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Conservancy Currents

Fall 2017



Conservancy Protects Land in Montrose

On September 28th, 32 acres of woodland was added to the hundreds of acres in Susquehanna County already preserved in perpetuity from unwanted development through conservation easements. The land, located primarily in Bridgewater Township off of Chenango St., is now protected by a conservation easement held by the Edward L. Rose Conservancy. The landowners, Mr.



and Mrs. Robert Vermette, wished to ensure that the land they cherish would always remain as natural and beautiful as it had been in the past. To do so, they contacted the Conservancy to work with them to develop a plan that would allow the property to continue to be used and enjoyed, with a portion to be set aside as an existing and future residence, while preserving it from further development.

With this addition, the Conservancy continues to build its portfolio of preserved properties to the benefit of the scenic beauty and the natural environment that we all appreciate in Susquehanna County. A conservation easement is a legal agreement, guarded by the Conservancy and designed by the landowner, that protects a property from future development and preserves its natural character. If you are a landowner, please consider the benefit you can bring to future generations by joining in this conservation movement.

Join Us at our Upcoming Pollinator Workshop

Saturday, October 21st, at the Broome County Regional Farmer's Market



Creating Habitat for Pollinators

Saturday, October 21st from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Location: Broome County Farmers Market, Binghamton, NY

Instructors: Tim Matthews and Karen Ceballos, the Edward L. Rose Conservancy in partnership with Rockwell Collins

Fee: Free!

Want to help native pollinators? On October 21st, the Conservancy will be at the [Broome County Regional Farmers Market](#) in Binghamton. We will be **GIVING AWAY** beautiful **MASON BEE HOUSES** and talking about bees! **Kids** can decorate the bee houses and we will have activities as well. We will be there from 9am to 1pm. Make sure to mark your calendar, you don't want to miss out!

This event was made possible by a Green Communities Grant from Rockwell Collins.

2017 Annual Membership Meeting



Our annual meeting provides an opportunity to learn about current issues affecting our local region, and catch up on the Conservancy's accomplishments for the year. It's also a chance to unplug, unwind, and enjoy being outdoors. This year, the Conservancy's Annual Meeting took place on Friday, July 28th, at Silver Lake. The meeting began with a brief business meeting, and included presentations on lake ecology and invasive insects. Afterward, members had time to relax and spend time with friends and fellow members, while enjoying the beautiful weather and view of the lake. Liz and Peter Nesvold generously hosted the meeting. **Please join us next year!**

In Memory of Joe P. Hester

The Honorable Joseph P. Hester, Jr., former member of the Edward L. Rose Conservancy board of directors, passed away on September 26, 2017. Joe was a source of warmth, love and wit for the many people who were a part of his world. Joe enjoyed the outdoors and was a strong advocate for clean water and environmental stewardship. While on the Conservancy board, Joe provided integrity and consistent leadership for the mission of caring for the land in Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania, and beyond. Joe was active in high level planning but he also pitched in for the annual trail clean-up and volunteered his time and energy for other environmental projects. Joe encouraged the Edward L. Rose Conservancy to strive for, and attain, national accreditation. He will be missed by all who had the honor of working with him. Joe provided a high bar for environmental stewardship, commitment, community service, and loyal friendship. He will be missed.



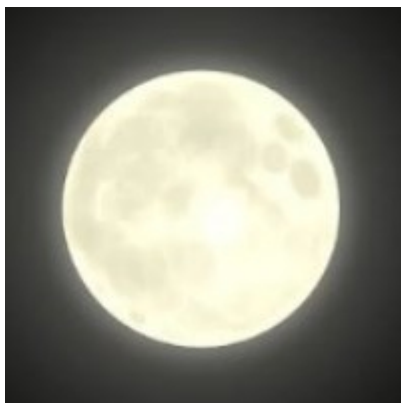
Link to the Press Connects Obituary for Joe Hester:

<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/pressconnects/obituary.aspx?pid=186785777>

Link to an article on the impact of our friend Joe Hester:

<http://pressandsunbulletin.ny.newsmemory.com/publink.php?shareid=024712e41>

Upcoming Events



Full Moon Hike



Make Your Own Bird Feeder

February, to be announced

Location TBD

Fee: \$5.00 cost of materials: \$23.00

November 3, 2017

Salt Springs State Park

[More info here](#)

Friday, November 3, 6:30 p.m. - FULL MOON HIKE

*From the Wheaton House we'll hike into the dusky woods and explore the park by moonlight. We'll end our hike around a campfire sharing snacks and stories. Don't forget appropriate shoes for hiking and layers for warmth. Meet at the Wheaton House. **Fee: Free-will donation or nonperishable food item for the local food bank.***

Instructor: Ann Vitale and Susquehanna County Master Gardener, Jim Kasten

[Register here](#)

Many people feed birds. Many also love to watch them and listen to their cheery songs. Join us and learn the best seed to buy, feeders to get, where to place them, whether you can you feed them year round, how to prevent larger birds from scaring smaller birds, stopping those pesky squirrels, keeping feeders clean plus much more.

After a brief informational presentation, you will learn how to create your very own feeder out of PVC. We have a limited supply of battery powered drills so please bring your own and safety glasses as well. The cost of materials for each feeder is \$23.00. Please indicate the number of feeders you wish to make and add the cost to your registration fee. Or you may just simply observe and listen in on the discussion.

Wild Things in Your Woodlands *The Porcupine*



The porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatum*) is the second-largest rodent in North America, surpassed in size only by the beaver. They are usually yellowish-brown or black with white highlights in their quills. Porcupines are covered in about 30,000 of these quills, each hollow and up to 3 inches long. They can grow to be up to 2 to 3 feet in length, not including their tails of 6 to 12 inches. Females weigh around 15 pounds, while males can average around 23 pounds. Males and females look similar, though males are significantly larger.

Porcupines themselves are often hidden up in trees, but the signs of their shenanigans are evident across New York. Forest trees may be stunted and twisted from years of browsing, or wood siding and tool handles may be destroyed by gnawing teeth. Porcupines are found in coniferous and mixed forests, but have also adapted to live in grasslands, scrubland, and even harsher environments like the desert and tundra. They are found in Canada, the northeastern and western regions of the United States and northern Mexico.

Porcupines are solitary animals, except during the breeding season and winter when they may occasionally den together in caves, decaying logs and hollow trees. Both males and females are territorial. In New York, porcupines spend most of their time in trees, with different trees used for feeding and resting. The amount of time spent on the ground varies by region, and depends on how much groundcover there is for foraging and protection. Hemlocks are often chosen as resting and feeding trees because their thick foliage hides them from view and the sturdy trees have high nutritional value. Porcupines are generalists, feasting on a wide range of plant material, depending on the season. In winter, porcupines feed on conifer needles and tree bark, often feeding heavily on a single tree, causing severe damage or death to the tree. However, in the summer, they will eat twigs, roots, stems, berries, grasses and other vegetation, including nuts in the fall. They mostly feed nocturnally to take advantage of the changes in plant and leaf chemistry at night; by feeding at night they can get the added nutrients available during nighttime metabolic processes of plants. Most people will also be quite familiar with porcupines' cravings for salt, driving them to chew on areas of collected roadside salt runoff or on tools with salt residue.

Porcupines are wonderfully adapted to the bitter northeastern winters, with thick fur and hollow quills to serve as insulation against low winter temperatures. They are also quite well suited to their arboreal lifestyle, with long, curved claws to hook into even the tiniest crevices, and single footpads covered with pebbled skin good for gripping trees. The underside of their tails have short backward-pointed bristles that serve as crampons. Porcupines lack quills on their belly and have no external genitalia because they spend so much time pressed against trees.

If one was searching for words to describe a porcupine's behavior, 'slow' is a good one with which to start. But these animals can afford to be slow because of their very effective defense system. First of all, they can avoid most predators by staying out of reach high up in the trees. Their black and white coloring also serves as a warning system, effective for night-time and colorblind predators. The porcupine, wolverine and skunk are the only North American mammals that have black and white colors because they are the only mammals that benefit from letting other animals know where they are at night. The porcupine's quills even contain a fluorescent pigment that makes them appear brighter. When threatened, a porcupine will chatter its teeth and erect its quills in all directions. They may release a warning odor, described as similar

to human body odor, goats or some cheeses. If that doesn't turn the predator off, the porcupine will back up into the predator or swing its tail like a barbed mace. Contrary to popular belief, porcupines cannot 'shoot' quills from their bodies. However, their quills are lightly attached to the porcupines, so if it hits the attacker the quills will become embedded. The experience is sure to be memorable, as the quills are coated in a 'grease' that facilitates the penetration, and are full of tiny barbs that allow them to really lodge into the attacker's flesh. Body heat causes the barbs to expand, making them even more deeply embedded.

Porcupines are preyed upon by coyotes, mountain lions and great horned owls, but their only specialized predator is the fisher. Fishers attack a porcupine's head repeatedly until it is wounded and disoriented, and then flips the porcupine on its back. Since fishers are agile tree climbers, porcupines cannot simply retreat further into the tree.

In contrast to their more dangerous properties, porcupine quills actually have antiseptic properties designed to protect the porcupine when it stabs itself with its own quills. Apparently this is a common enough occurrence, as porcupines are often tempted by the tender buds and twigs at the end of branches, leading to frequent falls from great heights. Their hollow quills also make porcupines decent swimmers, as their quills help them stay afloat.

Breeding season occurs during fall and early winter, and involves vocalizations, courtship dances, and males fighting other males for the chance to sit in the same tree as the female and spray her with his urine. Once the mating occurs, gestation lasts for about 210 days, and the female gives birth to a single young in the spring or early summer. The young, called porcupettes, have soft quills at birth, which harden in the following days. Mothers provide all the maternal care, and the porcupettes become independent at about 5 months old. Porcupines have relatively long life expectancy, living up to 18 years of age. Mortality includes predation, starvation, falling out of a tree, or death by motor vehicle. Their longevity is likely limited by the grinding of their teeth, since porcupines over the age of 12 actually show diminished feeding and are smaller in size.

Automobile mortality is common; many porcupine are killed during springtime along highways where they congregate to feed on road salt. While the New York porcupine population is thriving currently, hemlock plays an important role in their winter foraging, so pests such as hemlock wooly adelgid may pose issues for future porcupine habitat.

By Karen Ceballos
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Ways to Help the Conservancy

Planning on doing some holiday shopping on Amazon?



When you shop at AmazonSmile, Amazon donates 0.5% of the purchase price to Edward L Rose Conservancy Inc. Bookmark the link <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/22-2517879> and support us every time you shop!



Make a gift towards conservation

Do you love wild places, clean water, and a healthy environment? We do too. Help us preserve our local natural resources by making a donation this holiday season. Donate here

Thank you for your support this year! Happy holidays!



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