



The NATURALISTS CLUB

NEWSLETTER

Springfield Science Museum at the Quadrangle, Springfield, Massachusetts

July to September ~ Calendar of Events

JULY

Saturday, July 13, Paddling Canoe Meadows, *Lee*
 Wednesday, July 17, What Makes the Earth Special?, *Longmeadow*
 Saturday, July 20, Mindfulness Hike, *Westfield*
 Sunday, July 28, A Plant Walk at Whiting Street Reservoir, *Holyoke*

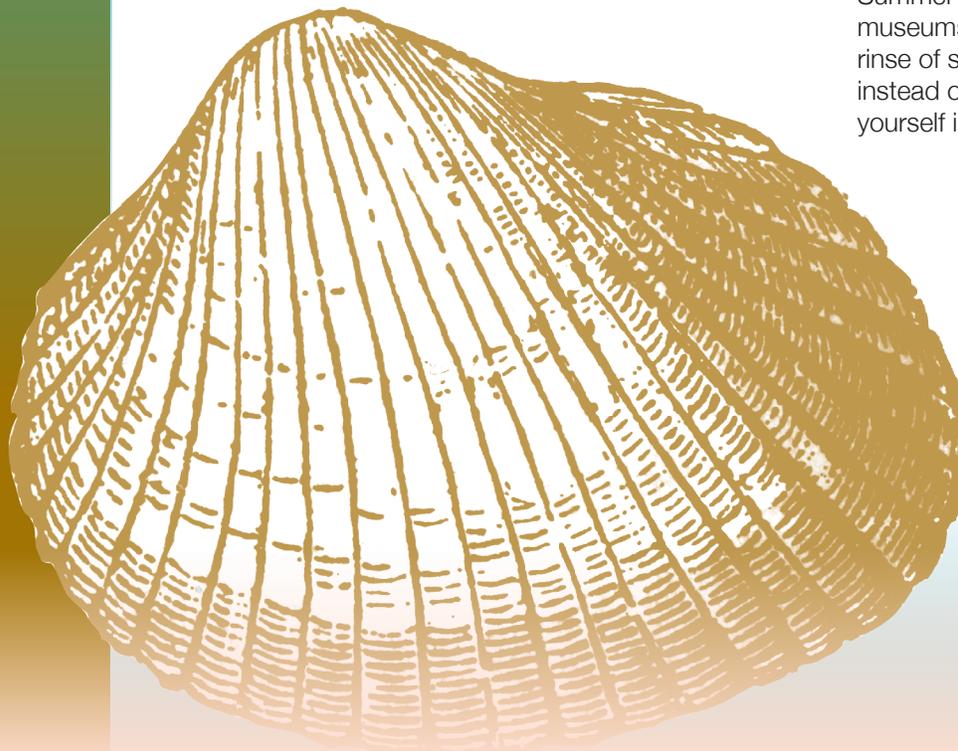
AUGUST

Sunday, August 11, Let's Go for a Bike Ride on the Norottuck Rail Trail, *Hadley*
 Monday, August 12, Deadline to Register for Stump Sprouts Weekend
 Saturday, August 17, Early Morning at the Oxbow, *Holyoke*

SEPTEMBER

Friday-Sunday, September 6 - 8, Stump Sprouts Weekend, *West Hawley*
 SEPTEMBER MEETING, September 18: History, Culture and Biology of Rapa Nui
 Sunday, September 22, Fantastic Fungi, *Westfield*
 Sunday, September 22, A Visit to Harvard Forest and Fisher Museum, *Petersham*
 Saturday, September 28, A Quiet Water Paddle on Buckley Dunton Lake, *Washington*
 Sunday, September 29, Trees and Shrubs, *Westfield*
 Sunday, September 29, Autumn Hike in Bear Hole, *West Springfield*

Summer is a great time to visit art museums, which offer the refreshing rinse of swimming pools - only instead of cool water, you immerse yourself in art ~ Jerry Saltz



NATURALIST'S CORNER

COME ONE, COME ALL, TO A PARTY

I adore springtime colors. Neighborhoods are bedecked with snow-white flowering pear trees. Ivory-colored magnolia petals rain down on greening lawns. Pink redbud flowers dangle daintily from branches while the dogwoods hold out their pink or white blossoms like a waiter balancing a tray at a fancy restaurant. Small leaf rhododendron add their delicate lilac color to the mix while shouts of yellow forsythia foretell the advent of sunshine. Even the myriad shades of green on every mountainside speak of newness and freshness. Beholding these sights in spring makes me smile.

What makes you smile when you are outdoors? Do you experience mental or physical health benefits? Does it improve your enjoyment of life? Do you approach the outdoors scientifically, naming plants and animals, or do you approach a walk outdoors more metaphysically?

I surveyed my 9th and 10th grade honors biology students, asking what they like to do outdoors and why. Fully half of my students said that they like hiking and walking outdoors because it relieves stress. Nearly that many said they play sports outdoors for fun and to stay active. Many said they like to watch wildlife and enjoyed the beauty, fresh air and peacefulness of the outdoors.

As a club, we have a great opportunity to share our love of the outdoors and show young and old alike what beauty we have to celebrate. As a club, we can have a larger voice and advocate for nature together. The Club's 50th anniversary plans to be not only a celebration of everything that we do but also an opportunity to showcase for residents of the Pioneer Valley and Hilltowns everything that is great and wonderful here in our natural neighborhood.

See the anniversary announcement on page 7 of this newsletter for details of the events planned. The party will take place at the Appalachian Mountain Club's Noble View Outdoor Center in Russell the first weekend of October. Put this event on your calendar. You can stay overnight in the double cottage. Most important of all, bring a friend or two or five, and spread the word and grow the club. Let us share what makes us smile outdoors and advocate for nature together.

~ Nancy Condon

*What a difference
10 years makes!*

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Naturalists' Club's 40th Anniversary Weekend, Russell
Friday, October 2, to Sunday, October 4
Registration: Please call Nancy Condon at 413-564-0895 to reserve a room in the lodge or a camping spot.
Place: Appalachian Mountain Club's Noble View property

Can you believe it? The Club is 40 years old this year! Don't miss out on the festivities and events planned to celebrate this momentous occasion. You can come for the whole weekend at AMC's Noble View facilities or come just for the daytime activities.

Double Cottage: Sleeping for 18: 6 rooms with 2 single beds 3 rooms with 3 single beds Electricity, stove, refrigerator, pots, pans & dishes and woodstove for heat NO POTABLE WATER ~ bring water for cooking and drinking. Wash water is available. No linens ~ bring your own Outhouse facilities	Cost: \$15/person/night.	Event Activities:
Camping: Bring your own tent ~ plenty of grassy field space NO POTABLE WATER ~ bring water for cooking and drinking. Wash water is available. Outhouse facilities Firewood provided for outdoor fireplace	Cost: \$10/person/night .	Friday: Potluck supper Astronomy Campfire
Daytime participants:	Cost: \$5/person/day.	Saturday: Early morning bird walk Breakfast (included) Hikes and programs by Naturalists' Club members and guest leaders and presenters Catered lunch (included) Hikes and programs by Naturalists' Club members and guest leaders and presenters Catered dinner with anniversary cake (included) Astronomy Campfire
		Sunday: Early morning walk Breakfast (included) Departure by noon

Considering the Red Wolf's Species Status, 2400 Years After Aristotle

The question of how best to define a species is a long-standing challenge for biologists. Aristotle emphasized morphological differences between groups of organisms, with little attention to variation among individuals within a group. More recent concepts have embraced the idea of diversity within species, while emphasizing the importance of distinctness between them. The definition in broadest use today is termed "the biological species concept" and holds that a group of organisms constitutes a distinct species only if it does not produce fertile offspring through mating with members of other species.

Over the past year, I was fortunate to participate in a National Academies of Sciences (NAS) panel charged with addressing this arguably philosophical issue in the context of a very specific question. In response to a request from the Fish and Wildlife Service, my seven colleagues and I were asked to determine whether existing evidence supports continued classification of the red wolf, *Canis rufus*, as a species distinct from other canids in North America.

The NAS, established by President Lincoln in 1863, has an intriguing and important role. Though its main campus is situated near the National Mall in Washington D.C. and immediately adjacent to the Einstein Memorial, NAS itself is not a federal entity. Instead, it serves as an independent contractor that agencies like FWS consult to gather scientific advice on matters that have potential policy implications.

For my colleagues and me, the responsibility of serving on a NAS panel came with two specific challenges. The first of these was readily apparent from the question posed by FWS. Though our conclusion about the red wolf's taxonomic status would almost certainly have implications for species management issues, we were contractually obligated to focus exclusively on taxonomic issues; as a result, my colleagues and I had to work hard to avoid discussing the potential policy implications of our decisions.

The second challenge became clearer as we read the scientific literature about the red wolf. Under the biological species concept, the challenge of assessing whether a given group of organisms is in fact a species amounts to assessing whether members of the group in question can and do have fertile offspring with members outside of their group. While this concept is compelling in principle, genetic data collected over the past decade reveal that true reproductive isolation is exceedingly rare. For example, extensive data now indicate that the subset of human populations that moved north from Africa into Europe and Asia had fertile offspring with other hominids living in those areas. Indeed, a small fraction of the genomes humans of European ancestry share came from the Neanderthal lineage. Under the strictest possible interpretation of the biological species concept, these data would frame modern humans and Neanderthals as a single species.

Red wolves have a story of diverse ancestry paralleling that of some human populations: Although at least some of the red wolf genome is likely unique to red wolves, much of it can be traced to the coyote, providing evidence of historical and ongoing hybridization. So, just as for modern humans and Neanderthals, a strict interpretation of the biological species concept would disqualify red wolves as a distinct species.

As my colleagues and I read, though, we learned that, despite matings with coyotes, red wolves remain a readily identifiable group, with cranial structure distinct from both coyotes and other wolves. Moreover, even though red wolves can mate with coyotes, they prefer to mate with red wolf mates. And though red wolves do at times eat small mammals, they also can successfully hunt large prey inaccessible to coyotes. Indeed, it is plausible that human activities account for reductions in populations of larger prey in some areas, ultimately forcing red wolves to put up with a second-choice diet more similar to coyotes'. Even the observation that contemporary red wolves often mate with coyotes may be attributable to human impacts, which have diminished red wolf populations and rendered coyotes the only potential mates available in a given region.

In the end, our NAS committee decided not to apply a strict definition of the biological species concept in our consideration of the taxonomic status of the red wolf. We opted for a more nuanced understanding of what constitutes a species, one more consistent with our emerging understanding of hybridization as part of the history of many species. We reported to the FWS that existing data are consistent with a view that despite dietary overlap and extensive hybridization with the coyote, the red wolf is a species of its own.

Grappling with and ultimately deciding on the taxonomic status of the red wolf is, I suspect, just one of many such studies that will become necessary as genomic data reveal complex population histories and as human activity increasingly impacts wildlife. The observation that two species (or would-be species) interbreed in a world of increasingly volatile weather patterns, habitat loss, and population declines provides little information on how those same species might have behaved in a world free of adverse human impacts. Moreover, hybridization with other species, in itself, does not undermine the possibility that a population of animals living in a given area plays a distinct role, the loss of which might be catastrophic for an entire ecosystem.

Continued on next page .

Continued . . . **Considering the Red Wolf's Species Status, 2400 Years After Aristotle**

Today, we have genomic data of breadth and depth unimaginable even just ten years ago. Unfortunately, even these vast data sets do not capture the myriad features, not just genomic, but also ecological, morphological, and behavioral, that make one group of organisms distinct from others. Designating species becomes even more challenging when we consider that human impacts tend to reduce habitat diversity, potentially undermining our ability to observe true behavioral differences among groups of animals. Approximately 2400 years after Aristotle contemplated species concepts, we are still searching for a taxonomic framework that, in acknowledging these complexities, allows us to identify distinct groups of organisms.

The full text of the NAS report is available at <https://www.nap.edu/read/25351/chapter/1>.

~ Diane Genereux

Paddling Canoe Meadows, Lee

Saturday, July 13, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Leader: Nancy & Tom Condon

Registration: Please contact Nancy (413-297-0778; nancy@paddleforwater.net)

Meeting Place: McDonald's in Lee just north of Mass Pike exit.

Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, who once owned the land that is now the Canoe Meadows Mass Audubon Sanctuary, is quoted as saying, "There is no tonic like the Housatonic." Join us for this quiet paddle down a six-mile stretch of gently moving water.

This section of the Housatonic, although passing through Pittsfield, is secluded and picturesque. Surrounded by the George L. Dacey Housatonic Wildlife Management Area, the river is alive with wildlife, so don't forget your binoculars and camera. If we have a dry summer, the river may be low and might require getting out in some places so be sure to bring water shoes, too.

Bring your own kayak or canoe and gear if you have it, but you don't need to own your own boat. You can rent one from us for \$10 per person. We'll provide lifejackets and paddles, plus a small dry bag for electronics. In addition to your water shoes, bring along a lunch and some water. Remember your sunscreen and hat, and bring your raincoat, too, if there is slight drizzle. Heavy rain cancels. Pre-registration required.

What Makes the Earth Special?, Longmeadow

Wednesday, July 17, starting at 6:30 p.m.

Speaker: Jack Megas

Meeting Place: Storrs Library

Jack Megas will give an encore of the talk he presented at the Naturalists' Club meeting in January, 2019.

At the Summer Solstice, all is green and growing, potential coming into being, the miracle of manifestation painted large on the canvas of awareness.

~ Gary Zukav



The winding down of summer puts me in a heavy philosophical mood
~ Thomas Carlyle
Robert Fulghum

Mindfulness Hike, Westfield

Saturday, July 20, from 9 to 10:30 a.m.

Leader: Nancy Condon

Registration: Contact Nancy (413-297-0778; nancy@paddleforwater.net)

Meeting Place: Westfield State University South Parking Lot, opposite the Dower Center. Meet at the very end of the lot by the woods.

We intuitively recognize how good it feels to get out into nature. Fresh air, soothing aromas, gentle streams, and beautiful forest have a resounding effect on us. Studies have shown that our brains do in fact respond quite readily to nature's healing effects. This hike will highlight ways we can improve our mental well-being while we promote our physical health. If you are tense or anxious or feeling like you need a mental boost, come join this fun, healthful hike and get rejuvenated.

Wear clothes you can move easily in, as we will be doing some light cardiovascular and muscle-strengthening exercises along the way. The hike will be about 1.5 miles long. Bring water and dress for the weather.

A Plant Walk at Whiting Street Reservoir, Holyoke

Sunday, July 28 from 1 to 3 p.m.

Leader: Dave Lovejoy

Registration: Please register by calling 413-572-5307 (leave message) or at dlovejoy@westfield.ma.edu.

Meeting Place: Dave will call or email registered participants with more information.

We'll probably do the approximately three-mile loop trail around the reservoir. It is an easy walk, mostly quite flat. We'll focus on the plants, but any participants with additional interests (birds? geology?) are welcome to contribute. Heavy rain cancels.

Register by Monday, August 12 for ...

Stump Sprouts Weekend, West Hawley

Registration: Reservations and 50% deposit should be sent in time for receipt by Monday, August 12. The trip may be cancelled if fewer than 18 people have paid by that date. For current information, please call Dietrich or Julie (413-788-4125).

All-inclusive cost for two nights' lodging and six meals is \$172 per person. Indicate your roommate preference, make your check payable to The Naturalists' Club, and send to Dietrich Schlobohm, 52 Poplar Ave., West Springfield, MA 01089.



High on the side of a mountain with a magnificent view, Stump Sprouts ski lodge provides a beautiful setting for walking, hiking, or relaxing in solitude. A ninety-minute drive from Springfield, the property consists of a 450-acre tract surrounded by Dubuque, Savoy, and Mohawk State Forests. Guests need to bring their own bedding, towels, and toiletries; bathrooms are shared. Our hosts will provide superb family-style garden-fresh meals, complete with homemade breads and cookies. There is usually a choice of meat or vegetarian fare. Bring along binoculars and good footwear. Limit: 20 people.

Let's Go for a Bike Ride on the Norottuck Rail Trail, Hadley

Sunday morning, August 11,

Leader: Carole Dupont

Registration: Please contact Carole (413-896-0124; carole0136@gmail.com) for meeting place & time

We will bike about 10 miles along a flat, pleasant trail, stopping to observe wildflowers, and for water breaks. We can shorten or lengthen our trip according to the needs of the group. Bring your trail-worthy bike. A helmet is essential, as are water and snacks. Dress for the weather!

Early Morning at the Oxbow, Holyoke

Saturday, August 17, from 7 to 10 a.m.

Leader: Nancy & Tom Condon

Registration: Please contact Nancy (413-297-0778; nancy@paddleforwater.net)

Meeting Place: Boat Ramp on Route 5 at the Holyoke/Northampton line.

Let's get up early and beat the heat and motorboats for a quiet exploration of the Oxbow of the Connecticut River. This small lake was created when the river's current cut through a narrow bend in its path and left the lake separated from the main flow. Over the years, sediments

began to fill the entrance and eventually succession would result in swamps and forests. Dredging allows the Oxbow to remain connected to the river and so serves as a marina for many. We'll be up early to watch for birds and explore the quieter corners of this unique feature of the landscape.

Bring along a lunch, some water, and shoes you don't mind getting wet. Remember your sunscreen and hat. Bring your raincoat if there is slight drizzle. Heavy rain cancels. Pre-registration required.

Fantastic Fungi, Westfield

Sunday, September 22 from 1 to 3 p.m.

Leader: Sponsored by the Pioneer Valley Mycological Association

Meeting Place: Main entrance sign to the Frank Stanley Beveridge Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary

This slow-paced walk on the trails of Stanley Park will focus on the many mushrooms we may find in the early fall. Members of the PVMA will discuss the interconnected relationships between fungi and forests, mushroom characteristics and features, and the role of individuals in the scientific study of fungi. No prior mushroom knowledge is necessary!



SEPT.
Meeting

History, Culture and Biology of Rapa Nui

Wednesday, September 18

Tolman Auditorium, Springfield Science Museum, Starting at 7 p.m.

Speaker: Dave Lovejoy

Formerly known as Easter Island, Rapa Nui is one of the most isolated islands on Earth. Often used as an example of poor resource management and sometimes invoked as a harbinger of what the human population (currently eight billion) might do to the Earth, the history of the settlement and successful occupation of this small South Pacific island should also be told. Much of the so-called “mystery” of the island’s statues has been explained in recent decades as has its unique culture. Dave and Debbie spent two days on Rapa Nui earlier this year as a part of a cruise from Chile to French Polynesia and will provide a glimpse into this seldom-visited spot.

A Visit to Harvard Forest and Fisher Museum,

Petersham

Sunday, September 22

Leaders: Dave and Suzy Gallup (413-525-4697)

Registration: Please call Dave to register, and for meeting place and time.

Join us for a special day at the Harvard Forest/Fisher Museum in Petersham. After meeting in Belchertown, we will drive to Petersham to have lunch at the country store. The lunches are great and the Town of Petersham is like a step back in time to the 19th century! After lunch we will go to the Fisher Museum, which is just down the road from Petersham center. The museum is free, and its main exhibit displaying 23 internationally acclaimed dioramas portraying the history, conservation, and management of central New England forests is spectacular. Time permitting, we will hike one of the many trails on the property. Come join us for a very pleasant day.

A Quiet Water Paddle on Buckley Dunton Lake,

Washington

Saturday, September 28, from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m.

Leader: Nancy & Tom Condon

Registration: Contact Nancy (413-297-0778;

nancy@paddleforwater.net)

Meeting Place: From Route 20 in Becket, turn onto Becket Road to enter October Mountain State Forest. Keep left on Yokum Pond Road. Watch for signs directing you left again onto Buckley Dunton Road and toward boat ramp.

Buckley Dunton Lake is a 161-acre reservoir that lies mostly within October Mountain State Forest. It is truly a gem in the Berkshires, with very little development along its shores. We’ll take a leisurely paddle around the lake watching for birds, beaver, bullfrogs, turtles and other wildlife, so bring your binoculars. We will identify aquatic plants like bladderwort, spatterdock and water lily growing up between the submerged stumps of this drowned forest. Colorful foliage will be twice as beautiful reflected in the reservoir’s still water.

Bring along a lunch, some water, and shoes you don’t mind getting wet. Remember your sunscreen and hat. Bring your raincoat if there is slight drizzle. Heavy rain cancels. Pre-registration required.

Trees and Shrubs, Westfield

Sunday, September 29, from 1 to 3 p.m.

Leader: Dave Lovejoy

Meeting Place: Main entrance sign to the Frank Stanley Beveridge Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary

Registration: Not required

Many of the common trees and shrubs of southern New England can be easily seen along the trails in the Sanctuary along the Little River. We will focus on a dozen or so of these woody plants, learning how to recognize them and distinguish them from similar species. Some late season wildflowers will also be seen.

Autumn Hike in Bear Hole, West Springfield

Sunday morning, September 29

Leader: Carole Dupont

Registration: Please call or email Carole (413-896-0124; Carole0136@gmail.com) for meeting place & time

Join us for an early fall hike to enjoy the brilliant colors Mother Nature is bestowing on us as she prepares the trees & bushes for their winter slumber. Feel the crisp cool air, the crunching of the fallen leaves under your feet as we stroll along an unmarked less traveled trail, eventually leading us to the popular falls and site of the old restaurant and bear cage. Bring your binoculars, water, snacks, hiking poles and boots as well as weather appropriate attire for a fun visit to Bear Hole.

Like a welcome summer rain, humor may suddenly cleanse and cool the earth, the air and you.
~ Langston Hughes

Events at Laughing Brook

These programs at Laughing Brook require registration with Mass Audubon (800-710-4550) and most require a registration fee. For more information and registration, visit the Mass Audubon website at www.massaudubon.org. Laughing Brook is located on Main Street in Hampden.

Insects of the Field and Forest,

Hampden

Saturday, July 20 from 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Leader: Kevin Kopchynski

Come visit Laughing Brook to explore both field and forest to see and hear some of the many insects that live here. Watch as a bee pollinates a flower, see how many different types of butterflies you can count, and learn what lives within all that white spittle on the field plants.

Instructions and Directions: Please meet at the Melville Room, Hampden Town Hall, 625 Main Street, Hampden. Please park in the back of the building and enter via the back door. Please bring your camera and manual.

Intro to Digital Photography at Laughing Brook,

Hampden

Sundays, September 22 and 29, from 1 to 4 p.m.

Leader: Kevin Kopchynski

Learn the basics of nature photography just in time to photograph the beauty of fall in this two-part program. We will discuss best practices for capturing an image, understanding exposure and focus, and using both manual and automatic exposure settings. Both digital and film users can benefit from this instruction, though when discussing equipment we will concentrate on digital photography and the special opportunities and challenges it offers. After the first session, participants are encouraged to take photos for review at the second session.

Mark your calendar for the Naturalists' Club 50th Anniversary Celebration!

Where: Noble View Outdoor Center in Russell

When: Friday evening to Sunday lunchtime, October 4 to 6

Stay the weekend to enjoy all the evening activities and camaraderie with friends or come up just for the days' activities.

Accommodations: Book a bed in the Double Cottage (18 available) or camp in the camping area.

Costs:

\$2/person for Friday evening program or Sunday morning, \$5/person for Saturday activities, \$25/person/night for the cottage (includes daytime activities), \$15/person/night for tenting (includes daytime activities). Free for kids 12 and under.

Invite your friends and neighbors and spread the news! EVERYONE is invited to celebrate 50 years of exploring nature in Western Massachusetts. Join the Naturalists' Club for a celebration of epic proportions. Three days of nature events. Don't wait for your invitation. Mark your calendar now. Here's what we have in store SO FAR...

Build yourself a bat box to take home – with Tom Condon

“Skulls and Scat” – Signs of Wildlife program and display by Bob Kidd

Caterpillar Lab – see live caterpillars with Sam Jaffee

“Leafminers and other Secretive Insects” – a hike with Naturalist Charley Eiseman

Raptor Program and Bird Release – Tom Ricardi

Nighttime star gazing – with Jack Megas and Dave Gallup

Mindfulness hike – with Nancy Condon

Campfire – share your favorite nature authors

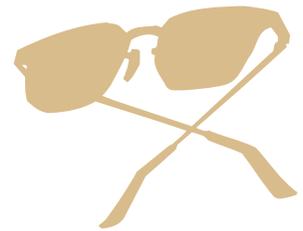
Silent Auction – donate books or new or lightly used items, and bid on treasures for yourself.

Tables and exhibits by organizations of the Pioneer Valley Outdoor Fair

Merry music

Catered lunch and anniversary cake

Plus more to come...



Reminder To receive electronic updates, please send us your email address

Occasionally, information of interest to club members becomes available after our Newsletter has gone to press. For example, such information can include changes in speakers for upcoming meetings and late-breaking trip announcements. If you'd like to receive these electronic updates, please be sure to share your email address with Dave Lovejoy (dlovejoy@westfield.ma.edu), who maintains the Club membership list.

THE NATURALISTS' CLUB

FROM THE TREASURER

This year's January to March newsletter contained a Club finances report noting that rising costs and declining membership might necessitate a dues increase. The Board has determined that an increase is indeed necessary in order to prevent regular withdrawals from our endowed funds to meet operating expenses. Therefore, beginning with renewals for 2019-2020 (due in September), the basic membership will increase to \$20, supporting will increase to \$30, and sustaining (\$50) and life membership (\$300) will not change. This is our first increase since 2002 and is still, we believe, quite a bargain.

Please renew (or join) by sending a check payable to The Naturalists' Club to Dave Lovejoy, Club Treasurer, Department of Biology, Westfield State University, POB 1630, Westfield MA 01086. As noted on the form below, we would like to have your email address on file even if you do not wish to receive the newsletter electronically. If none of your contact information has changed, you may send your renewal without the form.

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

\$20 per year for Individual
or Family Membership
\$30 per year for Supporting Membership
\$50 per year for Sustaining Membership
\$300 for Lifetime Membership

Renew your membership

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____ Email _____

Do you opt for electronic delivery of the Naturalists' Club Newsletter? Yes _____ No _____

Requests for programs/trips _____

Please send information per the above to: Club Treasurer, Dave Lovejoy, Department of Biology, Westfield State University, Westfield, MA 01086



The NATURALISTS' CLUB was founded in 1969 for the purpose of actively promoting knowledge, appreciation, and preservation of our natural environment.

It is an all-volunteer non-profit organization.

Education is a main focus of The NATURALISTS' CLUB.

Programming, with an emphasis on local natural history, is designed to create camaraderie among people of diverse interests through experiences deepening their appreciation of nature.

Activities are geared to acquaint the layperson with the natural world, mostly through field trips. Monthly meetings are held at the Science Museum at the

Quadrangle in Springfield, Mass. Most field trips and programs are free.

2019 JULY to SEPTEMBER

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