



THE EDWARD L. ROSE CONSERVANCY

Conservancy Currents



Welcome Spring!

Spring, 2015

Get Involved! Help us Protect the Land, Water and Wildlife of the Region

The Conservancy works in many ways to protect the region's natural resources through land conservation, as well as wildlife and natural resource monitoring and research. Would you like to get more involved? There are many ways you can make a difference. Potential volunteer activities include:

- Assist with spring trail cleanup. The next trail cleanup will take place at High Point Preserve on Saturday, April 25th, beginning at 9:00 am. Contact Keith Oberg at keith@professionalhome.com for more information.
- Volunteer as a garden assistant and help maintain the butterfly/pollinator garden in the field at High Point Preserve
- Lend a hand with membership activities
- Help maintain the Conservancy web site

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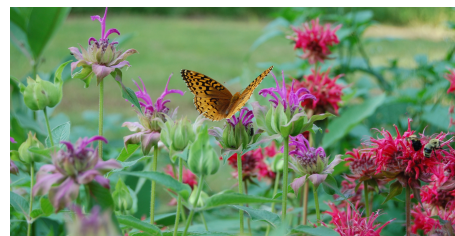
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- Monitor our properties and yours for the hemlock woolly adelgid and emerald ash borer, invasive insects that threaten the health of hemlock and ash trees in the region
- Learn how to identify amphibians and reptiles and get involved in searching for, and documenting the presence of, these animals. We are collecting and reporting locations of these animals as part of a statewide effort called the Pennsylvania Amphibian and Reptile Survey. For more information, or to get involved, email Kristi Sullivan at kls20@cornell.edu



If you are interested in any of these volunteer opportunities (or others that may arise) please send an email to board@elrose.org

Wild Things in Your Woodlands

Wood Frog

*The wood frog (*Lithobates sylvaticus*) is medium-sized, with a dark brown mask through its eyes, a dark line that connects the mask to the tip of the snout, and a white stripe along the upper lip. It also has pronounced ridges (folds of skin) that extend down each side of its back. The body coloration varies from light tan to dark brown, and changes with temperature; the darker color is more common for wood frogs in cold breeding ponds. The underside is white, occasionally with gray marks. Adults generally measure from 1 1/3 to 2 3/4 inches.*



With the first warm rains of the year, usually in late March or early April, adult wood frogs emerge from under rocks, stumps, or leaf litter where they overwinter in the forest. They make their way through the woods to return to shallow breeding pools or ponds where they mate and lay eggs. Adult wood frogs do not remain in the ponds for long and, after a short and intensive breeding period lasting from 1 to 2 weeks, they return to the woods, where you may occasionally encounter them moving about during the day. They are the first frogs to breed, often moving to water even before the snow and ice have melted away.

Once they reach the water, males often are seen floating on the water surface with their hind legs submerged below the surface. The male's call resembles a short quack of a duck, and cannot be heard from a very great distance. Females are attracted to the males' calls and the expansion of the light-colored pair of vocal sacs on the males' throats. They deposit from 1000 to 3000 eggs in large, globular masses, which they attach to submerged vegetation, sticks, or other substrate in the water. Often several females will lay eggs together, resulting in very large clusters up 1 1/2 feet in diameter, containing many thousands of eggs.

Wood frog eggs usually hatch in less than 1 month. In May and June, small temporary ponds may be full of wriggling wood frog tadpoles. The tadpoles can take an average of 9 weeks to develop into tiny wood frogs, which then leave the water and take to the woods. Tadpoles feed on anything small enough, but mainly algae. On land, wood frogs are carnivores, consuming insects, slugs, spiders, and worms. They remain on land for 2 to 3 years before returning to the water to breed for the first time.

Wood frogs are common, and found throughout New York State. They have the northernmost range of any amphibian on the North American continent. Some wood frogs live on the Canadian Tundra; others live in Alaska, north of the Arctic Circle. During winter, they hibernate at surprisingly shallow depths under the leaf litter on the forest floor. They do not burrow deeply into the ground or retreat below the water during winter to escape freezing temperatures. Instead, they distribute high levels of glucose (sugars) throughout their bloodstream, which keeps cells from freezing while their other bodily fluids freeze. In the spring, the animal slowly thaws out, and picks up where it left off before the freeze. To learn more and watch this amazing feat happen, watch this video at <http://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/lsp07.sci.life.evo.frozenfrogs/frozen-frogs/>

The wood frog is an important component in both aquatic and terrestrial communities. They prey upon a variety of small animals, and are prey for larger animals such as snakes, birds, mammals and other amphibians. Because of their complex habitat requirements, wood frogs are affected by the loss of both wooded and aquatic habitats. Furthermore, their tendency to migrate between these habitats during the breeding season makes them vulnerable to mass mortality. Roads that separate upland sites from breeding ponds are particularly hazardous.

To provide habitat for wood frogs, landowners can enhance and protect both their aquatic breeding sites and the surrounding woods. Shallow woodland pools that dry up during late summer or fall (and do not support predatory fish) provide particularly valuable breeding habitat. Protecting these and other breeding sites from pollution (chemicals, sediments from erosion) and disturbance is essential for these animals. By marking the boundaries of breeding pools during the wet season, landowners can help prevent disturbances within the boundaries of the pools during drier times.

In surrounding woodlands, maintaining a mostly closed forest canopy will provide optimum habitat for the wood frog and many other amphibians. A closed canopy shades the forest floor, keeping soils moist and leaf litter abundant. Woody material (logs, tree tops, brush piles, etc.) can also be left on, or added to, the forest floor to provide safe havens for the wood frog throughout much of the year.

Kristi Sullivan and Steve Morreale; Cornell Department of Natural Resources

Upcoming Events

Edward L. Rose Conservancy Sponsored Events

Presentation: *Creating Better Wildlife Habitat*, Kristi Sullivan, Cornell University in partnership with the Edward L. Rose Conservancy

When: Thursday, April 16, 7:00 PM

Where: Montrose High School; Register at Montroseadultschool.org

They say 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder' and that surely is the case when it comes to wildlife habitat. Animals, unlike people, tend to prefer 'messy' surroundings that provide good places to hide as well as abundant food items. Learn about the steps you can take to create better wildlife habitat and how looking at your land as part of the surrounding landscape can help you make important management decisions.

Trail Clean-up: *High Point Preserve Hike and Trail Clean-up*

When: Saturday, April 25, 9:00 AM

Where: High Point Preserve; Contact Keith Oberg at

Keith@professionalhome.com

Head outdoors for a chance to walk the trails at High Point Preserve and enjoy time with other members. Meet at the butterfly garden/field and help clear the trails for the upcoming hiking season.



Events Sponsored by Other Organizations

Hike: *Tree Id Walk and Scavenger Hunt*, Sponsored by Friends of Salt Springs Park

When: Sunday, April 19, 1:00 PM

Where: Salt Springs State Park; For information visit friendsofsaltspringspark.org

Have cabin fever? Go outdoors for an easy to moderate 1.5-mile hike!

Check out other events at Salt Springs State Park this spring including:

Saturday, May 9 - North American Spring Bird Migration Count

Sunday, May 10 - Find Some Flowers for Mom - wildflower walk

Event: *Seedling Sale*, Susquehanna County Conservation District

When: Saturday, April 18, 9:00-11:00 AM

Where: Bridgewater Township Building; For info visit <http://www.suscondistrict.org/>