Unexpected Wildlife Refuge

Unexpected Wildlife Refuge began in 1961 as the home of Cavit and Hope Sawyer Buyukmihci who dedicated their land to habitat preservation so that the unique Pine Barrens native wildlife and habitat could thrive.
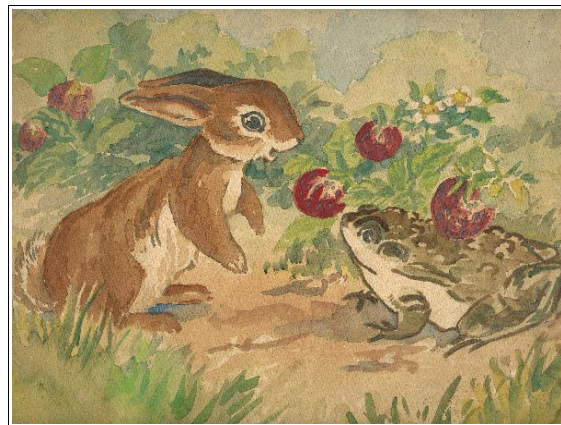
Today, we are a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization supported entirely by private donations. The Refuge continues to be an inviolate sanctuary for wildlife and we support the promotion of humane education. The original 85 acres purchased by the Buyukmihcis have grown to 767 acres of swamps, bogs, forests, fields and lakes that stretch over Gloucester and Atlantic counties, providing an extensive habitat for animal and plant species indigenous to the southern New Jersey Pinelands region.

The Refuge has ten miles of walking trails which pass through wetlands habitat, fields, forests and past the Refuge's active beaver lodges.

Hope Sawyer Buyukmihci

Hope, co-founder of Unexpected, was an impassioned naturalist, artist and writer with three published books. She spent her life on the Refuge, studying, photographing and painting the resident animals and plants. Prints of her watercolor portraits, like the delightful rabbit and toad print shown here, are available via our Web site.

Visit and Support the Refuge

Visits and tours are by appointment. We are here every day for hikers, nature-watchers, bird enthusiasts, artists, photographers and others. Call or E-mail us with a date and time to schedule your visit. We also host events throughout the year. Follow us on Facebook or our Web site to see wildlife photos, read updates and find out more about events at the Refuge.

We depend on our supporters. Without them, this sanctuary would not exist. We have many ways you can help, listed on our Web site and Facebook page.

For wildlife everywhere – the Trustees and staff at Unexpected Wildlife Refuge.