

# Comments on Connetquot

Published by the Friends of Connetquot River State Park Preserve

VOLUME 29 NUMBER 1 Spring 2025



Greetings Friends!

How quickly everything changes! We move the hands of the clock ahead and magically spring begins! Daffodils are popping up from the ground all around the preserve. My beloved Shunk cabbages are peeking out from the soil and they make me smile. And I heard peepers last week while walking on the Red Trail! What strange yet beautiful gifts of nature! With the coming of warmer weather, I will be getting outside to hike the preserve more. I can't think of a better way to improve my mental and physical wellness. I hope to see you out on the trails as well! Get Offline and Get Out There! Read more about the Challenge on page 4.

Friends of Connetquot is very excited and honored to share our announcement about receiving TWO GRANTS!

NYS Parks & Trails just awarded us the funds needed to tell the story of Connetquot's Riverbank Community. We hope to discover more about the families who lived along the river as early as 1690. With this grant, we will investigate our history and add Interpretive Signs, lectures and booklets about our discoveries of the Connetquot Community.

As I mentioned in our last newsletter, we are working to make accessibility improvements around the preserve. We are delighted to announce that we have secured the \$200,000 needed for the Phase 1A Construction of the Red Trail thanks to a generous non-matching grant from the John C. Dunphy Foundation! Drawings are complete and a few more steps are needed before we can start the bid process. We plan to build a raised walkway along the Eastern side of the hatchery and pond. This phase is the 'heavy lift'. The Greenbelt Trail Conference has pledged \$5,000 to improve the section between the north bridges. We wish to thank our dear friends of the Greenbelt! Friends of Connetquot will work to fund and construct what's needed for the final section of the loop – from the bridge, past the fishing platforms and out to the parking lot. A test section of trail was constructed last year with the help of Goldman Sachs that leads to the pollinator garden. I hope other companies will see the value in this project and contribute towards the final phase. Contact us if you can provide engineers, funds, materials or work teams. It's a great cause and a great team building opportunity for the community.



There are so many health benefits to being outdoors, surrounded by the beauty of the Preserve. Let's get EVERYONE outside!

Janet Marie  
Photo by Ray Staten



## *What's Happening in the Preserve*

By Connetquot Park Manager Jessica Anderson

**Spring is here!** – come visit and see signs of spring all around! The wildlife is very active and migratory birds are returning. Daffodils are sprouting and many are blooming. Spring peepers are in full chorus. With the warmer weather, we expect an increase in our visitors, especially on weekends.

**Slab Bridge Update (Brook Road closure)** – plans are advancing, which is great news. The Long Island Region Capital team is preparing to send the project out to bid. We hope to select a contractor by the end of summer, with a target project completion date by the end of this year. Read more about this projects progress in this newsletter.

**Trail Maintenance** – staff continue to conduct routine trail maintenance, including grading, the removal of dead limbs, and pruning low branches. Soon enough we will need to start mowing trail edges.

**Main House Projects** – staff completed spackling and painting the walls and ceiling by the main staircase Billiard Room. Take a house tour and see the beautiful work accomplished!

**Hatchery** – there was extensive rot and evidence of carpenter ants around the door leading into the hatchery. We removed the rotten wood, replaced the door frame, shingled the roof overhang, and sealed up the exterior. This is just one example of small projects that our carpenters Tony and Dan can tackle.

**Vehicle Use Fee collection begins**– Saturday, April 5, we begin collecting \$8 per vehicle on weekends and holidays until Memorial Day. After that, we will collect daily. Be sure to stop by the Park Office and purchase an Empire Pass!

## *Hoof Beats*

By Carole Scialdone

Photo by Kathy Schlosser

Winter requires warm coats, insulated boots and toasty gloves for us and snow pads and borium studs to keep our horses safe on the ice and snow. We survived another Winter's frigid temps, blustery winds and multiple snow storms. Although it is nice not having to deal with pesky flies while on trail, we are officially done with Winter.

The clocks have sprung forward, and we are enjoying the longer days of Spring. Especially appreciated by those riders who are employed, who can now squeeze in a relaxing ride after work during the extended daylight hours.

We are all anxious to trade in the dreary, bare trees and see the canopy burst into full bloom. Very soon we will start seeing the turkey poults, fox kits and spotted fawns prancing along the trails we love to ride. We will share the sandy paths with the turtles and the treetops with the hawks, osprey and eagles. Connetquot is such an captivating place. Every season brings new experiences, every twist and turn of the trail leads us to new adventures to share with friends.

"To watch spring unfold is to see the earth smile after its long Winter's nap."





## *When Can I Ride on the Red Trail? Update on the Red Trail Short Span Bridge*

Reported by Dan Rozell, LI Capital, Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

The secondary spillways of the Main Pond create a small stream that leads to East Pond. The Red Trail crossing of this stream is a concrete slab bridge in poor condition. The underside of the slab bridge has eroded due to high-water levels and low bridge clearance height. While steel plates have been placed over the existing bridge to provide support, they are a temporary measure. While designing a replacement, it was found that rain events are causing trail flooding and scour along the eastern abutment of the concrete slab bridge leading to further instability



The selected option is a prefabricated 8' x 20' utility bridge with a 10" bump rail, that has a load capacity of 8-tons—sufficient for the park's Ford F-350 dump truck and small emergency vehicles to safely cross the bridge. The frame of the bridge is made of fully welded, powder-coated steel tubes with Douglas fir pressure-treated wood decking. The bridge can be manufactured and delivered on site within 8 weeks of order by Roadrunner Bridge of Greenville, TX.

This option was selected due to its many benefits: • Prefabricated structure can be installed quickly • Most aesthetically pleasing option • Suitable for pedestrian, vehicular, and equestrian use • Smallest environmental impact, easiest to permit, and increases stream bed. current anticipated timeline of the project is to have this project out to bid by August 2025 and completion before year end

*THANK YOU NY State Park ENGINEERING!!*

### *History Team Update*

Article and Photo by Ritamarie Weigand

The History Team formed a small Scanning Team in December 2024, when we began lessons at the Long Island Library Resource Council (LILRC). To date the team has finished scanning 7 books and will be starting the eighth when we are able to meet again at LILRC's scanning center on April 11. Members of the scanning team are: Janet Soley, John Amato, Keith Snedecor and Ritamarie Weigand. We still have to learn to edit the scans we've completed so none are ready to be put on the NY Heritage web site yet.

We are working on a grant in hopes of obtaining our own scanner which costs around \$4000. It takes 2 people at a time, plus a third to aid, to scan each page of the nearly 100 SSSC books so it will take a long time if we decide to scan each book and then upload them onto the NY Heritage web site. Having our own scanner will give us more flexibility in scheduling the necessary two to three person teams needed.





Box of books from John Remmer

We were almost finished with the last box of SSSC documents until John Remmer dropped off a box someone found stored in their garage. The box consisted of 5 or 6 SSSC books in terrible condition and are in desperate need of repair; one photo album from about the 1920's; and a stack of SSSC Treasurer's Reports, also from the 1920's. All of these will be documented.

Paul Belard, our book conservator, returned five SSSC books he had restored last week and saw the books recently received laid out to dry fully. He checked them out to see that the inside of each book was in excellent condition. The covers were in very bad shape. I decided to have him take those books back with him to restore the covers before the Team started working on them.

Estelle Gervasio has finished archiving nearly everything in every box of documents saved from the Dowling College-Vanderbilt Historical Society collection. She recently completed the Herculean task of documenting hundreds of SSSC checks that resided in boxes for decades.

If you or someone you know would like to help out the Scanning Team, please contact us at [friendsofconnetquot.org](mailto:friendsofconnetquot.org). Because we will provide training at LILRC, being a Scanning Team member requires this specialized skill and a commitment of 4-8 hours a month once trained.

## 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. 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 two to start you off with!

### I Love My Park Day



Help us clean up a local state park or historic site on I Love My Park Day (this year it's on May 3)!

### Nurture in Nature



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





Join us on Saturday, May 3 to celebrate and enhance Connetquot River State Park Preserve Grounds, Gardens, Trails and Historic Structures.

As the largest single-day volunteer event in New York State, it brings our community together. The work you do that day not only enhances the natural beauty and accessibility of our iconic state park but also ensures that this cherished space is ready to be enjoyed by all throughout the season. By volunteering, you contribute to preserving the environment, fostering community pride, and supporting the long-term sustainability of New York's treasured public lands.

Registration opens early April    Parks & Trails New York :: [Find an Event / Sign Up](#)





## *Thank You Art Flick Trout Unlimited!*

To our surprise and delight, Art Flick TU presented the Friends of Connetquot a check of \$1,000 to offset the expenditure of the Electroshock Equipment purchased last year. Thank you AFTU!

We are “hooked on you”!



Photo by Serina Oliver

## *It's a Really BIG Check...we needed longer arms!*

L to R: Richard Cosgrove AFTU VP, Janet Soley, James Fitzpatrick FOC Fisheries Board Member and Matthew Caputo, Connetquot's Hatchery Manger

## *In Loving Memory*



It is with deep sadness that we report the passing of longtime Friend and Secretary Tom Casey. Tom succumbed to injuries sustained last year in an automobile crash while headed to another of his many volunteer positions. Tom was a champion of the Long Island Environment.

Please take a moment to read and reflect on the articles referenced to appreciate Tom's love for the outdoors.

[Parks & Trails New York :: Trails, Literature, and Service for New York's Outdoor Spaces](#)  
[Five Questions with a Board Member –](#)

The Executive Board of the Friends of Connetquot can think of no finer way to honor Tom than to make the outdoors accessible to EVERY BODY.

Bless you Tom. May you Rest in Peace.



## Friends of Connetquot Programs

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

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

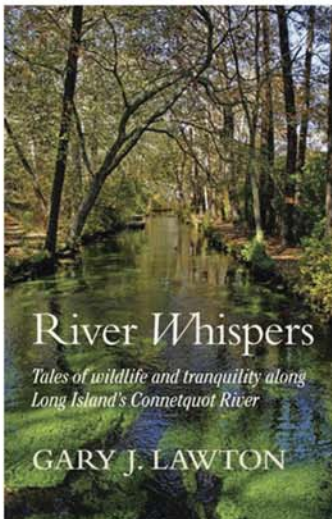
### The Amazing History of Radio on Long Island Saturday, April 26, 2025 at 1 pm



Radio technology transformed the world in the early 20th century. Early morse code transmissions helped save ships at sea. People could communicate across the world. Entrepreneurs and inventors rushed to capitalize, forming competing corporations and creating sprawling transmission stations with towers up to 500 feet high.

And Long Island was a proving ground for much of this. Giants of the industry made their mark on the Island, from Marconi and Tesla to RCA and more. Now their presence is noted only by an occasional street name or historical marker.

This talk will present an overview of Long Island's radio history, highlighting the major players, where they operated, and what drew them to the Island in the first place. Chris Kretz is the president of the Long Island Radio & Television Historical Society, a group dedicated to preserving this rich heritage through research projects and public outreach. You can find them at [lirtvhs.org](http://lirtvhs.org).



### River Whispers Sunday, April 27, 2025 at 1 pm

Get Ready for our April Book Discussion with Author Gary Lawton!

Author Gary Lawton worked with Gil Bergen for nearly 40 years. He spent countless hours exploring the preserve, sometimes finding vestiges of life from the 1800s, documenting the locations of rare plants and watching ordinary animals exhibit extraordinary behaviors. Come and enjoy stories and memories from your youth!



## *Friends of Connetquot Programs*

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### Purple Martins - North America's Largest Swallows

Saturday, May 24, 2025 at 1 PM



Did you know, Connetquot Preserve is home to a colony of Purple Martins? Purple Martins are beautiful, graceful flyers that live in colonies, depend on man-made housing and feed exclusively on flying insects. Martins overwinter in the Amazon Basin and start their spring migration into North America around the end of January, showing up in Florida in early February. Depending on weather and food supply the first Purple Martins, called scouts, arrive on Long Island around the first week of April to start their breeding season. Most Martins in this area start heading back south by the beginning of August.

Ken is the father of two 20 something daughters and has been married to his wife Juliette for 32 years. A lifelong Long Islander, he spent 40 years as a software engineer and is now semi-retired and working as a seasonal park ranger at Connetquot State Park. Ken first became interested in Purple Martins after spotting 40+ Martins sitting on a power line up in Westchester. Ken has been a Purple Martin landlord for about 10 years and currently has 3 poles with a total of 40 cavities in his yard in Blue Point.



Enjoy Ranger Ken's presentation on Purple Martins and then he will lead a hike into the field for observations!

### Rainbow Lantern Hike Friday June 6th 6:30 – 8:30pm

Have you ever wanted to explore the park after dark? Now is your chance, and the ambiance will be enhanced with rainbow lanterns! Join us!

## *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.

### **Clubhouse Tours: (Family Program) Sundays 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.

House tours can run up to 2 hours long. There will be a short talk outside before viewing the inside. Held on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month from 1:00-3:00pm.



# Great State Park Programs!

## **Tiny Tots Programs**

*Held on Wednesdays 10:30-11:30am*

Explore the natural world around us. These programs will connect children and their parents with nature through short walks, animal visitors, and crafts. Children ages 3-5.

Quack Quest April 2nd  
Earth Day Explorers April 16<sup>th</sup>  
Trees are Terrific April 30<sup>th</sup>

Horseshoe Crab Heroes May 14th  
Deep Sea Discoveries May 28th  
Hermit Crabs June 11th

Bats in Action June 25th

## **Sustainable Herb Gardening: (Family Program)**

*Friday April 18th 6:15pm - 8:00pm*

Grow herbs and learn about their uses through history. Learn about the native species you can find in NY and what grows best!

## **Self-Care Saturday: (Adult Program)**

*Saturday April 19th 1:00pm - 3:00pm*

Join us for a relaxing program designed to help you unwind, explore mindfulness techniques and discover simple methods of self-care. Create your own lavender sugar scrub, perfect for pampering and relaxation.

## **Crafting Tuesday: (Seniors Program)**

*Tuesday April 22nd 10:00am ~ 12:00pm*

**Join us for this new monthly crafting program.** The craft is a surprise! Seniors can unwind and express their artistic side! Materials will be provided. This crafting program falls on Earth Day! All skill levels are welcome! Recommended for 62+

## **Bird and Breakfast (Adult Program)**

*Sunday May 11th 8:00am ~ 11:00am*

A continental breakfast will be provided before a short presentation on returning birds. Join us afterwards for a guided walk through the preserve. Binoculars are provided or bring your own! This program is in collaboration with the Great South Bay Audubon Society.

## **Twilight Hikers Special (Adult Program)**

*Friday May 16th 5:45pm ~ 10:00pm*

Visit the less traveled northern section of the Preserve on this evening sunset turned twilight hike! We will be hiking 6 miles along the blue trail. Please bring water and your own packed dinner for a stop along the way.

## **Nightjar Survey: (Adult Program)**

*Friday May 30th 6:15pm ~ 9:30pm*

New York is home to three species of nightjars—the Common Nighthawk, Eastern Whip-poor-will, and Chuck-will's-widow—and all of them are experiencing steep population declines. Help us collect data and enjoy a walk through the natural habitats of the Preserve. May hike as many as 5 miles.



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Seasonal Parking Fees are required.

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

### **Pride Art: Keith Haring (Family Program)**

*Friday June 13th 6:45pm – 9:00pm*

Learn about the life and style of an influential modern painter to celebrate Pride Month. Learn to paint your own work of art in their style!

### **Rainbow Lantern Hike: (Family Program)**

*Friday June 20th 7:15pm ~ 9:00pm*

Join us for one of our popular evening lantern walks with a Pride Month Twist!

### **Nightjar Survey: (Adult Program)**

*Thursday June 26th 6:15pm ~ 9:30pm*

New York is home to three species of nightjars—the Common Nighthawk, Eastern Whip-poor-will, and Chuck-will's-widow—and all of them are experiencing steep population declines. Help us collect data and enjoy a walk through the natural habitats of the Preserve. May hike as many as 5 miles.

## *Friends of Connetquot Launch a New Scholarship Program!*

By Teresa Simeone

The Friends of Connetquot will award a \$1,000 scholarship to a graduating High School Senior this school year!

To qualify for this scholarship, students applying for this scholarship must meet the following criteria:

1. Graduating high school in good standing with no discipline problems in Spring/Summer 2025 and will be attending a college or trade school in Fall/Winter 2025.
2. Complete 40 hours of service to the park addressing concerns in at least 3 of the following categories:
  - a. Aquaculture – Assist at the hatchery, whether it be grounds or river maintenance or fish stocking.
  - b. Environment – Participate in field maintenance, clean-ups, plantings or invasive removal projects.
  - c. Education – Assist the Environmental Office in planned programs or create one of your own.
  - d. Historic Significance – Assist in informing the public about the history of the park, it's buildings or work with the History Team with Archival Materials
  - e. Trails – Assist with Trail maintenance or projects as proposed by park staff, or create a project of your own.

Documentation of service will be signed off by an Administrator on forms that FOC will provide.



Submit a brief essay of 250 words minimum on the importance of Parks and Preserves in a modern and evolving society, and how CRSPP can continue to survive in this changing climate and culture.

Application deadline must be submitted with all completed paperwork by May 1, 2025 to Teresa Simeone at [tersim4@aol.com](mailto:tersim4@aol.com)

Does this interest you or a young adult you know? Application can be downloaded from our website or contact us at [www.friendsofconnetquot.org](http://www.friendsofconnetquot.org)

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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: June 15, 2025.**

Send your files to [janetmariesoley@gmail.com](mailto:janetmariesoley@gmail.com)



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



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Parks & Trails New York's

# I LOVE MY PARK *days*

**Saturday, May 3, 2025**

**9 a.m. – 12 p.m.**

**Registration opens early April**

**[Parks & Trails New York :: Find an Event / Sign Up](#)**



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**