetquot Programs

Register at www.friendsofconnetquot.org

Our Programs are free to members, \$5 for non-members. Seasonal Parking Rate Applies



Birding is for everybody but it's not always easy.

Birding truly is for everybody and every body, regardless of disability or other health concerns.

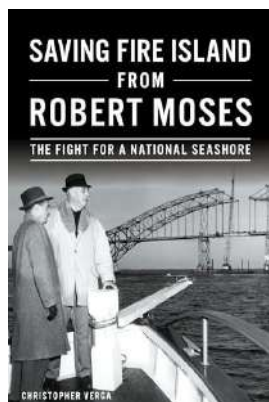
Through education, outreach and advocacy, Birdability works to ensure the birding community and the outdoors are welcoming, inclusive, safe and accessible for everybody. The focus is on people with mobility challenges, blindness or low vision, chronic illness, intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental illness, and those who are neurodivergent, deaf or hard of hearing or who have other health concerns. Our hope is to introduce birding to people with disabilities and other health concerns who are not yet birders so they too can experience the joys of birding. We need our physical environment to be accessible, and we need our social, cultural and institutional environments to be welcoming, safe and inclusive for all those potential new birders so they know they are genuinely wanted, and to make sure they come back!

You don't need a lot to start birding-just a good pair of binoculars, a desire to be outdoors, and a destination; like Connetquot! The 5th annual Birdability Week will be held October 20-26, 2025 and we invite everyone to join us at Connetquot at 9 am on Sunday October 26th to do a little bit of bird watching! The hike will be on easy terrain, suitable for everyone and we'd love to have you come out for a morning of beginning birding!

"Gone Whaling" Exhibition

November 15th – December 14th

A free, month long exhibit and lecture series of the history of whaling from members of the Shinnecock Nation at Connetquot River State Park Preserve. Viewing open Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays Opening Reception Lectures • Long Island Seamen of Color • Circassian Ship Wreck & the Shinnecock Nation



Saving Fire Island from Robert Moses

Saturday, November 1, 2025 - 1:00 pm

Presented by Christopher Verga

This lecture will elaborate on the struggle between the development and conservation of Fire Island through the use of historic images. Detailed will be Moses's goal to create a four-lane highway out of Fire Island, which was fought by local communities for thirty years. Bounding these community based grassroots efforts was the guiding idea that the natural beauty with limited access to motorized vehicles had to be a birth right for south shore residents. Armed with these efforts and guiding ideas, community residents waged a public relations war against Robert Moses, who wielded unchecked political power for over

Decorating the Clubhouse

Saturday, December 6th starting at 1 PM

Help us prepare for the holidays! Come decorate the building with thematic trees throughout the main floor of the Clubhouse. Community Service hours and refreshments will be available for this event. 😊



Claus at Connetquot

Saturday, December 13th 1:00 – 3:30 PM

Get ready for the Man in Red! He's coming back to visit Connetquot! Crafts, refreshments and time with Mr. and Mrs. Claus. A Wonderful time of the year! Register on Eventbrite

Register at www.friendsofconnetquot.org

Our Programs are free to members, \$5 for non-members. Seasonal Parking Rate Applies

Great State Park Programs!

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 (Notice that's "Ed" not "Ad").

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

Seasonal Parking Fees are required.

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

"Gone Whaling" Exhibition

A free, month long exhibit and lecture series of the history of whaling from members of the Shinnecock Nation at Connetquot River State Park Preserve Sat, Nov 15th - Sat, Dec 13th Viewing open Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays Opening Reception Lectures • Long Island Seamen of Color • Circassian Ship Wreck & the Shinnecock Nation

Twilight Hikers (Special Adult Program)

Saturday, Nov 22nd 2:30 PM - 6:30 PM

Join us on an evening hike to the park's Northern Trails to experience landmarks and sights not frequently seen. Bring a packed lunch and water.

Self Care Saturday (Adult Program)

Saturday, Nov 29 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

Join us for a relaxing program designed to help you unwind with mindfulness and your own self care. Create your own Fall themed craft, perfect for pampering and relaxation.

Holiday Door Decor (Adult Program)

Friday, Dec 12th 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Create a Holiday door decoration with nature inspired ornaments found around the habitats of Long Island. One craft per attendee.

Owl Prowl: Citizen Science (Adult Program)

Friday, Dec 26th 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Survey and discover the raptors of the night in a citizen science program to study the owls of Connetquot

Clubhouse Tours: (Family Program)

Sunday November 2nd, December 7th 10am ~ 12pm and 1:00pm - 3:00pm

A docent will discuss the history of the tavern and the high society Club which shaped Connetquot River State Park Preserve into what it is today. Tours of the historic Nicoll Grist Mill are included and will be offered after your house tour. There will be a short talk outside before viewing the inside.

Claus at Connetquot (Family Program)

Saturday, December 13th 1:00 – 3:30 PM

Get ready for the Man in Red! He's coming back to visit Connetquot! Crafts, refreshments and time with Mr. and Mrs. Claus. A Wonderful time of the year!

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

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Historical Bits by Bob Giffen

Reprinted from the Friends Newsletter Winter 1999

South Side Signal July 22, 1871

The favorite resort of New York Anglers for years was Eliphalet Snedecor's at Islip, L.I., and gathered around at his hotel after a good day's sport, have been such men as Daniel Webster, General Cadwallader, Henry Grinnel, Moses Grinnel, the Minturns, and representatives of many of the best families of New York. These gentlemen never fished to take away with them, but had the speckled trout cooked on the spot, and enjoyed an epicurean feast. A club was finally formed, known as the Obe Snedecor's Club of Islip (Obe was Eliphalet's son) and on the first day of March for years, there was a gathering of principal members, and the festivities were of the most enjoyable character. It was at one of these meetings that John C. Stephens first broached the project of sailing his yacht "America" across the Atlantic to engage in a contest for superiority with the English yachtsmen.

In 1865, the members of the Obe Snedecor's Club and several other prominent New Yorkers, eighty-four in all, formed the South Side Club. They paid in \$500 each and paid \$42,000 for Snedecor's Hotel and farm of 300 acres. Obe Snedecor, who had retired from the hotel business, was prevailed to take charge, and is still the host of the South Side Club. Troutng is, of course, the main sport of the members, but their large preserve of 300 acres affords good shooting at certain seasons for those members who may prefer the shot gun to the rod and reel.



Sales Pitch

We offer our deepest thanks for your continued support of the Friends of Connetquot. Allow us a moment to remind you of just some of what our efforts have accomplished in enhancing the infrastructure and visitor experience at our jewel of a preserve. We have restored the Nicoll Grist Mill, we have restored the 19th century stained-glass transom window over the entrance, created exhibits in three upstairs rooms, restored the tin ceiling and the skylight in the Fish Prep Room, commissioned the installation of a fire suppression system, secured the return of Eliphalet Snedecor's portrait and the Astor House stove, and purchased many artifacts for display. We are currently working on the Ice House and are restoring the Ladies Room. The Friends helped to reopen the Hatchery after it was closed in 2009, raising funds for a water filtration system. We recently completed the Interpretive Exhibit in the hatchery, and we have funded a high school scholarship. One of our most significant contributions is the work of our History Project in preserving the history of the South Side Sportsmen's Club and its members.

Take satisfaction in the idea that your contributions helped make all these works possible—and please, be sure to keep your membership up to date. Consider raising your membership category one level. Also, encourage your friends to become Friends!

It's a big park and needs all the love it can get. Renew or join online at www.friendsofconnetquot.org/join.



**We sadly bid Farewell to another member of
the Connetquot River State Park
Preserve
Family**

Jerry Ross

**LEARN HOW TO
FLY FISH**
AT CONNETQUOT RIVER STATE PARK PRESERVE
Available for High School fishing clubs and field trips.

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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.

Give Us Your Best Shot

Share your photos of the Preserve with us! Send us up to four photos, in .jpeg or .png digital format, for a chance to win a free year's membership in FOC. Photos must be current (within a year of submission) and shot within the park. Please give the approximate location of the scene whenever possible.

DEADLINE for next issue: December 2, 2025

Send your files to janetmariesoley@gmail.com

*Friends of Connetquot River
State Park Preserve*

**Cordially Invite You to Our
2025 Gala**

A Celebration of Our Achievements in 2025 •
And a Look Toward the Future

Honoring Tom Casey

**SNAPPER INN •
WATERFRONT RESTAURANT**

Thursday, December 4th
6 - 10 pm

Dinner * Open Bar * Live Music * Raffles
Live & Silent Auction

• See website for registration and sponsorship opportunities •

* www.friendsofconnetquot.org *

Together we can make a powerful impact toward
revitalizing the Connetquot Preserve for future generations

Friends of Connetquot is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation, conservation and history of the 3,474 acre Connetquot River State Park Preserve. We work to help management protect the pristine environment and historic buildings and artifacts. We support educational programs, fishing facilities, hiking and equestrian trails.

www.friendsofconnetquot.org

Trail Work All Over the Preserve

By Janet Marie Soley

Trail Work is going on all over the Preserve! Here's some updates on current work:

Redmond Trail – I was recently asked why the Redmond Trail was closed. The truth is it isn't! Mowing was discontinued as the trail was being washed out in areas making it difficult to mow and a protected plant was found in the vicinity. Now that the growing season is over, mowing will be included in the winter schedule.

Slab Bridge Replacement – A Change in Plans – In June 2025, it was determined that previously agreed upon bridge replacement option Roadrunner Bridge was not the best choice. The bridge coating was not robust enough for installation in our park environment. Two new options have been put forth. What do you think?



Manufacturer – CONTECH
8' x 10' truss bridge of weathered steel



Manufacturer – OHIO
8'x10' galvanized welded steel

Red Trail Phase 1 Project – I reported in our last Newsletter that funding was secured to begin Phase 1 of the Red Trail Loop. Phase 1 is the area highlighted in the aerial photo on the right. The Pre-Bid Meeting was held on September 2, at which 8 interested construction firms attended. Bids were due to NYS Parks Engineering on September 18th. NYS Parks Engineering is currently reviewing all the submissions and will be making their final selection in the coming month. Construction is anticipated to begin on December 18, 2025 and be completed on June 6, 2026!



Red Trail Phases 2 and 3 –Funding applications are being submitted for Phases 2 and 3 of the “Loop”. Phase 2 will span from the Rainbow Bridge over the Canal Bridge. Phase 3 will complete the “loop” by linking the Canal Bridge, going past the fishing sites to the parking area. Phase 3 will be blue stone chip as Eagle Scout Jace Quinn did at the Grist Mill.

Visit us at www.friendsofconnetquot.org



FRIENDS OF CONNETQUOT
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SAVE THE DATE!
Friends of Connetquot
Members Meeting & Open House



Saturday, April 18, 2026

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**