



The Henry L. Ferguson Museum

Newsletter Vol. 40, No. 1 • Spring 2025

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From the President

The Museum has many fun and inspiring activities lined up for this summer. For starters, the opening party will be held on Saturday, June 28, and I hope to see many of you there. This year, Museum Director Pierce Rafferty's primary annual exhibit will feature cottage colonies of Fishers Island that were central to the Island's development as a resort. On the second floor, a selection of photographer John Wilton's large-format F.I. landscapes and beachscapes will be on display. In the adjacent side gallery, a third exhibition chronicles the changes over time to a 1980 South Beach environmental art sculpture by artist Harriet Brickman.

After a virtual off-season, our lecture series returns to the second floor starting June 29, with forager Russ Cohen speaking on wild edibles. Other exciting lecturers this summer include renowned ecologist and author Doug Tallamy, informing us about the Homegrown National Park movement (co-hosted with F.I. Conservancy); historian Chris Pastore speaking about Nathanael Herreshoff, America's greatest naval architect; and Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center (DPNC) director Kim Hargrave unveiling the amazing world of amphibians. Pierce will present his summer talk on the history of land use and conservation on Fishers Island. (See pages 17-20 for the full listing of lectures with dates and times.)

Please also take time this summer to explore our wonderful trail system. Very excitingly, we have two new trails. First, on land licensed from the F.I. Waste Management District, we have established the Janet Harvey Sanctuary, a coastal preserve with a trail that starts behind the Community Center and works its way toward Race Point. This trail

highlights both Island history, with close views of several gun emplacements, as well as Island nature, with sweeping panoramic vistas of coastal bluffs, intertidal shorelines, and surrounding shrublands and woodlands. It is part of a longer coastal trail that is currently being developed with other organizations and individuals that will stretch from Silver Eel Cove to Race Point. (See pages 6 and 7 for details.) We also created a new trail within the recently acquired Chocomount Hill property that is owned and managed by the Museum, and subject to a conservation easement held by the Town. (See page 5 for details.) Explore the trails on your own or join Board Member Terry McNamara for guided walks on Thursday mornings throughout the summer.

For children, we have an exciting lineup of activities. Join us on the back deck every Wednesday at 2 p.m. during the summer for an interactive program led by DPNC educators. The F.I. Treasure Hunt, back by popular demand, will be held in mid-July. Fishers Island Nature Discovery (FIND), our week-long nature program for children ages 5-10, will begin this year on Aug. 11.

Finally, I am pleased to announce that the Museum has just completed a yearlong strategic planning process. Thanks to all of you who provided input for our forward-looking plan. I am very excited about the direction the Museum is going as we aim to preserve our shared history and conserve our natural habitats by engaging and inspiring generations of Fishers Islanders. Please visit our website to read or download more details about our strategic plan. Pages 8 and 9 of this newsletter present conclusions and provide insight into this transformative process. —*Elizabeth McCance*



Chocomount Beach. November 2011. Photograph by John Wilton from exhibition *The Longer Look*. 2nd Floor Gallery

2025 Annual Exhibitions

Passages: A Public Sculpture Over Time, 1980 – 2025



People viewing sculpture by artist Harriet Brickman, South Beach, Sept. 1980.

The Cottage Colonies of Fishers Island



Bartlett Cottages with Tower Cottage at center (today Tapscott), circa 1920.

The Longer Look: Photographs by John Wilton



Steps of Battery Marcy, Parade Ground, 1997.

Join us for the opening reception on Saturday, June 28th, 5 to 7 p.m. All are welcome!

Exhibitions sponsored by:



Land Trust Report Spring 2025

by Bob Miller, Vice-President Land Trust

For a number of years, we maintained the native grassland at Middle Farms by burning or mowing roughly one-third of the area annually, but that schedule could not be maintained recently due to Covid issues, wet weather, and other factors. This resulted in saplings and other woody growth invading the grassland, and we decided to reset the program by burning the entire area this year—approximately fifty acres. Due to the magnitude of the project, we engaged Star Tree Wildfire Protection, which specializes in prescribed burns, to work with the Fishers Island Fire Department. Chief Chris Aiello and our firefighters coordinated with Bill Edwards of Star Tree and his team to conduct the burn on March 9, and while the spectacle was dramatic, the process was not, despite winds gusting over 20 knots. The burn was conducted from the lee side of the flats so that the fire would work upwind, which permitted the flames to move more slowly to maintain peak temperatures longer for maximum effect on the woody growth. The exercise was a master class in calm professionalism.

Our Land Trust Committee has sought to build on the intensive work done to catalog and analyze the ecosystems present in our sanctuaries by establishing management plans for all our sanctuaries. (See the article on page 4 for more details on this effort, which should be completed by mid-summer.)

As the activities of the Land Trust have become more complex, we have had good fortune in developing staff to manage them. Jack Schneider continues his superlative work as Land Trust Manager. Jessica NeJame joined us last year as Land Trust Stewardship Coordinator and has not only contributed importantly to stewardship activities in the field, but also in developing management processes and standards, and Kate Stevens, the Museum's Special Projects Coordinator, has had a key role in the rehabilitation of the Battery Hoffman and Battery Hamilton area and the planning and development of the Coastal Path. We are pleased that each has shared the product



Middle Farms prescribed burn, March 9, 2025.
Photos by Scott Reid and Jim Reid.

of some of their efforts in this newsletter.

While we are working hard to manage our nearly 400 acres of conservation land in a responsible and enlightened way, the Museum continues to focus on the essential business of protecting environmentally sensitive property on this precious Island from future development. The natural beauty we experience all around us will not necessarily be available to future generations unless it is formally protected. The Museum is exploring terms for the potential acquisition of significant parcels of currently undeveloped land containing multiple possible building sites which would complement its current holdings and the protection of our watershed. Should these terms be finalized, your support will be essential to effect the purchases.



Jack Schneider, Land Trust Manager.



Jessica NeJame, Land Trust Stewardship Coordinator.



Kate Stevens, Special Projects Coordinator.

HLFM Land Trust Working on New Land Management Plan

by Jessica NeJame, Land Trust Stewardship Coordinator

With increasing pressure from ecological threats such as invasive plants, rising tides, and development near and far, it is more important than ever that the HLFM Land Trust maximizes the conservation potential of protected lands on Fishers Island. To ensure that we are using best practices for our 69 fee properties, 10 easements, and 2 licensed parcels, the HLFM is partnering with GEI Consultants to produce management plans that will guide our stewardship activities for years to come.

GEI Consultants is a top-ranked engineering and environmental firm with a strong focus on social responsibility. They are assisting the Land Trust Committee in developing 52 reports that will provide insights for the Land Trust holdings. These reports incorporate invaluable data that we have gathered from years of rigorous scientific studies, including the New York Natural Heritage Program Report (Schlesinger et al., 2023), the Yale Management Plan (Todorovic-Jones & Becker, 2016), and the Water Supply and Watershed Study (Tucker & Horning, 1993), with ecological observations made by members of the Land Trust Committee. GEI will provide management recommendations that advance the Land Trust's management goals.

The HLFM Land Trust goals remain the same—preserving land in perpetuity and providing public access via trails to promote the enjoyment of nature in the community. These

management plans will provide new and necessary insights, such as how to restore old fields with native grasses, prevent the expansion of invasive species populations, and improve habitat connectivity. GEI is also developing a protocol for a conservation monitoring program that will provide a means for tracking these changes as restoration projects are implemented.

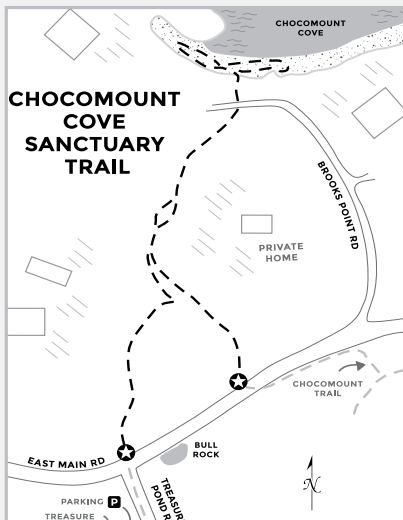
Additionally, this collaboration with GEI is helpful in moving our monitoring process towards conformity with the standards of the conservation organization Land Trust Alliance, which are generally considered to be the highest national standards for excellence and conservation permanence. In working towards this goal, 9 of the GEI reports will detail the current conditions of the properties subject to conservation easements granted to the Museum, ensuring that conservation values consistent with the terms of the easements are protected on these properties into the future. GEI will also provide additional recommendations about Land Trust Alliance policies that may be a good fit for our organization.

This collaboration with GEI is supported with funding from the New York State Conservation Partnership Program (NYSCPP) and New York's Environmental Protection Fund. The NYSCPP is administered by the Land Trust Alliance, in coordination with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.



New Museum Land Trust Publications

The Museum is pleased to announce the 2025 publication of two updated guides: the HLFM Land Trust Trail Guide and the Betty Matthiessen Wildlife Sanctuary Trail Guide. The guides will be available at the Museum's store and at the Beach Plum.



HLFM Land Trust Trail Guide

The pocket-sized guide, with its robin's-egg blue cover, has become an indispensable navigation tool, introducing many to previously unexperienced Island landscapes. The 2025 version reflects expansions and changes to the Land Trust trail network,

which are highlighted in Jack Schneider's article below and Kate Stevens' article on the new coastal trail that follows on pages 6 and 7. The original text by Terry McNamara and Connecticut-based naturalist Maggie Jones has been updated by Maggie. New maps are by Jessica Morgan, with several of Beth Jepsen's originals retained; original illustrations are by Charlie Ferguson.

Betty Matthiessen Wildlife Sanctuary Trail Guide

A microcosm of the Island, the Betty Matthiessen Wildlife Sanctuary hosts an impressive array of species captured in the updated guide's expanded species list. The original 1988 guide—with text by Penni Sharp and Carey Matthiessen and illustrations by Charlie Ferguson—was organized into 11 stations that corresponded to numbered posts in the sanctuary. This walking tour format has been retained and enhanced with new, illustrative station signs planned along the trail. The text has been updated by Maggie Jones, and beautifully portrays the sequence and interdependence of organisms in the Sanctuary ecosystem.

Along the Trails

by Jack Schneider, Land Trust Manager

Clay Pit Trail Redirect. A section of Clay Pit Trail has been rerouted. The path now slopes downhill from the Block Island Sound overlook and continues beneath an elevated canopy dominated by mature maples and an uncluttered understory, bypassing the corridors of invasive honeysuckles and privet and the mowed lawn. Instead, after passing by a grand, sprawling black oak, the revised route winds beneath an elevated canopy dominated by mature maples and an uncluttered understory. The openness provides satisfying views as the undulating trail glides gently downwards. Birdsong is the soundtrack and, instead of invasives, you'll find princess pine, young American holly, gnarly black cherries, and a group of large sassafras trees. A low rock wall in disarray signals that the new section is approaching the familiar Clay Pit Trail.

Until the new section becomes well-trodden, look for the fluorescent ribbons left over from when the trail was first cut. And please follow the prominent directional signs at the beginning and end of the bypass.

Chocomount Hill. Hiking the new trail through the forested 15½ acre Chocomount Hill Sanctuary is a remarkable experience. As the elevation of this parcel slopes downwards from north to south, the perceived height of the trees appears to change. Red cedars that soar a rich green against the blue sky when viewed from lower levels of the trail revert to their normal, down-to-earth size when approached. Scenes that are prominent when following the trail loop clockwise fade when the path is walked in the opposite direction.

The trail is bracketed by food sources for fruit-eaters, including healthy highbush blueberries and black cherry trees,

whose contorted branches sprawl outwards and upwards. To the north, the trail crosses the remains of one of Fishers' cross-island stone walls—there were once seven! Although much of the landscape is dominated by invasive shrubs and vines, the tree canopy is mostly native. The branching crown of a remarkable red maple, which greets you as you enter from the Chocomount Beach Road trailhead, may have provided shade to livestock when the area was pasture.

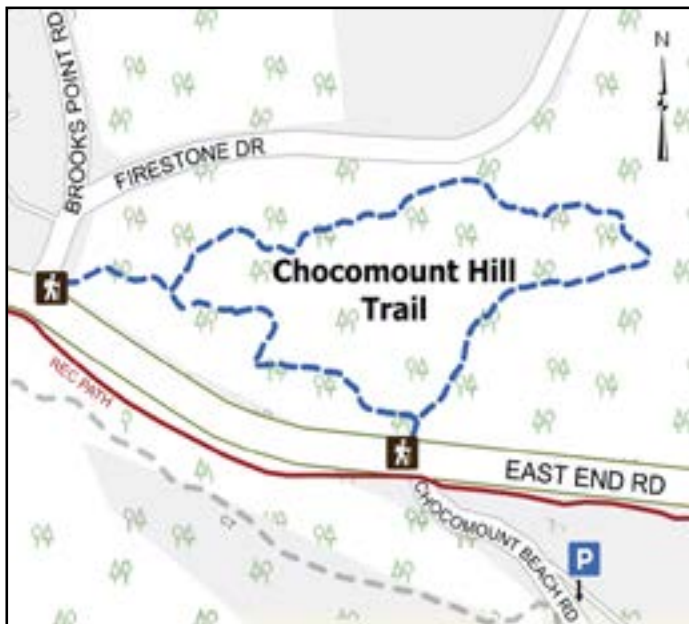
The trail encircles a physical depression—perhaps a remnant glacial kettle hole, but now a pristine red maple swamp—that can be glimpsed from above through the dense understory.

There is no dedicated parking, but the trail can be accessed from the trailhead at the corner of Brooks Point Road and from the second trailhead across from Chocomount Beach Road. Better yet, connect with Chocomount Trail and the trail complex ending at Middle Farms by crossing the Main Road to the spurs located directly across from each trailhead.

Trail Closure. The trail known as “Four Corners” or “Tombari Trail” has been closed because much of it relies on crossing properties not owned by the Museum and because there is inadequate off-road parking by the trailhead.

A Plea. No more dumping dog-poop bags along the trails.

Chocomount Cove Beach. Thanks to the Fishers Island School Landscape Construction class, there is a new sturdy driftwood handrail positioned alongside the stone steps that lead to the beach. Also, the area at the end of Spofford Road has been graded and widened to fit two or three carefully parked vehicles.



Route of new Chocomount Hill Trail. Note trailhead located directly across road from turnoff to Chocomount Beach. Map by Jessica Morgan.



New railing constructed by F.I. School students with stone steps installed by Race Rock Co. Photo by Jack Schneider.

The Janet Harvey Sanctuary & the Silver Eel–Race Point Coastal Trail

by *Kate Stevens, Special Projects Coordinator*

Janet Harvey Sanctuary

In December 2023, the Fishers Island Waste Management District granted a license to the Henry L. Ferguson Museum to manage, restore, and protect approximately five acres of natural coastline habitat and historic Fort Wright structures for the benefit of the Fishers Island community. The outcome is the Museum Land Trust's new Janet Harvey Sanctuary, which currently features a single traversing trail accessible from either the Ordnance or the runway side. Additional trail loops or spurs to access specific site features and facilitate birding and other activities may be added over time. Educational signage will provide information about the history of the Fort Wright emplacements, native plantings, invasive species, and coastal resiliency. Stewardship and restoration efforts will be informed by the Sanctuary's conservation management plan and the New York Natural Heritage Program's 2023 ecological survey.

Planning a trail through the impenetrable shrubland of the Sanctuary was challenging. Initially, a boardwalk was envisioned to navigate the rocky, wooded, and presumed-to-be wet section from the Osprey pole toward the runway. However, a skilled crew from Race Rock Garden Co. created a pilot path through the successional woodlands and black locust forest, proving that a simple at-grade path is both possible and preferable. Full access to the historic emplacements and a direct connection to the Community Center recreation area are still in the planning stages.

The first step to stabilizing the early 1900s Fort emplacements was to remove the destructive vegetation that had overtaken the bunkers. This task was accomplished last winter over several workdays that included a diverse collective of enthusiastic volunteers from the Museum, the Ferry, Walsh Park, and other generous community members, with the indispensable help of Coast Defense Study Group (CDSG) members who came down from Rhode Island. The Community Center provided a warm and cheery atmosphere for the workday lunches and Race Rock's team heroically cleared the concrete pad of decades of accumulated metal and organic debris.



Battery Hamilton before clearing on Nov. 16, 2024.



The HLFM is dedicating the new coastal Sanctuary to Janet Hardie Harvey, a beloved member of the Fishers Island community who passed away on April 13, 2024, at the age of 66.

A friend and colleague explained: “Janet was a child of nature, and ... she was also a force of nature with her humility, kindness, and gentleness.”

Generous and “wildly” effective, Janet's love of nature and the outdoors took myriad forms—gardener, outdoor sports enthusiast, plein-air artist, environmental educator, and nature center administrator.

Janet also advocated for increased access to the outdoors for all, so it is fitting that this spectacular section of the West End coastline, made accessible to the public for the first time, be named in her honor.

A celebration of the opening of the Janet Harvey Sanctuary is planned for this summer to coincide with the 60th anniversary of the Museum Land Trust. We look forward to seeing you all there!



Battery Hamilton after clearing on Nov. 16, 2024.

Photos by Chris Zeeman, CDSG.



Coastal Trail route and project partners.

The Silver Eel–Race Point Coastal Trail

The trail work at the Janet Harvey Sanctuary has catalyzed the creation of the Silver Eel–Race Point Coastal Trail. Making this section of the stunning West End coastline accessible to the public has been a longstanding goal made possible through close collaborations with multiple organizations: the Henry L. Ferguson Museum, the Fishers Island Waste Management District, the Fishers Island Ferry District, the Fishers Island Conservancy, and Brad and Mary Burnham, neighbors and owners of the Ordnance property.

The new Coastal Trail links Silver Eel Cove to Race Point through a sequence of Island scenes and experiences. The trail begins at the Lighthouse Works Public Art installation at Silver Eel Cove and proceeds along the Ferry Park berm, offering views of Fishers Island Sound. It weaves through pepperidge trees across the Ordnance lawn and meets up with the beach rose-lined entry to the Janet Harvey Sanctuary. The trail then opens into a meadow plateau, offering sweeping views: seaward across Long Island Sound towards Little Gull, Great Gull, and Plum islands, and Orient Point, and inland towards the recently cleared historic Fort Wright emplacements (currently closed to the public). The Osprey pole marks a halfway point



Trail Route through Janet Harvey Sanctuary.



View of Race Rock Light from Coastal Trail.

as the path heads downhill towards the maritime rocky beach. It proceeds along the undulating pilot path through the successional shrubland and maritime woodlands, before exiting the Janet Harvey Sanctuary into the successional old field that leads toward the runway. The trail transitions to a dirt track that leads to the rocky beach and Race Point. Future linkages with the Parade Ground trail network may be possible.

Project Partners on the Coastal Trail

‘How can all Islanders access our breathtaking shoreline?’ has been a recurring question at Waste Management meetings for the past 15 years. During that time, I’ve bushwacked and scrambled over the rocks with many people. Enthusiasm was strong, but roadblocks, lack of focus, and red tape were stronger until recently. The catalyst happened when *community partnerships* rose to a prominent position in Waste Management’s strategic planning process.

–Sarah Malinowski, Fishers Island Waste Management District

The Fishers Island Conservancy and Ferry District have a long history of partnering and managing both the Parade Grounds and Ferry Park and are now proud to be part of this next exciting collaboration. The Coastal Trail aligns perfectly with our mission to preserve and protect the environment. Our community will be much enhanced by the respectful access to this beautiful and fragile end of the Island.

–Tom Sargent, Fishers Island Conservancy

The Museum is thrilled about this new community trail that amplifies our mission of conservation, history, and education. What makes this project special is the collaboration among multiple public and private parties to provide public access to the Island’s natural habitat and the history of Fort Wright.

–Scott Reid, HLFM Land Trust

Introduction to the HLFM's Strategic Plan

Vision, Mission, and Values

The Museum is at a unique point in its history. In the last few years, it has expanded its programming, its projects, and its level of professionalism. Simultaneously with these system-level changes, there was a clear need to prepare for the future transitions of key staff and board members. As such, the Board decided to embark on a year-long strategic planning process with the following goals:

- Identify specific goals and outcomes for the next three years (2025-2028)
- Identify the governance and operation structure that will ensure the Museum's success in achieving these outcomes
- Develop a plan for financial diversity and stability to sustain organizational growth
- Develop a succession plan for new leadership

With a grant provided by the New York Conservation Partnership Program, the Museum hired a consultant, Jennifer Aniskovich, last August. The strategic planning team (Elizabeth McCance, Heather Burnham, Murray Fisher, Mike McNamara, Sarah Rose, and Pierce Rafferty) has worked diligently under Jennifer's guidance to come up with our new vision, mission, and values. The complete plan will be finalized by June. —*Elizabeth McCance*

Vision

We envision a Fishers Island where our unique history and natural character are protected and treasured by all.

Mission

To preserve our shared history and conserve our natural habitats by engaging, educating, and inspiring all Fishers Islanders.

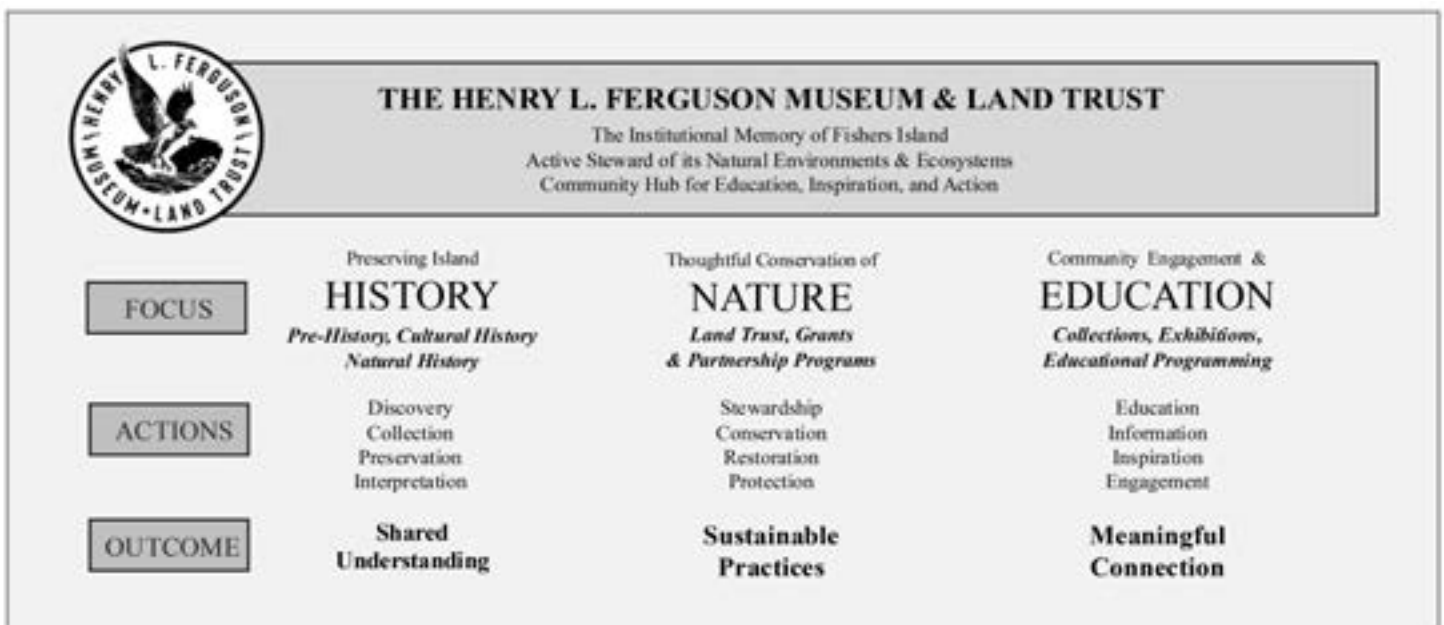
Values

Conservation: We believe in safeguarding Fishers Island history and biodiversity for future generations.

Curiosity: We believe the pursuit of knowledge about the past and our natural surroundings is essential to shaping our future.

Community: We believe our greatest impact is achieved together, in partnership with the Fishers Island community.

Connection: We believe our work should inspire, empower, and create connections between people and Fishers Island.



The Museum's Evolving Mission

by Mike McNamara

As a small, single-room organization grows into a multi-floor museum dedicated to the social and natural history of Fishers Island, a shift in identity and purpose is natural. This shift becomes even more significant when considering the Museum is also Fishers Island's largest natural land conservator, stewarding nearly 400 acres of wetlands, grasslands, beaches, and woodlands. To ensure that the Henry L. Ferguson Museum is performing to a level that meets its expanded mission and reach, the Board of Trustees has undertaken a process to evaluate our direction and impact.

This reassessment began in spring 2024 by fielding an online community survey. It was promoted via the *Foghorn*, on bulletin boards around the Island—including the FICC, Post Office, Village Market, and Ferry—as well as in the Museum's weekly e-newsletter and on social media. In two weeks, we received over 340 responses from a diverse cross-section of Fishers Islanders.

Our goal was to capture a snapshot of the community: who they are, what matters to them, how they perceive the Museum, and what we can improve. A summary of key findings appears on the opposite page. The response to the Museum's performance was overwhelmingly positive, with many respondents expressing pride in the Museum's contributions and its role on the Island. The Museum is more than 'just a museum.' It is deeply personal: a keeper of family histories and traditions, serving as the Island's institutional memory. It's also widely recognized for its education on local natural history. Many mentioned the network of Land Trust trails and the Osprey Cam.

Others expressed interest in expanded off-season programming, more opportunities for children and teens, and more partnerships with other Island organizations.

When asked about the importance of protecting undeveloped areas—to conserve ecosystems, preserve viewsheds, and safeguard local flora and fauna—95% of respondents said it was either 'Very Important' or 'Important.' Forty-three percent reported walking the trails six or more times a year, while nearly half of year-round residents use them 10 or more times annually.

However, 40% of respondents were unaware that the Museum—through its Land Trust—has long managed and maintained the Land Trust properties and trails. This reveals a significant awareness gap. As our conservation work evolves from passive protection to active land management, we must ask: have we done enough to communicate our efforts to the community? This question became central as the Board entered a yearlong Strategic Planning process, launched in summer 2024, that included updating the Museum's mission.

The Museum has its roots in Natural History and conservation. In fact, 60 years ago this August, the Board of Trustees



Terry McNamara standing with Land Trust 'Trail Dogs,' the Museum's advance force for environmental conservation projects.

adopted a 'new progressive course' to acquire undeveloped land for use as nature preserves. Under the direction of President Elizabeth McCance, the Museum's conservation efforts continue to grow in scope and complexity, backed by increased budgets and the hiring of dedicated staff.

The revision of the Museum's Mission statement—and the addition of a Vision statement and guiding Values—are a recognition that our conservation work holds equal importance to our historical preservation. These dual responsibilities define who we are and the work we do for the community.

This is not a traditional museum model—and we are not a traditional museum. Our work extends far beyond the walls of our building on Equestrian Avenue. From trails and marshes to archives and exhibits, the Museum is a reflection of Fishers Island itself: living, layered, and constantly evolving. With this updated mission, we are doubling down on our commitment to both people and place—preserving the stories, species, and natural spaces that make Fishers Island unique. As we move forward, that dual focus will guide everything we do. We look forward to working with our members, neighbors, and partners to bring this mission to life—through programming, collaborations, conservation, and engaging directly with the community. In doing so, we hope that future generations inherit both a deep connection to Fishers Island and a thriving, biodiverse environment that sustains it.

Early History of the Catholic Church on Fishers Island

by *Pierce Rafferty*

While researching within online newspaper archives, I recently stumbled upon a July 1893 article whose headline caught my eye: “A Hundred Years Since Mass Was Celebrated on Fishers Island.” The article recounted that Father Daniel Sheehy of St. Ambrose Catholic Church, Brooklyn, had just returned from saying Mass on Fishers Island the prior week, the first time that such a service had been held on Island since around the time of the American Revolution. During that period “some Catholic clergymen, who were chaplains upon some French frigates, are said to have celebrated mass there for the benefit of the French soldiers and a few straggling Catholics who were then on the island.” (*Brooklyn Eagle*, 23 July 1893.)

I found no further historical evidence of the Mass conducted by French priests, but did uncover considerable detail about Father Sheehy’s 1893 Mass. The district schoolhouse (today’s F.I. Library) was borrowed for the service as St. John’s, then the only church on Island, was Episcopalian. Sheehy’s Mass was very popular and attracted not only Catholic residents, but also guests of that faith staying at the Island’s three major hotels, along with numerous Protestants, and “infidels,” i.e. non-believers.

The success of the July 1893 Mass encouraged the Brooklyn Diocese to continue the practice of sending a priest to conduct religious services on Fishers Island in borrowed venues during the summer season; this tradition continued for the next ten-plus years, during which a succession of priests served, some for multi-summer stretches. They held services in either the F.I. School, or in private homes, the latter also being used to house the visiting clergy. At least for the summer months, the arrival of priests freed Catholic worshipers from the considerable burden of travel by boat to attend Mass at mainland churches.

The ambitious goal of establishing a permanent Catholic church on Fishers Island was first raised in the press immediately after the 1893 Mass; however, it would take more than a decade of concerted and persistent efforts by clergy, church officials, and Island residents to realize this dream. The impediments were mostly fiscal: “The work of erecting a church on Fisher’s Island was necessarily slow. The permanent Catholic residents were few in numbers and not of more than ordinary means.” (*Brooklyn Citizen*, 16 July 1905.) Hotel guests of Catholic faith also contributed, but not significantly.

Father John A. Ferry is widely credited with pulling and pushing the campaign for the new church across the finish line. After his arrival in 1898 as a visiting priest, fundraisers

were held both on Fishers Island and as far away as Montauk, L.I. During this period, an entirely new group of faith-seekers began attending the Island’s Catholic services: workmen who were building the new fortifications of Fort H.G. Wright. They joined a coalescing congregation that included many residents “employed around the villas of the summer residents.” (*Catholic Union and Times*, 7 September 1899.)

The Brooklyn Diocese chose noted architect George H. Streeton to design the Island’s new church. He was the architect of many prominent buildings throughout the boroughs of New York built primarily for Roman Catholic clients in a variety of architectural styles. By September 1901, the project had progressed to the point that Rev. Ferry purchased a plot of ground on Fishers Island as the site for the new church.

(*Times Union*, 21 Sept. 1901.) The overall cost for building the new church was estimated at \$15,000.

On September 11, 1902, Right Rev. Charles E. McDonnell, Bishop of Brooklyn, led high pontifical ceremonies that commemorated the laying of the cornerstone for the new church, originally named “Church of the Star of the Sea.” Brooklyn diocese officials and approximately a dozen priests from both Brooklyn and multiple towns on Long Island

attended the ceremonies. (*The Standard Union*, 13 September 1902.)

Rev. Ferry stated in 1902 that it was his intention “to have the new church built during the coming fall and winter, so as to be ready for divine services early next summer [1903].” However, it would take two more years of fundraising to enable the completion of the project, including a benefit event at the Mansion House Hotel on Fishers Island and a theatrical benefit in Brooklyn. The much-delayed construction finally began in October 1904 and was finished by early summer 1905.

The completed church was renamed “Our Lady of Grace,” possibly because there already was a Church of the Star of the Sea in New London. Dedication ceremonies were held on Sunday, July 30, 1905. The structure was blessed by Bishop McDonnell, assisted by clergy who delivered a high Mass. Father Belford of the Church of Saints Peter and Paul, Brooklyn, preached the dedication sermon. (*Brooklyn Eagle*, 22 July 1905.)

Construction on the adjacent rectory began in May of 1912 and was almost certainly completed during that year. Our Lady of Grace Church was formally incorporated in 1915.

As for today’s Catholic services on Fishers Island, Dominican Friars conduct one Mass on Saturday evenings and one on Sunday mornings during summer months; in the off-season, priests from New London perform weekly Mass on Sunday mornings on Fishers Island as well as special services on Holy Days.



A Sampling of Donations to the Museum's Collection in 2024

Please note that although space constraints prohibit a complete list, we greatly appreciate all of your donations.

Thelma Hedge and her brother, the late Richard Hedge.

A collection of tools and objects used by their grandfather Ed Hedge, the one-armed fisherman and lobsterman, in his iconic fish market on West Harbor and on his fishing boats.

Bagley Reid. A group of 14 paintings, including 11 attributed to Rev. Josiah M. Bartlett, that were painted on F.I. in the late 19th century. Also donated: A 1908 landscape by Harold C. Dunbar showing F.I. as seen from the CT shore, and a Charlie Ferguson painting entitled *The Great Wave*.

duPont Family (Grey Gulls LLC). A 17th century chart of New Netherland by cartographer Pieter Goos published in the Zee-Atlas circa 1667. Depicts Atlantic coast of America from Cape Cod to Cape Hatteras.

A Sampling of Acquisitions purchased for the Museum's Collections in 2024

An illustrated advertising envelope for the Fishers Island Farm, breeders of land and waterfowl, with turkey engraving on front. Postmarked Feb. 1896.

An illustrated cover for Boston Sea Scout Division "New York World's Fair Cruise, Fishers Island, New York." Post-marked August 16, 1939.

A painting by Charles Thomas O'Neil, #3040, oil on panel, currently on display 2nd Floor Gallery.

A painting of Canada Warbler by Ed Horning, Jr.

A photo of US Army Transport Col. John E. Baxter, former passenger ferry S.S. *Fishers Island*, circa 1943.

An issue of *Once a Week* illustrated newspaper with engravings of 1891 Naval Maneuvers at Fishers Island. Published on Aug. 18, 1891.



A press photograph of Drake, the English Springer Spaniel that triggered Ferguson interest in the breed that in turn led to dog trials on F.I. Photo taken on Jan. 19, 1923 at a specialty dog show in N.Y.C.

A first-place bowling trophy awarded to Battery G, 11th Coast Artillery, Ft. H.G. Wright, featuring duck pin base. Silver plate. 1927.



Race Rock Light painting attributed to Rev. J.M. Bartlett, c.1885.



The Great Wave painting by Charles B. Ferguson. Undated.



F.I. Farm envelope with turkey illustration, 1896.



Photo of U.S. Army Transport Col. John E. Baxter, formerly S.S. *Fishers Island*.



The Board of Trustees would like to extend its heartfelt thanks to all who gave during 2024. We are grateful to each and every one of you!

John K. Ahlgren	Gerry & Vicky Cameron	Foundation	Kiendl & John Gordon
Karen & David Alberghini	Bob & Suzanne Campbell	Reynolds duPont, Jr.	Allison & Chauncey Goss
Mark Allan	Jeff & Ellen Campbell	Ruth & Tom duPont	Jared Goss
Alsop Family	James & Laurie Carney	Linda Duryea	Mariel* & Porter Goss
Altus Partners, Inc.	Edmund & Mary Carpenter	Melinda Duryea & Sandy Draper	Michele Goss
Roseanna & Clifford Anderson	Jeff Carpenter	Andrew K. Dwyer Foundation	Richard W. Goss III
Alex & Mark Andrews	Mary W. Carpenter	Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Dwyer	Ben & Rachel Gray
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Please excuse any inadvertent misspellings or omissions.
 * Deceased
^o Osprey Circle - Member of Planned Giving Program

Nature Notes:

Dragonflies and Damselflies (*Odonata*)

by Terry McNamara

Butterflies, flitting about during the summer and spring, are pollinating flowers while feeding themselves. Their bright colors and intricate patterns catch the eye, evoking a sense of beauty in the observer. Members of *Odonata*—dragonflies and damselflies—also elicit a favorable reaction when viewed by humans. Many have striking metallic or iridescent colors and are admired for their beauty and agile flight. The latter is one of the characteristics that leads to the dragonfly's reputation as the most efficient predator in the animal kingdom. Recent studies have shown a success rate of 95% in attacks on other insects. They are carnivorous in each of their life stages, taking a heavy toll on mosquitoes, gnats, flies, and other insects.

Their ability to capture prey in mid-air with precision is the result of a combination of physical and mental abilities. They possess large compound eyes that provide binocular vision and capture images at a rate of 200 images per second (IPS). For comparison, human vision maxes out at 60 IPS; an Osprey, at 120 IPS. They can accelerate to more than 30 mph and are able to move in any direction and hover as well. The coordination of their brain, eyes, and wings enables them to single out prey in a swarm with precision. A methodology called camouflage motion used in their aerial pursuits is currently being studied to improve human weapon systems. The hunt ends with a crushing bite to the head or the tearing off of prey's wings. This is a creature that has evolved into a predator with unparalleled hunting abilities. This makes dragonflies and damselflies important members of our Fishers Island ecological community. Traditionally, these predators have been welcomed into gardens throughout the world. These insects have a direct effect on our mosquito populations and will become even more important allies as the climate changes.

The abundance of ponds and wetlands on Fishers Island provides the habitat critical to the life cycle of these beneficial predators. Unlike butterflies, they do not undergo a full metamorphosis—there is no pupae stage. The eggs laid in a pond or stream hatch into a nymph form called a naiad. This ferocious predatory form has a large, hinged mandible hidden under its head that shoots out and grabs prey. It will grow for two months to five years, feeding on invertebrates like aquatic worms and mosquito larvae, as well as tadpoles and fish. Interestingly, the gills are in the rectum and this positioning enables the nymph to force out a stream of water making it “jet-propelled” when threatened. When ready to take its adult form, the naiad climbs out of the water on a reed or other plant and molts, leaving behind its exoskeleton or exuviae. The adults will then enjoy a brief but brutal predatory period lasting up to four months. During that time, they will also breed and then lay eggs to begin the next generation.

Please understand that local spraying of pesticides for mos-



Dragonflies are characterized by large, multifaceted eyes, two pairs of strong, transparent wings, and an elongated body. USFWS photo.

quitoes or ticks will have a deadly effect on dragonfly populations as well. Additionally, misbeliefs about dragonflies' ability to inflict harm are unfounded. When handled, a bite can startle and may hurt slightly, but most go unnoticed. The swarms of last summer were most likely caused by the drought conditions, though swarms can occur during concentrated prey insect hatches as well as dragonfly migrations in the fall. They pose no threat to Island residents, as an individual will bite only when threatened. Even then, it's only a pinch, rarely breaking the skin. Welcome these creatures into your garden where they will feast upon other insects and, in turn, serve as a food source for kestrels, flycatchers, and other bird species.

On Fishers Island, there are usually two periods when the adults emerge from the water, late spring and early summer. We hope to document the presence and emerging times associated with our *Odonata* population using citizen scientists. Based on data from iNaturalist, Fishers Island Biodiversity Project, and observations of the New York Natural Heritage Program scientists who assessed the Ferguson Museum Land Trust properties, it appears that we have 19 species of dragonflies and damselflies. These lists will be available on the Museum website. Hopefully, they will expand this summer.

We plan to engage an expert entomologist to do a presentation that will provide anyone interested in participating in this project with the skills necessary to identify, photograph and capture *Odonata* specimens.

My Lifelong Osprey Studies: Scientific Adventures on Our Coast

by Paul R. Spitzer

In the spring of 1968, I began a lifelong journey of scientific understanding based on Osprey field study. My Osprey mentors, ornithologist Roger Tory Peterson and his wife Barbara, had moved to Old Lyme, CT, in 1954, partly because of the great Osprey colony of 150 nests centered on the Connecticut River Estuary. By the late 1950s, Roger was finding almost no young in those nests; the colony was in a precipitous crash. Every spring, a Yale graduate student would keep the “death watch,” counting the drastic decline. By 1967, the observer was Tom Lovejoy, who soon departed to begin his famous life’s work protecting the tropical forests of the Amazon. So, in January of 1968, I went to the Petersons and asked if I might continue the study—now reduced to a handful of nests, whose eggs were now known to be highly contaminated with DDT residues. The late Rachel Carson published “Silent Spring” in 1962, but the impact of DDT on Ospreys was yet to be proven—much to Roger’s frustration. The Petersons warmly approved my research and thus began my lifelong ecological adventure. I was a senior at nearby Wesleyan and my progressive advisors allowed much of my last semester to be devoted to Osprey science. They were experimentalists, so they supported my egg switch experiment between the highly contaminated CT eggs and relatively “clean,” viable eggs from Chesapeake Bay. Those transplanted Maryland eggs hatched at their usual, good rate in the CT foster nests, so we knew the viability problem lay within the CT eggs.

In 1969, I repeated the egg switch with similar results. By that time, researchers in the United Kingdom determined that DDT was thinning Peregrine Falcon eggshells. This clear biomarker became part of the classic DDT toxicology story. That spring, I expanded my nest survey to cover the whole remnant population of Os-



Paul Spitzer inspecting an unfledged osprey on ground nest, Gardiners Island, NY, July 1971. Photo by Roger Tory Peterson.

preys breeding between New York City and Boston, reduced to 150 nests from 1,000 pre-DDT. I delighted in climbing to tree nests and running ladders up to high pole sites—and I found many thin-shelled eggs collapsing under the incubating Ospreys. This work became my doctoral project, advised by

Tom Cade at Cornell. It was a dazzling adventure into scientific field research for a CT schoolboy: A voyage of discovery, crossing Long Island Sound to find the remaining Osprey nest sites in the diverse habitats of Long Island’s East End. The research became my annual spring pilgrimage, shared with genial hosts in lovely places: “How are your Ospreys doing?” On Fishers Island, teacher Ed Horning helped me find the nests. On Plum Island, lab director Jerry Callis and his scientists helped me monitor food chain toxicology by collecting dead eggs. On Shelter Island, police chief Ben Byington let me overnight in the normally empty, impeccably clean town jail. At some sites, we used



Feeding time at Money Pond, Fishers Island, July 23, 2009. Photo by Timothy J. Hallett.



Osprey protecting nest, Fishers Island, c.1980. Photo by John Wilton.

bucket trucks to access high nest poles, some on power lines. “Don’t touch anything!” was the general policy. Nearby live wires were often quietly fizzing, adding to the excitement of my elevated perch. Robert David Lion Gardiner let me roam his grand Gardiners Island preserve to study the 38 natural nest sites that remained as a remnant of that famous colony. With this shared Osprey fellowship, I came to understand that “Collegiality is the Bread of Life”—a principle I have tried to live by ever since.

The Federal ban of DDT in 1972 was a triumph for us all. Throughout the 1970s, we monitored the Ospreys’ initial recovery as a result of reduced egg contamination. Each nest site was a data point. The nest colonies on islands and coastlines were data clusters. A core practice of ecological science is measurement to determine process. I color-banded Osprey, then followed these marked individuals for years, collecting their life histories: Age at first breeding, sex-specific dispersal, and annual adult survival. After the many delights of fieldwork, I fitted all that hard-earned data into a population equation. Using my decade of carefully collected population data, I found that the recovering Ospreys needed to fledge only a low, 0.8 young per active nest to be stable: what we term the replacement rate. Thus, my thesis predicted a population explosion when the Ospreys were healthy again, and that is what happened, both here and in Europe.

As the effects of DDT subsided, it became possible to study broader Osprey ecology. The failure of the isolated Gardiners Island nest colony to produce young became our focus. The hatch there was now good, but was followed by massive nestling starvation, with brood reduction from 3 to only 1 young or even complete nest failure. The colony stumbled along with about 20 nests. Surrounded by miles of open bay water habitat, it was dependent on migratory menhaden, a prey base that was apparently very limited for many years, starting around 1995. To this day, menhaden population biology remains a complex scientific and political challenge. The tight schooling, surface-active fish are perfect Osprey prey, but they can be overharvested, and long-term ocean climate cycles may also shape their abundance. The recovery of the famous Gardiners Island Osprey colony followed strong menhaden fishery re-



Paul Spitzer using mirror to check hatch in Osprey nest, Connecticut River estuary, June 2016.



Osprey pair on ground nest, Gardiners Island, circa 1911. Photo by Clinton G. Abbott.

strictions in 2012, and the colony is now up to 80+ nests. The Fishers Island nests also benefit from these regional NY-CT harvest limits. Eastern Long Island Sound was a large-scale menhaden fishery in the 19th century, and current Fishers Island nest numbers (15 nests in 2024, fledging 34 young) and large brood sizes (6 of the nests fledged 3 young) indicate renewed menhaden abundance. The coves of serpentine Fishers hold other prey fish species—an annual Osprey food study of nest deliveries might yield interesting discoveries about the diets of Fishers Island’s Ospreys. In stark contrast, some Osprey colonies along the Virginian coast of Chesapeake Bay are currently suffering almost complete reproductive failure. Research seeks to determine whether intense annual menhaden harvest near those sites has severely depleted local menhaden populations. It is heartening to see the robust recovery of Osprey in many locations, including Fishers Island. Still, it is clear that more study of these great birds is needed – my life-long work, continues.

Dr. Paul R. Spitzer, a protégé of Roger Tory Peterson, envisioned and promoted the restoration of DDT-decimated Osprey populations in the Northeast in the late 1960s and 1970s.

Paul R. Spitzer, 31672 Old Orchard Rd., Trappe, MD 21673.

MISSION STATEMENT

To preserve our shared history and conserve our natural habitats by engaging, educating, and inspiring all Fishers Islanders.

Museum Speakers and Programs 2025

Programming announcements are sent to our e-news mailing list the week before the scheduled program. You can sign up for our e-news list at the footer of our website, fergusonmuseum.org. Check the FishNet and website calendars, our e-news announcements, or Facebook, and Instagram (@fergusonmuseum) for details on whether the talks are in person and/or virtual.

Museum Opening Reception: Saturday, June 28, 2025. 5 to 7 p.m.

Nibbling on the Wild Landscape of Fishers Island.

Join Russ Cohen, author of the book *Wild Plants I Have Known...and Eaten*, as he presents a slide show on at least two dozen of the tastiest wild plant species the Island has to offer. These include species everyone knows well, like daisies and dandelions, as well as species far less known, like nannyberry and meadow beauty. Keys to the identification of each species will be provided, along with info on edible portion(s), season(s) of availability and preparation methods, as well as guidelines for safe, ethical and environmentally responsible foraging. The reception to follow will include handouts and samples of goodies made with wild foraged ingredients for people to sip and nibble on. **Sunday, June 29, 2025.** 4 p.m. Place: Museum, 2nd floor. Reception to follow. Please note also the related Nature Walk that Russ will lead the following day, **June 30, 2025.**

Wild Edible Plant Excursion on Fishers Island. Russ Cohen, naturalist and wild food enthusiast will lead a two-hour ramble through some of the shaggier parts of the Island to encounter and learn the comestible virtues of at least eighteen species of edible wild plants. **Monday, June 30, 2025.** Time: 10 a.m. to approx. 12 noon. Place: Meet at the Museum. Limited to 30 people. To assure a spot, please sign up by contacting the Museum by phone (631-788-7239) or by e-mail (info@fergusonmuseum.org)

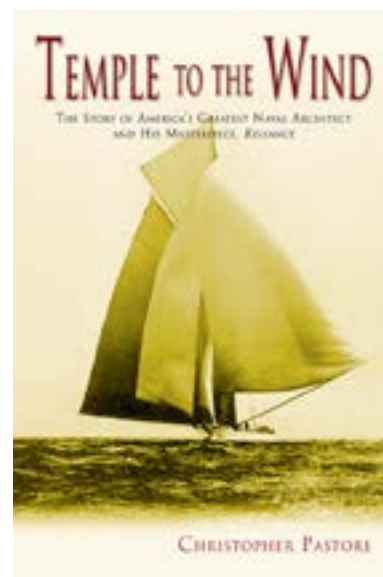
Creature Camouflage Colors. Meet live animals and learn how they use unique colors and patterns to camouflage for survival. Explore different types of camouflage and discover the importance of hiding for both predators and prey. Meet Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center (DPNC) ambassador animals with excellent camouflage. A family program for ages five and up. **Wednesday, July 9, 2025.** Time: 2 to 3 p.m.



Place: Museum. Limited to 15 children. Advance registration recommended. Suggested donation: \$10.

Third Annual F.I. Treasure Hunt. Registration closes for this fun event on Craft Fair Day, **Sat., July 12, 2025.** Three age groups: 6 & under, 7-10, and 11-14.

Temple to the Wind: The Story of America's Greatest Naval Architect and His Masterpiece, *Reliance*. Dr. Chris Pastore, author and professor of history, will present an illustrated talk on the yacht designed and built by Nathanael G. Herreshoff in 1903 as the America's Cup defender. It was an all-or-nothing nautical contest—fraught with political tension between two great rivals, Britain and America. Drawing from Herreshoff's sketches, photos, models, and personal papers, Pastore chronicles the riveting story of *Reliance* and its quest for the America's Cup. **Sunday, July 13, 2025.** 4 p.m. Place: Museum, 2nd floor. Book signing and reception to follow.



Bird's Eye View. Meet live birds and explore the ways bird vision differs from humans. Learn how birds perceive colors and ultraviolet light, and how they use this special sense to find food, attract mates, avoid danger, and more. Encounter one of DPNC's resident birds of prey and make a bird feeder to attract colorful birds to your own home! A DPNC family program for ages five and up. **Wednesday, July 16, 2025.** Time: 2 to 3 p.m. Place: Museum. Limited to 15 children. Advance registration recommended. Suggested donation: \$10.



"Eelgrass Boat Tour," a Fishers Island Seagrass Management Coalition (FISM) program. **Friday, July 18, 2025.** Time: 8:30 a.m. See HLFM website calendar for event/sign-up details.

Homegrown National Park. Join us for an illustrated talk by renowned entomologist, ecologist, and award-winning author Doug Tallamy who will inform us that our parks, preserves, and remaining wildlands—no matter how grand

in scale – are too small and separated from one another to sustain the native trees, plants, insects, and animals on which our ecosystems depend. We can fix this problem by practicing conservation outside of wildlands, where we live, work, shop, farm, and ranch. Thus, the concept for Homegrown National Park: a national challenge to create diverse ecosystems in our yards, communities, farms, and surrounding lands by reducing lawn, planting native, and removing invasives. Co-hosted by F.I. Conservancy. **Sunday, July 20, 2025.** 4 p.m. Place: Museum, 2nd floor. Reception to follow.



P. Jasper, Ph.D., will present a summary natural history of atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂, the primary driving force of global climate) and a prospectus of these levels based on the major contributions to the contemporary atmospheric CO₂ budget. While the presentation spans the last 500 million years for perspective, it quickly focuses into the last century where it served as background for preliminarily considering the health of the southeastern Connecticut coastal environments. With the general perception that eelgrass abundance is inversely proportional to water temperature, these relatively recent records focus interest and discussion into the history and fate of eelgrass in this region. **Sunday, August 3, 2025.** 4 p.m. Place: Museum, 2nd floor.

Awesome Amphibians. We love our slimy friends! Learn what amphibians are, meet live frogs, and find out why amphibians are so important to the environment. A DPNC family program for ages five and up.

Wednesday, July 23, 2025. Time: 2 to 3 p.m. Place: Museum. Limited to 15 children. Advance registration recommended. Suggested donation: \$10.



Innovative Animal Adaptations. Discover the world of biomimicry and learn about human inventions that were inspired by animals and plants in the wild. Explore hands-on activities to replicate some of the incredible adaptations that animals have perfected over millions of years. Meet DPNC ambassador animals and observe their innovative adaptations! A DPNC family program for ages five and up. **Wednesday, August 6, 2025.** Time: 2 to 3 p.m. Place: Museum. Limited to 15 children. Advance registration recommended. Suggested donation: \$10.

Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI) President Peter de Menocal and a WHOI chief scientist will discuss new developments in marine science. on **Thursday, August 7, 2025.** Time: 5 to 7 p.m. Place: F.I. Movie Theater. Co-hosted by HLFM.

Healthy Landscape Ecosystems. Nature, like life, is about relationships. Jim Sirch, naturalist, master gardener, and former Education Coordinator for the Yale Peabody Museum, will elucidate how species interact and depend upon one another. Many of the 400 bee species in New York State specialize on specific plants for survival. The same is true of many other kinds of wildlife, including butterflies, moths, and birds. In an age in which humans are rapidly unraveling the ecosystem services of the planet, it's important to understand about relationships in nature. The more we know, the more we can make a difference in our own landscapes. Learn how to create a healthy landscape ecosystem that functions well for people and wildlife. **Sunday, July 27, 2025.** 4 p.m. Place: Museum, 2nd floor.

Food Chain Connections. Learn about energy flow in an ecosystem and how all living things are interconnected. Meet live animals and explore predator-prey relationships that exist in the wild and play a fun food chain game. A DPNC family program for ages five and up. **Wednesday, July 30, 2025.** Time: 2 to 3 p.m. Place: Museum. Limited to 15 children. Advance registration recommended. Suggested donation: \$10.

Understanding the Global-to-Regional Climate Driven by Atmospheric CO₂. With geochemical experience in natural sciences spanning the last 45 years (MIT/WHOI etc.), John

A Brief History of Land Use and Conservation on Fishers Island. Museum Director Pierce Rafferty will survey the history of land use on Fishers Island since first European settlement before turning his focus to land conservation efforts on



our Island from the mid-1960s to date. This talk will encompass both the origins and evolution of the Museum's Land Trust and its trail network, and the FI Conservancy's project to convert the former Fort Wright Parade Ground into a meadow. **Sunday, August 10, 2025.** 4 p.m. Place: Museum, 2nd floor. Reception to follow.

Join naturalist **Murray Fisher** at the F.I. Library to learn about his effort to "rewild" half of his yard in Westchester County and the transformation experience it has been for him and his family. Murray's goal is to help others see the immense opportunity these lawns provide for not only creating habitat for wildlife and sequestering carbon but for foster-

ing deep connections to the natural world. Murray is the co-founder of the New York Harbor School and the Billion Oyster Project, a Trustee of the H.L. Ferguson Museum, and a partner in Plan it Wild. **Tuesday, August 12, 2025.** 5:30 p.m. Place: F.I. Library. Co-hosted by HLFM.



Summer at the Pond. Explore a pond habitat and understand the metamorphosis of pond animals. Use nets to explore the Sanctuary Pond behind the Museum and learn how these animals enjoy the muddy water. Please dress to get muddy! **Wednesday, August 13, 2025.** Time: 2 to 3 p.m. Place: Museum. Limited to 15 children. Advance registration recommended. Suggested donation: \$10.

Amphibians of Fishers Island and the Surrounding Region.

An illustrated talk for adults and older children by Kim Hargrave, executive director of the DPNC. Discover the fascinating world of amphibians as we explore the diverse salamander and frog species of Fishers Island and the surrounding region. Gain a deeper appreciation for these often-overlooked creatures and their crucial role as an indicator species in the ecosystem. **Sunday, August 17, 2025.** 4 p.m. Place: Museum, 2nd floor.



Owl Prowl. Meet a live owl in an up-close encounter! Learn about owls native to the area and explore the unique adaptations that make them the perfect predators of the night. Touch owl artifacts and create an owl craft to take home. A DPNC family program for ages five and up. **Wednesday, August 20, 2025.** Time: 2 to 3 p.m. Place: Museum. Limited to 15 children. Advance registration recommended. Suggested donation: \$10.



Birds at Rest: The Behavior and Ecology of Avian Sleep. Roger Pasquier, ornithologist at the American Museum of Natural History, will speak about his new book, *Birds at Rest*, the first to give

a full picture of how birds rest, roost, and sleep, a vital part of their lives. From the poles to the tropics, how, when, and where birds sleep reflects the ecology of each species, as well as their evolution from dinosaur ancestors. **Sunday, August 24, 2025.** 4 p.m. Place: Museum, 2nd floor. Book signing and reception to follow.



Inspect an Insect. Gain an appreciation for the diversity of insects as we examine insect specimens, meet a live insect, and use nets to see what insects are living outside of the Museum! A DPNC family program for ages five and up. **Wednesday, August 27, 2025.** Time: 2 to 3 p.m. Place: Museum. Limited to 15 children. Advance registration recommended. Suggested donation: \$10.

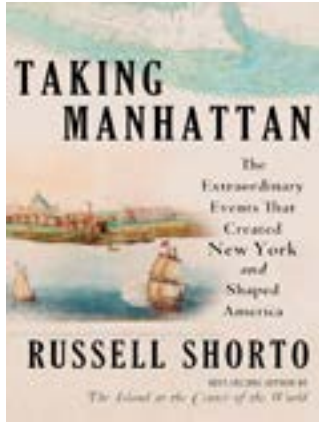
Fort H.G. Wright and the Defense of the Race. Terrance McGovern, author of eight books on fortifications and long-time officer of the Coast Defense Study Group, will present an illustrated talk on the history of Fort H.G. Wright, tracing its role in the defense of the eastern entrance of Long Island Sound from its founding in 1900 to its deactivation in 1949, followed by the sale and transfer of properties in 1958. The presentation will explore how the fort was first developed as part of a chain of forts defending the Race and remained a very active post through two world wars. **Sunday, August 31, 2025.** Time: 4 p.m. Place: Museum, 2nd Floor. Reception to follow.



Shorebirds of Neighboring Great Gull Island. University of Rhode Island professor Dr. Peter Paton will present an illustrated talk on current research activities on neighboring Great Gull Island, the breeding and nesting home to 11,000 pairs of Common Terns and 2,200 pairs of endangered Roseate Terns. Using recent advances in tracking technology, scientists and volunteers are monitoring not only annual migration from Great Gull to wintering haunts in Argentina and Brazil, but also daily foraging trips to Montauk and Napatree, a journey of 16+ miles, to capture fish for their nesting chicks. Recent discoveries of migratory patterns of Great Black-backed Gulls nesting on South Dumpling and Block Island will also be revealed. This talk will remind us what amazing, feathered neighbors we have! **Sunday, September 14, 2025.** Time: 4 pm. Place: Museum, 2nd Floor.



Taking Manhattan: The Birth of New York City. Renowned historian Russell Shorto, author of *The Island at the Center of the World*, will introduce us to *Taking Manhattan*, his new, riveting narrative that chronicles the birth of New York City in 1664 after England decided to invade the Dutch-controlled city of New Amsterdam on Manhattan



Island. Bristling with vibrant characters, *Taking Manhattan* reveals the founding of New York to be an invention, the result of creative negotiations between Richard Nicholls, the military officer who led the threatening English flotilla, and Peter Stuyvesant, New Netherland's canny director general. **Sunday, September 28, 2025.** Time: 4 p.m. Place, 2nd Floor. Book signing and reception to follow.

FISM's Invasive Plant Trail Walk on Saturday, October 11, 2025. Time: 1:00 pm. See HLFM website calendar for event/sign-up details.

Fishers Island Nature Discovery Program

The FIND program will be held in the morning from 9:00 am to 12:00 p.m. during the week of **August 11th to 15th** for children ages 5-10. The schedule and signup will be sent out by e-news and posted on FishNet and the Museum's website



Nature Walks

Nature walks will be led by Board Member Terry McNamara on Thursday mornings in July and August. Meet at the Museum at 10:30 a.m.

Museum Hours

June 29th to Labor Day. Tuesday through Friday: 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday: 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Sunday: 11 a.m. to 12 noon. Closed Mondays.

Off Season Hours: To be posted. For special appointments, please call Museum Director Pierce Rafferty at the Museum (631) 788-7239, or email info@fergusonmuseum.org



Osprey and flounder drawing by Charlie Ferguson.

The Henry L. Ferguson Museum

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In the spring of 2024, Mary Linda Strunk retired from her position as Administrative Assistant to our Director, a position she held for ten years. Pierce, the entire Staff, and the Board of Trustees would like to acknowledge her dedicated service and wish her happiness in her retirement. Mary Linda, you are truly missed!