

The BEAVER DEFENDERS



Sharon Brown, of Beavers: Wetlands & Wildlife, feeds a wild beaver.

JULY 2006

They shall never be trapped anymore.

The BEAVER DEFENDERS



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July 2006

Good News from Unexpected

Speaking of Jungles . . .

On Friday, my friend Stacey dropped by to donate some hand-painted bird houses to the Refuge and do a little walking around. I missed her, but she left me a little note telling me that it was a "jungle out there". She's not kidding! We had a relatively dry, warm and very enjoyable spring, with the trails cleared for hiking and birding. With the recent nor'easters and Summer heat, things are busting out all over. Substantial precipitation created trails crowded with blueberry bushes, sweetpepper bush and mountain laurel; ticks, mosquitoes and deer flies; turtles, snakes and frogs. The Main Pond's water deficit is remedied for the time being, and it is lush with pickerelweed, spatterdock and lily pads. Tree swallows and dragonflies are swooping and buzzing and dipping in the thick humid air.

The prothonotary warblers came on April 17th, and several pairs fledged successfully. The bluebirds are working on their final brood in the cove nestbox and phoebes, orioles and flycatchers abound (look out, bugs!).

South Jersey took quite a pounding with the recent storms. The Delaware River flooded Trenton and parts of Lambertville, New Hope and other communities that lie within it's reach. We were fortunate and only experienced our usual Unexpected Road River, whereby after a heavy rain, the sandy road briefly turns into what resembles a creekbed with a modest flow.

But the last 100 yards of the driveway were perfect, thanks to Bob Bevalacqua. Bob is the Chairman of the Wenonah Environmental Commission (*TBD April 2006*). We worked with Wenonah to educate residents

By Sarah Summerville

about their wonderful new beaver neighbors. Bob, who works for a local paving company, showed up with dozers and dirt to grade the road and fill in our world-famous "driveway lakes". Now, even after these recent powerful rainstorms, the Refuge driveway is a smooth, dry ride!

Speaking of Rides . . .

In April, I was invited give our Unexpected Wildlife Refuge slide show to Beavers: Wetlands & Wildlife's annual meeting in Herkimer, NY. I arrived early the day of the meeting and stayed with Owen and Sharon Brown at their home in Dolgeville. They were very gracious hosts, and introduced me to Houdini, the beaver who was trapped in an Erie Canal Lock (*TBD January 2006*) as well as their resident beaver family who lives in a beautiful beaver-created wetland (*see cover*).

On the second day of our visit, cold wet weather moved in, so we watched old film footage of two Beaver Women: Dorothy Richards and Hope Sawyer Buyukmihci. We were joined by new Beaver Defender Len Flynn, from Morganville, NJ, and we watched a very informative DVD on how to make and install a flow device for beaver dams and culverts. This new DVD, created by and available from B:W&W, also has information on the history of the beaver, and a brief history of Dorothy Richards.

In the mid 1940's, Dorothy Richards, with her husband Al, began a beaver sanctuary called Beaversprite in Dolgeville, NY. Dorothy, with the help of Hope, wrote *Beaversprite, My Years Building an Animal Sanctuary*, one of the first books Hope had me read after coming to Unexpected Wildlife Refuge. I was fascinated by what was described in the book, with beavers living in the

house and swimming at the "Y". All in all, it was a wonderful trip, but of course it wasn't long enough.

Speaking of "long enough" . . .

While sitting in the Butterfly Garden, I watched the flaming orange daylilies sway in the evening breeze. It was the last day of Spring. I was again remembering Hope, who passed away five years ago that day. It was warm that day, too, and I remember listening to the insects busy with their work unaware of our loss and sorrow.

I am always thankful for the time I had with Hope, but I always think that it wasn't long enough. Although I know she was ready, I certainly wasn't. Selfishly, I wanted more time.

I only knew Hope for a year, but others knew the fiery woman who lead hikes like a gazelle and worked volunteers to exhaustion (they would happily return to work again another day). I did not see the woman who bravely testified against trapping next to her husband, Cavit, amid boos, hisses and threats from hunters only to return home and battle them on Refuge land.

Hope told me that when she was a child, she was terrified of snakes until her father introduced her to a hognose snake and taught her all about him. She said she was never afraid of snakes again. She embraced that power of knowledge and harnessed it to teach others about compassion and kindness towards animals. Her accomplishments in this endeavor alone would fill this issue of *The Beaver Defenders*.

When I met Hope she was unable to enjoy the far reaches of her Refuge; her secret places with little surprises. Her upside down bucket "seats" are still distributed throughout the property where she left them waiting for her next visit. Hope had an endless curiosity that she never denied. Whenever I came over to the cabin, she always had a book, or a map, or a magnifying glass, or a pair of binoculars in one hand. Her Refuge became the arm's length around her, as fascinating to her as the

larger Refuge. Disregarding her pain, she was examining bugs, beetles and butterflies with attention to minute details. She always found joy and delight in the most common creature.

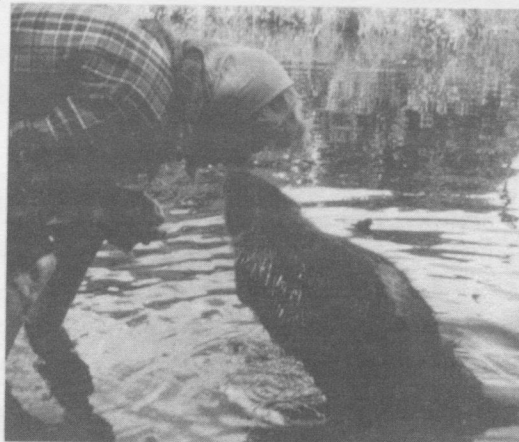
Her humor was dry. Her laughter, quiet, often no more than her brilliant smile and a little shoulder movement. Her sayings and phrases were priceless. Who can forget her call to her volunteer army? "Carry On!" Or her signature method of moving seamlessly from one topic of conversation to another? "Speaking of....." even though for life of me, I couldn't remember anyone mentioning this new topic. If you stole her next move on the Scrabble board you got "Hey, you took my place!" as if you had no right to do this terrible thing to her (even though you know she'd do it to you in a heartbeat). Everyday, regardless of the weather brought, "Isn't it a beautiful day?" Now how can you argue with that?

The Hope I knew still had a fire, a twinkle in her eye. She was still fighting, but this time it was a battle with the chronic pain of shingles. She accepted her recent frailty and age with grace, dignity and a sense of humor. A photographer about to snap her picture was politely asked to relocate the cane leaning against her chair, as it

was not hers. Some old lady had forgotten to take it with her. She came out of the bathroom laughing one evening during our heated Scrabble wars. She commented that if she shrunk any more we would just *have* to lower that mirror.

One cool colorful October evening in 2000, she asked if I would take her out to see Ernest, one of the beavers that I had recently befriended. We drove to Squirrel

Haven and then slowly and carefully walked 400 feet of the Long Boardwalk to the waiting beaver at the feeding spot. Gently, perched on a camp stool, Hope held out an apple slice to Ernest, who gratefully accepted it. We sat silently, listening to the little beaver eat and the sounds of the pungent swamp at dusk. Slowly Hope stood and turned to go home and said to no one in particular, "That's good."



Hope and Chopper touch

Good news from Len & the Beavers in Morganville, NJ!

Hello Beaver friends:

Today, Wildlife Control Officer Kim Tinnes visited to examine and photograph the current state of the beaver pond and the water level. Her pictures documented water levels that were clearly far lower than those seen at her earlier visit before the leveler was installed. Her inspection would support the view that neighbors' continuing complaints about the beavers were unjustified.

Despite the need for further adjustment of the pipe (recent rains had caused the pipe to float up higher in the dam) that showed the need to use metal posts to anchor the pipe, it was obvious that the leveler was definitely reducing the water level. I told her posts would be installed as the final adjustment of the leveler was made.

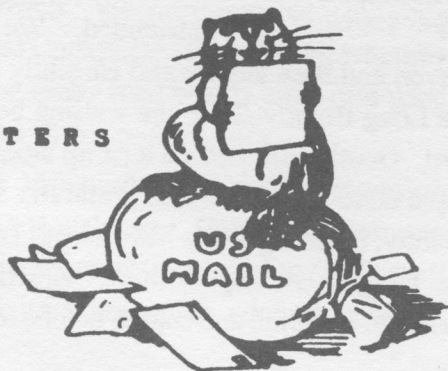
She observed little apparent beaver activity and concluded the creatures were not active right now and may not even be present. In particular, she saw no signs that the beavers took any steps to fix damage to the main dam which had overflowed from recent rains. I did not contest this perception nor did I volunteer that I had observed and photographed both beavers working on another part of the dam LAST NIGHT.

Tinnes concluded the 25 minute inspection with her judgement that the status quo should prevail for now. Hooray!

For the Beavers,

Len Flynn

LETTERS



Dear Sarah,

I am a retired Philadelphia school librarian. This year I've been substitute teaching. If possible I try to include an animal related lesson.

Today I used the poem by Beverly Armstrong that you published in your last newsletter. After reading it to the third graders, we discussed it. Most agreed that wild animals deserve to be free, but a few thought it was just fine to cage them. I then asked them to put their thoughts on paper.

I decided you would enjoy seeing what they wrote. It was a good lesson.

I've supported Unexpected Wildlife Refuge for many years and even had a memorable visit with Hope meeting her beaver buddies.

Continue your good work. I'm so glad you're there to watch over this enchanted place.

Sincerely,

Judy H.

Don't forget that July is membership renewal month! Thanks so much to all of you who remembered to send in your dues. Your \$20 membership helps cover the cost of printing and mailing this newsletter.

Unexpected Wildlife Refuge protects habitat for wildlife and protects wildlife from being hunted, harassed or killed. We work hard to fulfill our mission of buying land for preservation and passive recreation and educating the public about the humane and respectful treatment of all life. This does not come without expenses! Land costs, taxes, insurance and maintenance can get very expensive. Hey, if this was easy, everyone would be doing it!

Please consider making an additional financial contribution with your renewal and help make a world of difference.

Emmitsburg Takes Heat for Killing Beavers
Ingrid Mezo, Gazette.net, June 15, 2006

Emmitsburg town officials have taken heat in the past two weeks over a controversy in which they hired a trapper to kill beavers in Rainbow Lake.

Town staff said they hired the trapper to kill the beavers because they were contributing to algae buildup in the lake, a reservoir from which the town draws some of its water.

The trapper killed two beavers, and town officials believe three remain, Mayor James Hoover said.

But according to Sharon Brown, a biologist at Beavers: Wetlands & Wildlife, a national beaver advocacy organization in Dolgeville, N.Y., beavers eat algae.

"In warm weather, the majority of their diet would be these leafy plants, an aquatic diet [of] dandelions, clover, they eat algae actually," Brown said.

"Beavers are what's called a keystone species because they create the habitat that other species require to survive," she said. "But they also have the huge benefit of creating and restoring wetlands, which are a huge benefit to our ecosystem. When you take out beavers, you're disrupting ecosystems, so it's much better if you can co-exist and have all those benefits."

Brown said beavers can also help to moderate droughts.

"Beaver wetlands slow the flow of water," Brown said. "They have the great effect of keeping water on the land and preventing flood damage when you have severe weather conditions."

But Robert Colona, Furbearer Project Leader at the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and self-labeled "beaver expert for the state," said the town is well within its rights to trap the beavers. "In the end, the landowner has the right to protect their property," Colona said.

Colona disagreed with Brown that removing the beavers from Rainbow Lake would disrupt the ecosystem.

"That's a large ecosystem. It's not just that lake; it's the whole watershed," Colona said.

In addition, Colona said the state has a law against relocating beavers. "It would be illegal, unless we wrote a special permit," Colona said.

However, Brown said that trapping beavers in one area would cause their population to rise in a neighboring area. Those additional beavers could then re-locate to Rainbow Lake.

"It's true that beavers will have larger litters when they're

trapping," Brown said. "Like a lot of species, they respond to the availability of food and territory. ... They are unique in that they will control their own populations to a certain extent. They repel foreign beavers and often need 1/2 mile [of territory]. ... We feel it's better to correct whatever specific problems beavers create because if you remove them, others are likely to take their place. That's what the studies have shown."

In addition, Brown said the traps used for beaver can in some cases cause them to suffer excruciating pain for hours, even days, before they die.

"They did a study in [upstate] New York, and more than half did not have the fast death [Conibear] traps were designed for," she said. "The beaver have to enter in the right position, at the right speed for the head to enter the trap to produce a quick death."

If another part of the beaver enters the trap, the animal could struggle for hours or days before it drowned, she said. Or, the beaver could chew off a limb, and suffer from an infection before it died.

Brown said the tree damage beavers cause could be easily addressed by placing wire fencing around the trees, or a wire fence at the water's edge.

Hoover said on Friday that town officials would not bring up the issue again, if at all, until the fall.

Beaver season is Dec.1 through March, Hoover said, so trapping by anyone other than a state-licensed trapper would be illegal.

"We've already stopped," Hoover said. "We weren't invoiced until sometime in April, but the last trapped beaver was done in March."

"What will happen in the fall is we'll have staff come back with the options, trapping to kill, trapping to relocate, and we'll go from there," Hoover said. "So we'll open all those options, and see what happens."

Commissioner Chris Staiger said, "somebody would have to give [him] a really convincing reason to eradicate them."

"I'm not convinced that the beavers are contributing in any substantive way to the nutrient problem," Staiger said. "Typically, this type of problem has much more to do with agricultural runoff, and I have to see some reason to really kill these beavers. I can't see three or five of them [causing that kind of algae buildup]."

But Staiger pointed out that the town had done nothing illegal. "It may be distasteful, but it is not illegal."

From the Record Searchlight, May 14, 2006

By Dylan Darling

For more than 20 years, a beaver pond has been a happy backyard secret for a cluster of homes on Salmon Creek off Old Alturas Road in east Redding. That changed this winter.

The beaver dam that formed the pond was blown out during high water brought by the winter's unremitting rain. Now where there once was a deep pond — big enough for a small rowboat — there is murky, shallow water.

Sitting in the middle of the dwindling pond is the den, which still houses three or four beavers. The beavers haven't been busy rebuilding the dam and, with the heat of summer quickly returning, people who live around the pond are worried about the fate of the pond and the beavers.

"I don't want to see anything suffer," said Norman Hargett, who has a clear view of the beaver den from his living room window. "Those animals mean everything to us out here."

So, what should be done, and who should do it?

Hargett, who has lived by Salmon Creek for 33 years, said the state Department of Fish and Game (DFG) should repair the dam. DFG officials say if the beavers still want the pond, they'll rebuild the dam.

Worried about the situation, Hargett called DFG on May 4 to tell them about the pond. He said it's the agency's job to protect wildlife, so it should do something to help the beavers. That could mean putting logs in the creek to re-form the dam and trucking in tanker loads of water, he said. "Sometimes mankind has to come in and help wildlife," Hargett said. He got a message back from DFG the same day he called.

"The beaver situation sounds pretty grim," Scott Hill, a DFG wildlife biologist, said in the message. "Unfortunately, this is probably one of those things where we let nature take its course."

Beaver dams often are blown out during the winter, and the situation doesn't put the animals in peril, said Pete Figura, another DFG wildlife biologist.

"Normally beavers are tenacious little guys, and if they want to stay in the area, they will rebuild quickly," he said. "Dams kind of come and go."

Craig Martz, DFG staff environmental scientist, said the beavers might be looking to build on another spot of the creek because of a better supply of trees for food and building material. If that's the case, then the pond could once again become a free-flowing part of the stream. Beaver dams "are not always a permanent fixture," Martz said.

Before the beaver dam was constructed in the early 1980s, the stretch of Salmon Creek that passes behind the home Hargett shared with his parents would go almost dry each summer.

Since the beavers built the dam, the pond has become a part of the neighborhood. Residents have put benches or picnic tables on its shores to create spots to watch not only the beavers, but also the flocks of waterfowl the pond attracted. One neighbor even built a dock to walk out on

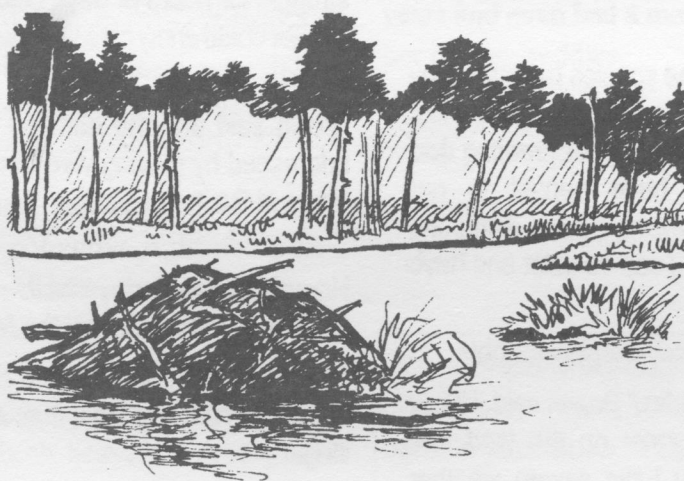
and feed the birds.

This winter's heavy flows not only broke through the dam but also pulled the dock off its concrete moorings and pushed it down stream. It now sits tangled in creekside bushes about 30 feet from where the dam was.

Most beaver dam problems are opposite of those at Salmon Creek, Martz said. People usually want to get rid of beaver dams, not rebuild them, he said.

One such unwanted dam was on the spillway of the dam holding back Mary Lake several years ago. "The city would take it out by day, and the beavers would rebuild it at night," he said.

With the beavers at the Salmon Creek pond not burning any midnight oil to rebuild their lost dam, Brenda LaManna, who owns the property where the pond sits,



said she and other neighbors have been trying to help rebuild it themselves.

Rocks, branches, concrete rubble, a tarp and more have been stacked where the dam broke in an attempt to hold the water back, but the makeshift, man-made dam hasn't held as well as the sticks, stones and mud that had been formed by the beavers.

"They are pretty good contractors, those beavers," LaManna said. She said she thinks mesh and pea gravel should be used to rebuild the dam and preserve the pond. Until this year, the pond has been a fixture down the hill from her house, with the water level changing only slightly through the year. "It's been here 13 years and it never changed more than two or three feet," LaManna said.

But before such work is done, Martz said, people would need to notify DFG of their plans. There's a fee for notifying DFG of the projects that could alter streambeds, starting at \$200 for projects that cost less than \$5,000. Depending on how much a project alters a stream, the DFG may require a special agreement, he said.

Before the agreement is made, DFG officials will inspect the proposed project, evaluate it and recommend changes, he said. The notification and agreement process can take up to 90 days.

With beaver dams, Martz said, DFG might recommend that people wait for the beavers to rebuild the dam themselves.

"Sometimes that is the best thing to do," he said. "When human beings try to intervene and lend Mother Nature a helping hand, it can cause more problems then it solves."

How Did You Come to the Beavers?

It was about 1 ½ decades ago that I found the book *Cats, Chocolate, Clowns, and other amusing, interesting and useful subjects covered by newsletters*.

Copyrighted in 1982 by Greg Mitchell, the 189-page book covered everything from Barbie, beavers, beer cans carousels, the flat earth, Johnny Appleseed, marbles, Mother Goose, Elvis Presly, puzzles, Sherlock Holmes, Smokey the Bear, superstitions, the Titanic and UFOs to Unicorns, werewolves and wildmills.

Hope Buyukmihci and *The Beaver Defenders* are on pages 110, 111 and the address is given on page 178. There is even a photo of her with two baby beavers.

It was in *The Beaver Defenders* that I learned about Owen and Sharon Brown's *Beaversprite* and Sherri Tippi's *Wildlife 2000*.

Two of my six daughters have been with me to feed the beavers with Hope and see the beavers at the Browns.

Send your beaver story to Sarah Summerville. Perhaps this could become a regular series of articles.

The latest story I know about is of Jim Mays. He and I used to work together for GM and Delphi in the Dayton, Ohio area.

Shortly after I bought 52 acres near Kentucky's Lake Cumberland, Jim bought 300 acres near Flemingburg. And while I know about a cornstalk dam and lodge six miles from my place, beavers have moved right onto Jim's place. So I got him a gift subscription to all three beaver papers. Hopefully, his interest in beavers will continue.

- Bill Ingram

The interview with Hope found in the above mentioned issue of Cats, Chocolate, Clowns... is on page 13.



Ken Weber: From Pond to Meadow to Forest
Providence Journal, April 22, 2006

In other springs, I could sit on this shore and watch wood ducks and great blue herons, kingfishers and bluebirds and tree swallows. On really good mornings -- lucky mornings -- otters would be busy out there, and perhaps deer and beavers.

No longer. Places change, sometimes gradually, sometimes abruptly. This beaver pond -- make that this former beaver pond -- is in the early stages of another transition. Unless the beavers return, unless they repair their dam and refill the pond, the wildlife activity will continue changing.

It was about 25 or 30 years ago when the beavers arrived and created, for the second time, a pond in the low-lying woods. Until then, the place had been quiet and virtually deserted for decades, ever since an earlier pond had been allowed to drain down to a meandering stream.

Long before the beavers came, a sawmill had stood along the stream, a mill powered by water stored behind a stone-and-earthen dam. When the mill was dismantled, the center of the dam was removed, to allow the stream to flow freely once more, but both ends of the dam remained in place. That made it easy for beavers, perhaps searching for a new home, to again dam up the stream. As the beavers' new pond filled, hundreds of trees that had taken root since the draining of the millpond were flooded; they eventually died, leaving a forest of skeletons.

That's what the pond looked like the first time I visited, more than a dozen years ago: about 20 acres of shallow water and dead trees, and a great many birds. Especially in spring. The trees had been dead long enough for woodpeckers to have drilled holes in many of them, creating nesting places for tree swallows and bluebirds. The larger trees along the shores were becoming nest sites for herons. I could always count on kingfishers' being around, and it was one of the more reliable places for seeing wood ducks, mallards, geese, and hooded mergansers. The

waterfowl seemed to relish preening and snoozing on the scores of logs scattered throughout the pond.

It was also a good spot for watching otters. Often, if I arrived early in the morning, I could find otters out there, usually a mother and her two or three youngsters. They would either be hunting fish or playing follow-the-leader among the logs. Frequently, they, like the ducks, climbed onto the logs, either to eat their fish or to loaf. I remember seeing three otters stretch out and nap in the sunshine, two of them using the third as a pillow.

Deer and the beavers -- which had built their lodge all the way across the pond from the dam -- were seen less often in daylight, although they sometimes showed up. I also saw mink and a pair of coyotes at the pond, and found the tracks of fishers and raccoons. There were owls and hawks and frogs and turtles and snakes and dragonflies, too. Few places draw as much wildlife as a beaver pond.

By last spring, though, things had changed. The place was a jumble of logs, dead trees, puddles, and mud. A huge hole in the dam had allowed most of the water to escape. Tree swallows still swirled overhead, and one kingfisher remained, but the aura of the place, the sense of wildness, was shattered. Just as active beaver ponds exude life, empty beaver ponds seem desolate and even ugly.

The cynic in me assumed that somebody had deliberately breached the dam. I've seen that too often to think otherwise. Sure, there are times when beavers and their dams cause problems and should be removed, but in other cases dams are wrecked simply as someone's idea of fun. This time, though, the breaching had apparently been caused by a large tree's blowing down. When its roots pulled up, they ripped out

part of the old earthen dam.

The beavers had not tried to repair the dam, but I thought that would happen in time. It has not. Now, more than a year later, it is obvious that the beavers are gone. The stream still trickles but there is no pond. Just logs and dead trees and puddles, and a wide variety of emerging new plants. Up north,



when beaver ponds are abandoned, the resulting expanses are referred to as moose meadows, because moose like to browse on the new vegetation. We don't have many moose here, but this place will similarly fill up with grasses and sedges and bushes before finally returning to forest.

That time is a long way off; the transition is just starting. Some of the pond wildlife is still around. Swallows continue squabbling over hollow trees, and frogs and turtles still bask on logs. One pair of herons appears to be remodeling an old nest, and mallards are still dabbling in pools of muddy water. Deer undoubtedly still come by at night, and there are plenty of raccoon tracks in the mud.



But, with the beavers gone, change is inevitable. Already, the otters and wood ducks have moved on. The turtles and frogs will decrease as the puddles dry up. There will be some compensating wildlife when the old pond becomes a meadow, and some of it is sure to be interesting. But, to my thinking, there won't be enough wildlife. Not nearly enough.

Boycott Alaska and Canada? Not the Sierra Club!

In Alaska they are shooting wolves from helicopters so that hunters will have a better shot at getting that trophy elk or moose. Canada has slaughtered over 300,000 baby seals so that someone with more money than sense can wear a dead animal around town. Animal rights groups and environmentally sensitive individuals have been encouraging everyone to boycott Alaska's tourism market and Canadian products until these acts of violence and murder stop.

In the May/June 2006 issue of *Sierra* magazine, I counted 17 trips to Alaska and Canada for your hiking, biking and camping pleasure. I guess someone forgot to tell the Sierra Club about all those dead animals up there.

They call that sport?

Posted by the Asbury Park Press on 05/27/06

It's hard to decide what was more disturbing about the video shown by animal rights activists this week in which bowhunters kicked and prodded pheasants to make them take flight before firing their arrows at nearly point-blank range: The video itself, in which hunters exchanged high-fives after watching the limp birds fall to earth, or the response to the video from Larry Herrighty, chief of the Bureau of Wildlife Management in the state Department of Environmental Protection.

"I don't see anything illegal in the video that I saw," Herrighty said.

If it wasn't illegal, it should be. It was barbaric.

The hunters apparently transported the pheasants to a site in Sussex County, releasing them one at a time. As the hunters stood in a row, bows at the ready, one of them would either poke or kick the pheasant to get it off the ground.

Before the birds were even 10 feet in the air, the hunters would unleash a fusillade of arrows. There's more sport involved in picking off plastic ducks at an amusement park.

The vice president of the United Bowhunters of New Jersey, which apparently sponsored the event, defended the hunters' actions. "Whether they flushed those birds by shaking or kicking at a bush, or used a dog, they are both accepted methods," said Matt Trembow.

They may be acceptable to bowhunters. But they violate any civilized standard of behavior.

The state Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals says it will investigate the incident. Stuart Chaifetz, director of the Animal Protection PAC, hopes the state will prosecute the case. If officials find there are no grounds for doing so, lawmakers must draft legislation that will provide an appropriate punishment for yahoos who engage in such cowardly, inhumane conduct.

"I wanted you to see what real courage is, instead of getting the idea that courage is a man with a gun in his hand. It's when you know you're licked before you begin, but you begin anyway and you see it through no matter what."

- Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*

When the bulldozers come

Posted on Fri, May, 26, 2006, Philadelphia Inquirer

By Linda Bonvie

*I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.*

So goes the oft-quoted beginning of New Jersey poet Joyce Kilmer's "Trees." I think that I shall never see a church as lovely as a tree. Particularly the one just erected on a neighboring property where a small forest used to be.

Here's the church, the flying-saucer-shaped new home of St. Theresa's, a parish with more parishioners than parking spaces. And here were stately pines, cedars and oaks that prospered in the 20-acre wood.

*A tree whose hungry mouth is pressed
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast*

It had been with a heavy heart that I resigned myself to the ravishing of this lovely woodland, much of it now stripped to dirt. But the work, as it turned out, wasn't quite finished. On a perfect, blue-sky morning less than a week after Arbor Day, I awakened to sawing and crashing. Devastation: Phase II had begun, to make way for additional parking and a Sunday school.

A giant machine, containing a saw inside its jaws, was plowing its way toward my part of the fence. Some of the trees in its path were simply snatched like sticks. Others swayed to the side, as if trying to escape.

*A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray*

I stood at the fence and waved my arms at the driver. He saw me and stopped. He slid out of his cab and bent down to move a turtle away from his big yellow machine.

He walked over and sighed. He had seen this before. People standing at fences, waving their arms, suddenly realizing the view from their backyard had turned from forest to open air.

"I thought you were finished here. What about the 50-foot buffer?" I shouted at him. "This space is your buffer," he explained. The air qualified. He told me about another job, in nearby Barnegat, where a woman had chained herself to a tree.

*A tree that may in Summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair*

"The Fire Department cut her free, and she was arrested. And the sad thing is now that lady has a criminal record, and I continued right on with my work. When the bulldozers come, it's too late."

During the lull in the noise, a lone bird started singing. One of the tall pines still standing right in front of his machine swayed slightly in the breeze.

*Upon whose bosom snow has lain,
Who intimately lives with rain*

This tree had no say-so in its fate. In his notable 1971 essay, "Should Trees Have Standing? Toward Legal Rights for Natural Objects," professor and lawyer Christopher Stone proposed that guardians should be allowed to speak for the "voiceless" natural elements in the world. Legal rights, he noted, already are conferred on numerous inanimate objects, such as corporations and even ships.

Furthering that thought, in a unique dissent in the Supreme Court decision of *Sierra Club v. Morton*, Justice William O. Douglas argued for "the conferral of standing upon environmental objects to sue for their own preservation."

But such eloquent pleadings were no match for the simple observation: "When the bulldozers come, it's too late."

By this time, two more men had arrived. One brought a site map, which he unrolled on top of the fence. Everything was in order, he assured me. There was nothing left to do or say. When the bulldozers come, it's too late.

The operator of the big machine climbed back into it to finish his job. The interruption had been but a brief reprieve for the tall pines. For a few moments more they had been allowed to stand, reaching closer to the heavens than the circular church for which they were about to be sacrificed.

As I walked away, all I could think of was the conclusion reached by the poet who was himself cut down in the prime of his life during World War I:

*Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.*

Linda Bonvie is a freelance writer and Web designer and writes from Little Egg Harbor Township, N.J.



The energy crisis is here

By ANN McFEATTERS, May 19, 2006

The uh-oh letter came in a plain white envelope, no indication of the bolt of lightning inside.

It was from the electric company, announcing that the "average" residential customer's bill will increase 41 percent, meaning about \$800 more a year. I am not average. My bill will go up about \$1,500 a year, if I use no air conditioning at all this summer.

The letter explained that the "prices for the fuels used to generate electricity (coal, oil and natural gas) have all increased substantially in the past few years." Another increase is likely a year from now.

The company (motto: "We're connected to you by more than power lines") advises that the best thing to do is conserve energy in such ways as not wasting hot water, keeping the thermostat low in the winter and high in the summer, and turning off lights when leaving a room.

A new poll by The Washington Post and ABC News has found that Americans are less pessimistic this month about gas prices than in April, when 70 percent said fueling their cars was causing financial hardship. Now, 57 percent say that is the case, even though paying \$3 for a gallon of gas has become routine for many Americans. Possibly, knowing that Europeans pay \$5 a gallon makes us feel a little guilty about complaining.

The lesson for me is that we are never in our lifetime going to see cheap energy again, and, painful though it will be, we will get used to it. We have no choice because our country has no energy policy because its politicians don't realize we're in a full-fledged energy crisis.

In a brand-new development, we now compete with millions of people in China for finite fuels, and the tradeoffs in our foreign policy we are going to make will be galling. (Note: Libya, which blew Pan Am 103 out of the skies- the deadliest terrorist attack on Americans until 9/11, is now our friend. Prediction: Oil-rich countries with anti-democratic dictators will be increasingly tolerated.)

It's well and good for President Bush to tell us to end our "addiction to oil," as he did in January, but that is not going to be easy. The electric company's 85 common ways to save electric energy involve much less comfort, spending money on new equipment, hiring contractors or such simple changes t

that many energy-conscious homeowners have already done them. Tell a soccer mom who carpools kids around half the day that she should get rid of her gas-guzzling SUV, and she'll shrug her shoulders helplessly.

Global demand for energy is expected to increase 50 percent in 25 years. America's oil and natural-gas industry, represented by the American Petroleum Institute, says that in the last 13 years its companies have invested \$1 trillion in exploration and new production. That's how it justifies the huge revenues from consumers the industry is accumulating. But how else will it get \$6 trillion to invest in producing more oil and gas by 2030?

The administration's approach to serious energy problems is to throw environmental caution to the winds, relax regulations and let the companies do just about what they please. Congress so far has blocked efforts to end the ban on offshore oil and gas drilling, but sooner or later the ban will end. The stupid idea of giving consumers \$100 gas rebate checks in an age of huge deficits is dead, but it won't be the last silly idea politicians come up with to try to assuage angry voters.

This country needs to develop an environmentally sensitive energy policy, go on an energy-conservation binge by mandating tougher energy-efficiency standards, decrease our dependence on foreign oil instead of increasing it, raise gasoline taxes to promote more research on renewable sources of alternative energy, stop waging war with oil-rich countries, stop giving oil-rich dictators our petrodollars and make hybrid cars more economically viable.

This will not happen in the next two and a half years- Bush has not the time, interest or political capital to push such steps. Basically, the former Texas oilman wants to kick the can down the road, letting oil and gas companies contaminate environmentally sensitive areas by trying to find a little more gas and oil, which will not solve our long-term problem at all.

This is like an out-of-work father just about out of money spending his few remaining dollars on lottery tickets instead of investing in training for a new job.

Meanwhile, as we stagger toward the realization that we are in a full-fledged energy crisis, I am hoping for a cooler-than-normal summer.

(Scripps Howard News Service columnist Ann McFeatters has covered the White House and national politics since 1986. E-mail amcfeatters(at)nationalpress.com.) © Copyright 2005 Capitol Hill Blue

Loving Nature with a Gun

Commentary by Founder and President of Sea Shepherd Conservation Society and Sierra Club National Director Paul Watson (2003-2006)

To what dark depths of immorality is the Sierra Club USA prepared to go to suck up to the "hook and bullet" crowd?

The Sierra Club clearly embraces the slaughter of wild animals proclaiming that 20% of the membership are "hunters or anglers."

The Club hosts a web page showing Club leaders posing with macho smiles of triumph with their slaughtered, bleeding trophy victims. We see them proudly gazing at the cameras with pitiful corpses of elk, deer, antelope, geese, ducks, and fish.

And just to show you that the Sierra Club is an equal opportunity organization when it comes to slaughter – there are women hunters featured like bow hunter Jean Legge of North Dakota. She appears all smiles over a dead deer and proudly states that "hunting is more enjoyable when you have the right equipment." I think the men agree, Jean.

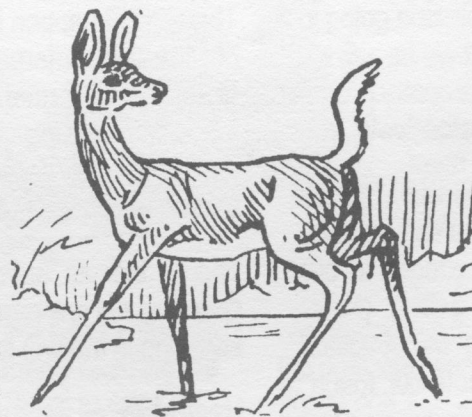
Even in death the animals look nobler than the smirking, cruel clowns posing with their corpses.

It was a goddamn embarrassment to discover that as a National Director of the Sierra Club, no one told me anything about the tens of thousands of dollars we had allocated for "hunter outreach" programs.

Not only are we posting snuff snaps, we are actually spending money to promote the murder of wildlife and enticing more of the sadistic death deviants into joining the Sierra Club. The Club even has an essay contest entitled; Why I Hunt?

I wonder how many Sierra Club members realize that the Club is offering a grand prize of an all expense paid trip for two to the Alaska Sportsman's Lodge. The value of the prize is \$12,200.00.

Hard to believe, but, the Sierra Club is actually spending donated funds to send some sadistic bastard up to Alaska to kill a grizzly or whatever else he stumbles upon. Yep, that's the way to protect nature – shoot it.



I notice this sick little excursion was never brought before the Board of Directors for approval.

Trophy hunters argue that hunting is a natural instinct of man. We come from a hunter-gathering background they say, yet I don't see any acorn or root gathering going on. In fact, I don't think there is a single gathering club in the country. So, if hunting is a natural part of our instincts, then how come gathering isn't?

And there are few predators in nature that would target the biggest and the strongest animals. Humans do so, only because we have devastating weapons of mass wildlife destruction. Targeting the biggest and the strongest is not natural or ecologically sound.

Behind all the chit-chat of conservation and tradition is the plain simple fact that trophy hunters like to kill living things. Many, like Vice President Dick Cheney, like their victims helpless therefore they patronize canned hunts and safaris parks to snuff out defenseless captive animals.

The Sierra Club webpage posts an essay by Rick Bass entitled, Why I hunt? – Stalking wild game in a rugged landscape brings one environmentalist closer to nature. Tell me Rick, how does a gun bring you closer to nature unless you enjoy the sight of red blood splattered on green leaves?

Is a camera not enough? Is it so hard to look at an animal without wanting to kill it or is it only the fact that you kill it that makes you so excited?

Bass has a book promotion on the Sierra Club website where it describes how he went to Alaska to investigate the threats to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. An excerpt describes how "he now pursues game with a primal passion coupled with an environmentalist's conscience, providing nearly all the meat his family consumes. He hoped to kill one caribou and bring home its meat."

If I understand this right, Bass went to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to kill a caribou in order to write about the threats to the caribou. What part of the words "wildlife refuge" did he not understand? The meaning of the word "refuge" is a place of shelter and protection from danger. I guess Bass does not think that caribou need any refuge from his rifle.

And do we really want to promote "primal passion?" I thought this was a term for rapists and serial killers. Aldo Leopold is considered the father of wildlife ecology. In the early part of the 20th Century, he shot a wolf and wrote the following about his experience:

We reached the old wolf in time to watch a fierce green fire dying in her eyes. I realized then, and have known ever since, that there was something new to me in those eyes – something known only to her and to the mountain. I was young then, and full of trigger-itch; I thought that because fewer wolves meant more deer, that no wolves would mean hunters' paradise. But after seeing the green fire die, I sensed that neither the wolf nor the mountain agreed with such a view.

Nor do I, but as a director of the Sierra Club for the last three years, I have encountered a great deal of hostility because I don't hunt or fish. In my life, I have disrupted hunting, and as a child I sabotaged trap lines, releasing animals and destroying the vicious leg-hold traps. But living compassionately with nature is not considered admirable by the Sierra Club. They don't post our essays on vegetarianism or anti-hunting despite the fact that many Sierra Club members are vegetarian and eighty percent of the members do not hunt.

The Sierra Club has decided that nature is best loved with a gun, and bunny huggers need not apply. Apparently, there is little room for compassion and plenty of resources to promote violence, exploitation, and cruelty in the wilderness.

Paul Watson turned in his resignation to the Sierra Club board of directors on April 17, 2006

Leave it to Beavers, from Cats, Chocolate, Clowns, and other amusing, interesting and useful subjects covered by newsletters

Hope Sawyer Buyukmihci observes, nourishes, and protects all sorts of animals and birds that wander into the fields near her home in Newfield, a small town in south New Jersey. Deer, foxes, muskrats, ducks, snow geese and dozens of other creatures pass through each year. She calls the 300 acre property - mostly wild woodland and swamp - the Unexpected Wildlife Refuge. The daughter of a naturalist and bird artist, Edmund Sawyer, Hope started Unexpected to give her own children a chance to experience nature first-hand.

During the first years of refuge-watching, Hope put out a

newsletter called *Good News from Unexpected*. She wrote a book called *Unexpected Treasure*. "In 1970," she recalls, "I decided to concentrate on beavers, about whom people know so little and who desperately need protection." She wrote another book, called *Hour of the Beaver*, and began publishing a 16 page, illustrated quarterly, *The Beaver Defenders*, which now goes out to 400 subscribers in the US and Canada. "They are all nature lovers," says Hope, "and especially interested in beavers, of course."

Some of the articles in *TBD* are reprints from other publications with titles like "Bonkers over Beaver; or Meet Mr. Beaver: Landscape Modifier." Hope's contributions cover week to week happenings at the refuge. She raises sick or orphaned baby beavers (called kits) in her home. The beavers are not relegated to the basement; they have the run of the house. Sometimes when she's not around they drag brooms out of the closet and begin building makeshift dams across doorways. "All during January, February and March we had Candy with us," Hope once wrote, "and although never friendly, she was a joy to be with. Beavers smell good, for one thing, and the rhythmic sound of their gnawing is easy on the ears."

Hope kept one beaver, named Chopper, in the house for two years. "He had a furry face full of childish eagerness," she recalls. That's why "it was hard for those who knew Chopper," Hope explains, "to face the fact that beavers just like him could be trapped and killed to make fur coats." In addition to the large numbers of beavers killed every year for their fur, others are destroyed by people whose land has been flooded because a beaver decided to dam up a nearby stream. Chopper was clubbed to death by a fisherman who claimed the beaver had tried to climb into his boat.

Like many "animal protection" publications, *TBD* seeks to dispel what the editor feels are harmful "myths". In the case of beavers, Hope believes, one has to consider their entire contribution. The dams may occasionally be a nuisance but they help conserve water, control soil erosion and encourage aquatic growth. "Beavers are as much a part of our waterways," Hope contends, "as the water itself."

The new craze for Western wear does not augur well for Hope's furry friends "They are using beaver for the hats," Hope points out, "especially the more expensive ones." She has responded by writing "Away with Traps," which she has labeled the Song of The Beaver Defenders. Members of the group, the song proclaims, would rather take pictures than wear beaver coats..."

A ra made of seal eyelids? By by Michael Nenonen

Pamela Anderson, host of the 2006 Juno Awards, was loudly booed when she dared condemn the cruelty of the annual seal hunt. In contrast, Jann Arden was applauded for saying "My bra is made entirely of seal eyelids." Appearances deceive. The media often portray Anderson as a half-witted bombshell, while Arden is portrayed as an intelligent and sensitive songwriter. When it comes to grasping the ethical significance of animal suffering, however, Anderson is light years ahead of both Arden and her applauders.

The study of ethics has always taken suffering very seriously, but its concern was traditionally focused almost exclusively on human suffering. This began to change in the last quarter of the twentieth century as philosophers began realizing that privileging human suffering above the suffering of animals is as unjustified as privileging the suffering of one group of humans over that of another.

The philosopher who has taken the lead in this movement is Peter Singer, a Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University and a Laureate Professor at the Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics at Melbourne University. Singer's book, *Animal Liberation*, originally published in 1975 with updated editions produced in 1990 and 2002, is required reading for anyone interested in the ethical issues surrounding animal exploitation.

Singer follows a school of ethics known as utilitarianism. The cornerstone of utilitarian ethics is the proposition that "The good of any one individual is of no more importance from the point of view . . . of the universe, than the good of any other." In line with this proposition, utilitarians argue that the study of ethics deals with interests, rather than with rights, because while the existence of rights is debatable, the existence of interests is beyond question.

On the most basic level, it's in every individual's interest to avoid suffering and to experience happiness. In fact, the capacity to suffer and to feel happiness is a prerequisite for having any interests at all. Things that can't suffer or feel happiness, such as plants and bacteria, don't have any interests, whereas things that can, like birds and mammals, do. According to the principle of moral equality, if an individual has interests, then those interests have equal footing with the interests of any other individual. To dismiss an individual's interests solely because of his or her membership in a non-human species is both arbitrary and self-serving. Singer uses the awkward term "speciesism" to refer to this kind of prejudice and discrimination.

The existence of interests has nothing to do with intelligence, because intelligence has nothing to do with our need for happiness or our capacity for suffering. Fools weep as bitterly as the wise, and laugh as loudly. This point is extremely important. By human standards, a pig may have a very low intelligence, but so does a newborn human infant, a severely developmentally-delayed human adult, or a profoundly demented human elder. Indeed, the pig's

intelligence may well be greater than theirs. If we're to dismiss the pig's interests because of the pig's stupidity, then we must also dismiss the infant's, the delayed adult's, and the demented elder's. If we're unwilling to condemn intellectually-challenged humans to slaughterhouses and laboratories, then pigs shouldn't be condemned to these miserable fates either.

Having said this, not all individuals have the same interests. Our interests are defined largely by our capabilities. For instance, it's in my interests to be politically active, but it's not in my cat's interests to do the same. Similarly, it's in an orca's interests to spend its life swimming freely across the open ocean, but not in mine. Despite this, some interests are shared by all individuals. To use the most obvious example, it's not in anyone's interests to be tortured.

Interests can be important or trivial. Our need for food is important; our desire for tasty food is trivial. When weighing competing interests, we must ask whether we're comparing important or trivial interests. If my desire for tasty food competes with your need to avoid torture, your need must take precedence. Unfortunately, in our dealings with animals, we often sacrifice their most important interests in order to satisfy our most trivial interests. For example, human beings can thrive on vegetarian diets, but because of our preference for flesh we condemn billions of animals to the myriad tortures of factory farming.

People are reluctant to acknowledge animals' interests for the same reason that slave-owners are reluctant to seriously consider their slaves' interests. Just as the slave-owner profits from ignoring the interests of his slaves, so too do we profit from ignoring the interests of animals. We're rewarded for eating their flesh and wearing their hides, for experimenting upon their bodies and erecting homes upon their habitats. Because animals can't mobilize to resist us, and because we've been conditioned to think of them solely in terms of their usefulness to us, it's easy to pretend that their abuse is ethically irrelevant.

It's hard to think of a single speciesist argument that Singer doesn't successfully dismantle in *Animal Liberation*. The most common argument is one flesh-eaters use to defend their habit. It says that since animals eat one another, it must be "natural" for humans to do the same. Singer points out that animals rarely have a choice about what they have for dinner, whereas many humans do, and that humans are capable of ethical reasoning, whereas animals aren't. Humans therefore have ethical obligations towards animals that animals don't have towards each other or towards us.

Unfortunately, speciesists rarely examine the logical foundations of their prejudices. More often, when confronted with the significance of animal suffering, they simply make jokes at animals' expense. Speciesist humour, such as Arden's comment, serves the same social function as racist humour, and is just as deplorable. Someone deserved to be booed at the Junos, but it wasn't Pamela Anderson.

The Beaver Defenders Membership Application

Name: _____
Email: _____
Address: _____
Phone/fax: _____

Membership/subscription is \$20 annually, **due each July**. Please make checks payable to Unexpected Wildlife Refuge. All contributions are tax deductible. The amount of your donation in excess of membership dues will be considered a donation unless otherwise specified. **THANK YOU!**

Mail to: Beaver Defenders
PO BOX 765, Newfield, NJ 08344

In the Store!

(Please include an additional \$3 for shipping and handling of merchandise orders)

Books: Hoofmarks (by Hope Buyukmihci)	\$10.00
Beaversprite, My Years Building an Animal Sanctuary (by Dorothy Richards and Hope Buyukmihci).	\$15.00
The Best of Beaver Defenders	\$ 5.00
T-shirts: Hunter green, on the front - our logo; on the back - I support the Unexpected (with charming beaver).	\$15.00
Mug: Light brown mug with green logo, very tasteful	\$ 5.00
Posters: Trapped beaver and baby	\$ 1.00
Beavers turn wilderness into happiness	\$ 1.00 (colorable!)
Cards: 12 custom beaver block prints created by fifth graders with poems written by Beaver Defenders, 24 pack, fit legal envelopes . . .	\$ 4.00
Sheet Music: Away with Traps, Song of the Beaver Defenders . . .	\$ 1.00
We Love You, Little Beaver	\$ 1.00

Educational Materials free with a self-addressed stamped envelope.

- ▶ Unexpected Wildlife Refuge, Home of the Beaver Defenders
- ▶ What Beavers do for Waterways
- ▶ Beaver Problems and Solutions
- ▶ Species found at the Refuge
- ▶ Coloring sheets (beaver scenes Hope Sawyer Buyukmihci)
- ▶ They All Call it Home
- ▶ Slandered Do-gooders (snake information)
- ▶ The Square of Flesh
- ▶ Chopper, in Memoriam
- ▶ Intruder in a Cageless Zoo (by Ferris Weddle)

The Beaver Defenders is published quarterly by the **Unexpected Wildlife Refuge, Inc.**, a non-profit organization created in 1961 to provide an inviolate sanctuary for wild animals, to study wild animals in relation to humans and to promote humane treatment of animals and environmental protection.



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