The Ovenbird

Pfeiffer Nature Center and Foundation

Fall, 2010

The Seedy Truth

Walking around the woods during the autumn season can be a beautiful time. The leaves are changing into brilliant reds, yellows, and oranges and animals are busy getting ready for the winter. The plants, on the other hand, are getting ready for spring next year. They have actually been working on preparing for it all summer long. They have been creating seeds and nuts that will hopefully make new plants in the spring. But first the seeds need to leave the parent plant and move to a new home to grow. But how do they get there? Seeds move in a variety of different ways. Based on who you talk to there are five to six ways seeds move; gravity, animals, wind, explosion, water, and fire.

The first way seeds move around in this world is through gravity. Many plants just drop their seeds and they fall straight to the ground where they can grow in the shelter of the parent plant. Gravity is the simplest form of seed dispersal and is sometimes accompanied by a second form of dispersal, which can be animals.

Nut bearing trees, such as the Beech, Oak, and Shagbark Hickory, which can be found on Pfeiffer properties, rely on gravity but they also use animals to help move their seeds. Animals, such as squirrels, chipmunks, and other gathering rodents will collect fallen nuts which they store in caches to eat later. Many nuts are buried throughout the forest and are forgotten by these little critters. They are essentially planting the nuts for the trees.

Another way animals help disperse seeds is through eating them, which is called endozoochory. Berries are a prime example. The fleshy fruit is covered with tiny seeds. Birds and other animals, such as bears and even turtles, will eat the berries and later deposit the millions of seeds in other places around the forest. Some seeds need the animals to eat them so that the animal’s digestive system can start to break down the seed’s outer coating. The animals cannot digest the seeds but their stomach acids weaken the seed’s outer shell making it easier for the seed to germinate.

A third way that animals help disperse seeds is on the outside of their bodies. Many seeds have ways of sticking to animals so they can hitch a ride to another location in the forest. This process is known as epizoochory. Some plants, like the Burdock plant, have hooks or barbs attached to their seeds. This allows the seed to attach to the fur of an animal and be carried along to a new location where it will eventually be rubbed off by the animal. Another way that seeds attach to animals is through a sticky mucus. Milkweed is a plant that has sticky fruit which attracts birds. The seeds stick to the outside of the bird’s beak. When the bird scrapes it back against the bark of a tree to get the seeds off, the seeds are deposited onto a new tree. This works for the Milkweed because it is a parasitic plant. It needs another plant, in this case a tree, to survive.

Besides animals, many plants rely on wind to disperse their seeds. On the Pfeiffer properties you can find a variety of trees and other plants that use this method of seed dispersal. Maple trees have winged seeds. These seeds will flutter to the ground and be blown away from the parent tree, though usually not very far. The American Elm is another example of a tree with winged seeds. The key to this type of dispersal is large quantities of seeds. This (Continued on page 4)
As the seasons change, so, too, things change here at Pfeiffer Nature Center. In August we bid a fond farewell to Susan Avery, our intrepid Naturalist for the past two years. Susan and her ever-faithful canine friend, Sassy, headed south to the Washington, DC area. Susan had a large impact on the Nature Center, building new programs and adding both depth and breadth to existing programs. Not to mention lending her amazing organizational skills to our office space! Susan’s generosity of time, energy, and spirit were greatly appreciated, and she will be missed.

Shortly after Susan left we learned that we’d be saying goodbye to one of our Board members. Bob Wood has his fingers in many pies, and unfortunately several of them conflict with our meeting times here at Pfeiffer Nature Center. Bob has been instrumental in making stronger connections between the Nature Center and Cooperative Extension’s Master Forest Owners (MFO), and in bringing a joint meeting of the MFO and NYS Forest Owner’s Association to our Lillibridge property (see page 3). I’m sure we’ll be calling on Bob for some of his knowledge in the future!

I don’t know about you, but it seemed to me as if MANY trees suddenly started displaying their fall colors over the weekend of September 18-19. Friday they were mostly green, and by Sunday the hillsides were shades ofumber, sienna, copper, amber, and brick, with splashes of magenta thrown in for good measure.

Enjoying the autumn!

Reann Ehman joined us as our Naturalist. Reann is a certified teacher, and has lots of experience working with students at all levels. Reann has a quick smile and is eager to share her life-long love of the outdoors. I know you’ll enjoy her positive outlook, easy nature, and attention to detail. Come to our nature hikes, our programs, or just stop in the office and say hello. Reann will love to meet you.

Margaret Shulock lives in Friendship, NY. Her “Sticks” cartoons can be seen in the Olean Times Herald. Visit her website, www.thesixchix.com

The Seedy Truth (Cont.)

(Continued from page 4)

A fifth way that seeds are dispersed is through water. These seeds usually have a special coating that helps it survive this wet form of transportation. Seeds might have a heavy wax coat or many thick layers to protect it. Seeds like the coconut can drift for hundreds of miles on the open ocean before the salt water will seep into the shell and ruin the seed. Some seeds, like the sedge fruit have sacs of air that help them float.

The last way that seeds are dispersed is through fire. Plants that live in high fire risk areas have traits that allow them reproduce when a fire occurs. Animals can run and hide from a fire but plants cannot so plants need another way to survive. The plants have a seed dispersal mechanism that is based on the destructive fire. These plants need the fire to release their seeds. The intensity or heat of the fire is important to this form of seed dispersal. Certain temperatures need to be reached for some of the seed pods to open. A number of species of pine, called serotinus, have cones that only open after a fire. The Jack Pine is an example of this type of pine. Lodgepole pine, which is found in the western United States, is serotinus and relies on the fire to release its seeds. When the Lodgepole pine grows in an area where there are few fires it will release its seeds on its own without the use of fire. Some species of plants will store their seeds in the ground until a fire reaches the right heat for germination.

So the next time you hike through the forest at the Lillibridge property or the fields of Edelman property on a fall day look for the ways that plants disperse their seeds. Are their seeds floating through the air or dropping on the path in front of you? Keep your eyes open and see how many different ways you can find.

Membership Levels and Benefits

All members receive a subscription to The Ovenbird, our quarterly newsletter, delivered to your home.

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<th>Level</th>
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<tr>
<td>Student/senior</td>
<td>$10 1 $5 off program admission coupons</td>
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<td>Individual</td>
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<td>Family</td>
<td>$35 3 $5 off program admission coupons</td>
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<td>Conservator</td>
<td>$100 4 free family program admissions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patron</td>
<td>$250 Same as Conservator, invitation to wine &amp; cheese reception, 1 tree planted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guardian</td>
<td>$500 Same as Patron, plus 1 decorated fir holiday wreath</td>
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<td>Benefactor</td>
<td>$1,000 Same as Guardian, plus unlimited free program admissions</td>
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Additional Donation $___________

All members also receive discounted admissions and gift shop purchases at many other nature centers. Your contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowable by NYS Tax Law.

NAME: ________________________________________________________________________________   STREET ADDRESS: ___________________________ ____________

PHONE: ___________________________ E-MAIL: ___________________________

MEMBERSHIP LEVEL: ___________ Is this a ____ new or ____ renewing membership? (Check one)

May we contact you about volunteering? ____ Yes _____ No, thank you.

Send your completed form to: Pfeiffer Nature Center, PO Box 802 Portville, NY 14770

From the Director

A few weeks prior to Susan’s departure, Reann Ehman joined us as our Naturalist. Reann is a certified teacher, and has lots of experience working with students at all levels. Reann has a quick smile and is warm summer days, nights are consistently cool. Garden flowers and wildflowers alike are rapidly going to seed, preparing for their progeny. Animals are busy gathering their stores of winter food, and the small ones are attempting to move into my basement.

As we approach the autumnal equinox, that single date when the day and night are of equal length, we notice how much things are changing. Leaves are changing color and drifting down to the ground. Clouds are changing shapes and color, no longer looking like summer clouds. While we still have some beautifully warm summer days, nights are consistently cool.

Breadth to existing programs. Not to mention lending Garden flowers and wildflowers alike are enjoying the autumn!

Seasonal Stirrings & Nature Notes

OCTOBER – • Shorter days and dropping temperatures signal many plants to withdraw their valuable chlorophyll from leaves, revealing the yellow and red colors associated with waste products that have built up in the leaves over the summer. • Chemical reactions caused by diminishing daylight make many animals grow more fur or feather as they hunker for the coming cold.

NOVEMBER – • Raccoons scout out winter dens where they can conserve their fat when food becomes scarce. They do not hibernate but merely become inactive.

DECEMBER – • While the ground’s surface may be frozen, each foot of snow on the surface reduces the depth of soil freezing by approximately the same amount.

• The Gemfield shower can produce around eighty meteors per hour in the skies after dark between December 6th and 18th. It will peak December 13th.

Enjoying the autumn!

Peg Cherre

Yes, I’d Like to Become a Member of Pfeiffer Nature Center

Margaret Shulock lives in Friendship, NY. Her “Sticks” cartoons can be seen in the Olean Times Herald. Visit her website, www.thesixchix.com to see more of her work.
A Heartfelt Thanks to Our Generous Donors

Franz & Emily Hodge
Marc & Nancy Mantelli
Francis Shields
Joe & Theresa Schaechler
Bob Waltz

We are grateful for your generosity and support! Kind acts and thoughtful gifts such as these assist us in fulfilling our Mission. If we have inadvertently omitted your gift from these lists, please bring it to our attention and we will happily correct our oversight.

Create a Lasting Tribute
You can honor your family and friends in ways that will have lasting impacts on Pfeiffer Nature Center and therefore the local community. Gifts can be either memorials or tributes to the accomplishments of someone still with us, and all gifts will be acknowledged in this newsletter. Gifts to the Kay Pfeiffer Gerkin Endowment Fund are maintained and managed separately from our operating funds. The principle in this fund is retained exclusively for investments and income generation, with only interest and dividends available to support our ongoing activities. Check with your financial or legal advisor to name Pfeiffer Nature Center in your estate planning.

Gifts may be made specifically to our sugar bush expansion project. We will plant sugar maples on our Eshelman property annually. While donors will not be able to identify “their” tree, they will have the benefit of knowing that their gifts provided a source of ongoing income. Maple seedlings are $35 each. Gifts of any size may be made to the Nature Center to honor or memorialize relatives, friends, or pets. With no minimum donation, this option provides giving opportunities for all.

We hope you’ll make a gift soon!

Nature - It’s Good for What Ails You

Does the fall and winter weather find you feeling blue? Do you seem to lack energy and enthusiasm for things you enjoy during the warmer weather? Do your children behave better in the summer than they do in the winter?

If so, Pfeiffer Nature Center may be just what the doctor ordered!

In the last decade, studies done in the U.S., Japan, Sweden, England, and elsewhere have documented the health benefits of time spent outdoors in natural environments. It’s obvious that you’ll improve your physical health if you walk more, but did you know that spending time outdoors will also improve your attitude? Being in nature also enhances a feeling of well-being and reduces stress, anxiety, and depression in both children and adults. It’s also documented that spending time in wild, outdoor areas can improve concentration, social skills, and mental agility. Green environments have also been shown to boost the immune system and lower blood pressure.

Hike our trails, come to our programs, learn how to enjoy the outdoors all year round with Pfeiffer Nature Center.

Go outside — you’ll feel better!

Top 10 Reasons to Buy a Wreath from Pfeiffer Nature Center

10. Nature Center wreaths are made from regionally-grown greens (fir or boxwood), requiring minimal transportation — they’re not only green, they’re green—supporting a regional economy and reducing carbon footprints.
9. The regionally-grown wreaths will be beautiful on your front door well into the new year.
8. The Nature Center’s decorated wreaths come with a beautiful bow, hand-tied by our volunteers.
7. Our decorated wreaths are artfully graced with all-natural decorations — pine cones, rose hips, dried flowers and seed heads, feathers, nuts, and more.
6. Most of our decorations are gathered and dried in Cattaraugus and surrounding counties, although some of our more-distant friends help us gather flowers, cones, and seeds from more southern locales.
5. Dozens of volunteers enjoy getting together the weekend before Thanksgiving designing and decorate hundreds of wreaths, admiring each other’s handiwork and creativity.
4. You’ll select from hundreds of gorgeous wreaths, choosing one that will look just right on your door.
3. When you pick up your wreath (form 1-4 pm on either on either Friday 11/26 or Saturday 11/27, at Pleasant Valley Nursery), you can buy a poinsettia, cyclamen, other gorgeous plant, or even pick out your Christmas tree!
2. Picking up your wreath is a great excuse to avoid distant shopping malls on Black Friday, giving you one more reason to shop locally.
1. Your purchase helps support Nature Center programs, workshops, bikes, and more!

Call 716-933-0187 or use this form to place your order.

Quantities are limited!

Pfeiffer Nature Center Wreath Order Form

Name: __________________________________________________________ Date: _________________
City, State, Zip: ___________________________________ Phone Number: _________________________
Street Address: __________________________________________________________________________

Wreath Order

Wreath Description Price Quantity Total
Decorated Fraser Fir $32 ______ $ ______
Decorated Boxwood $43 ______ $ ______
Undecorated Fraser Fir $27 ______ $ ______
Undecorated Boxwood $38 ______ $ ______

Order Total $ ______ $ ______

Select a payment option
____ I will mail a check to the Nature Center office by 11/25/10 OR
____ I will pay for my order via credit/debit card. Please call me at ______ for my card number OR
____ I will pay for my order (check or cash) when I pick my wreath up at Pleasant Valley Nursery.

Send orders and make checks payable to: Pfeiffer Nature Center P.O. Box 802 Portville, NY 14770
Pfeiffer Teams Up with SBU for Freshman Service Day

On Saturday, August 28th, Pfeiffer Nature Center teamed up with St. Bonaventure University (SBU) for the first annual Freshman Day of Service through SBU’s Center for Community Engagement, under the leadership of Larry Sorokes. “SBU’s Center for Community Engagement leads a variety of integrative educational, service and volunteer activities to promote a culture of Franciscan service to others.”

There were several other agencies in the community that participated in this day of service, including Canicile Farms, the Warming House, Cattaraugus Community Action and the Allegheny River Valley Trail. The Day of Service was a way for many of the SBU freshmen to complete required service hours for University 101, a complete required service course for University freshmen at the SBU. Pfeiffer was lucky enough to have seven freshmen from SBU on-site at our Lillibridge Property for a service project, where we had two projects underway. Two of the SBU students, Gabrielle Weir and Pat from Bonita Buddies, worked with Jeff McMullen on a book sorting project, while the remaining five students, Greg Fraugman, Anthony Watts, Aditya Rao, Daulston Sherwin, and Anthony Shult, worked with Mike Ermer, Nick Vaczek, Mike Canada, Carol Bradley and Joellen Beatty on another.

Can You Help? We Need...

Aquatice Collecting Net—D Frame
Replacement Sweep Nets Muslin 16" Diameter (2)
Replacement Sweep Nets Poly Mesh 14" Diameter (2)
Aquatic Collecting Net—D Frame
Can You Help? We Need...

Periodic help maintaining our property: mowing meadows and open trails, clipping encroaching plants/branches, removing fallen trees from trails, etc.

The Seedy Truth (Con’t)

(Continued from page 1)

The larger of the two projects included the demolition of a small shed just off one of our trails and the removal of debris. The dilapidated building was a safety hazard and needed to be removed. The Pfeiffer volunteers and SBU students completed a full demolition of the shed and removed two flatbed trailers worth of debris from the site. While there is still some wood that needs to be removed, the majority of it was taken away by Mike Canada to be burned. Jeff McMullen took the glass, metal and other recyclable debris to the transfer station.

“Everyone was working together seamlessly. The SBU students really seemed to enjoy the demolition aspect of the project,” said Joellen. “Mike Ermer also brought apple cider and donuts from Cummin’s Cider Mill as refreshments for the volunteers, which was a wonderful surprise.” We hope to work with the SBU Center for Community Engagement on more projects in the future. For more information on the CCE, please visit www.sbu.edu and search for the Center for Community Engagement under Campus/Spiritual Life.

We would like to thank Dave Michie and the Fortville Boy Scouts for their help in clean up at this year’s Woods Walk.

We want to thank Linda Poelma of the Cuba Library, Tammy Kokot from the 21st Century Library in Almond, and the Bradford Library for inviting us to present. search of elusive salamanders to their students and patrons. This year’s theme was water and the children had fun learning about the water cycle and examining multiple water creatures.

We are grateful to Bob Waltz and Joe Schueckler for fixing the lawnmower and keeping the lawn around the pavilion beautifully mowed all summer long! Roy Griffin did a marvelous job of brush hogging the fields around the pavilion. We are also grateful to Carol Bradley for looking after the cabin for us and making sure that it looks wonderful for our visitors. The Reisman family (Jeff, Tonya, Matt, Austin, & Justin) have been working hard all summer long on keeping the Birdsong Property looking great.

Our thanks go out to Francis Shields for his donation of the ginseng botanical pressing and a two year subscription to New York Conservations. Both of these items will help in our education of the public through our monthly programs. Mr. Shields also offered his guidance on a recent walk to explore ginseng growth. We are saddened to hear of the untimely passing of Martha Bohan and are grateful for her recent donation of a flower book.

In July we had a great day with the NYS Forest Owners Association (NYFOA) and Cooperative Extension’s Master Forresters (MF). These two groups worked together to hold an information refresher course at on our Lillibridge Property. Thank you to Bob Wood, Brian Bullock, and Mark Wiford for organizing this event.

After refresher course, Brian Bullock, Nick Vaczek, Joe Schueckler, Bob Wood, Kim Sherwood and Susan Avery hiked up Thorton Thruway to measure and core a Tupelo tree. The data has been entered in the Champion Tupelo and NYS Big Tree Registry and we think we will have a Champion Tupelo. Thanks to everyone who helped with this event.

Another big event that happened in July was Fantastic Forest Fun. Many volunteers spent the day with 42 children and their chaperones from various summer programs throughout the county. It was a day full of bugs, hiking, tie dying, painting, bottle rockets, and water slides. The children had a wonderful day learning about nature and exploring the Lillibridge property. A big thanks goes out to all our helpers who ran programs and assisted with activities: Vicki Schmidt, Lisa Mulberin, Sue Stevens, Tina Stevens, Joellen Beatty, Marcia Storch, Joyce Ermer, Colleen Kent, and Steve Kellogg.

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One of my favorite plants from childhood demonstrates the fourth way that seeds are dispersed, which is through explosions. Touch-Me-Not, also known as Jeweledew, is a prime example of this type of dispersion. I can remember spending hours of my childhood playing with this plant. In the fall, their seed pods swell up and become tight. Then with the slightest touch they explode, sending seeds flying everywhere. These seed pods were always great fun to touch and feel. You never knew when they might explode!

(Continued on page 3)

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