

# NEWSLETTER

*Fall 2024 Issue*



*Woodland Sunflower (Helianthus decapetalus) along road in WISP. Photograph by Gifford Lewis.*

The changing colors of Fall is certainly beginning along the River. We have enjoyed a warm and wonderful growing season this summer. The sky was frequently painted with colorful spectacular sunrises and sunsets. The perennial plants throughout the Nature Center grounds were just as spectacular thanks to the bountiful rains we also received.

In Minna's Fall article, *Flowers Seen Along the Roadside*, she reminds us that in each season there are hidden gems of color and bloom. While the abundance of color may be less, the continuation of their livelihood is just as important. The same can be said for many of our favorite birds that stay with us after the initial migration takes place throughout the winter.

Perhaps her article is more than just a reminder of the elements of nature that persevere throughout all seasons. Perhaps she is reminding all of us that while change may take place in our lives, it is our job to persevere and see the positive in each day we are given.

This Fall we are pleased to once again host our annual Fall Festival on Saturday, October 12<sup>th</sup>, at the Nature Center. We hope you and your loved ones will join us for a fun-filled day of games, delicious treats, music, and crafts at the Nature Center.

I hope you will embrace the changing of the seasons and find opportunities in your own lives to promote kindness, peace, and love toward others and our environment.

Robin Colello-Poplaski  
*Board President*  
*Friends of the Nature Center*

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**The Minna Anthony Common Series**

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## Flowers Seen Along Roadside

**November is not barren month it's pictured**

**by Minna Anthony Common**

**November 19, 1932**

*Reprinted with permission from the  
Watertown Daily Times.*

Even in chilly November the country road calls to those who love the open. At this time wild flowers cannot be picked anywhere and everywhere, but only in chosen places. Birds do not hide in every tree and bush but must be sought in favorite haunts. Yet, withal, November is not the barren month it is apt to be pictured. It may not flaunt its glories like October, nor hide beneath a blanket of snow like December, but it does show some beauty along the open road even though in very small portions.

It is true the bare branches of the trees swish in the wind, but as recompense how clearly now can the beautiful architecture of the tree be seen. The sparrows on the ridgepoles do look cold and unhappy, but that is because they do not belong here anyway. Our native larks, pipits, goldfinches, chickadees, and tree swallows dance about over the fields or pick weed seeds from the ground as happy as ever. What do they care for November? Such of our birds as do not enjoy cool weather have gone south; the ones that stay here like winter as well as the children do.

What flowers are likely to be in bloom in November? At first thought the answer would probably be, "None." The sure way to know - and to be surprised - is to walk along a country road to see what can be found. Aster plants that have been broken down by one means or another have

put forth a few stunted sprays of bloom. One or two flowers will be all that the plant can boast, but these will be as perfect and bright colored as were September's blooms. A dandelion under some leaves and close to the ground has hidden a gorgeous yellow disk much more noticeable now than in spring because so rare. Chickweed, yarrow, red clover, herb Robert, silvery cinqfoil, everlasting, and butter and eggs are almost sure to be found.

If the road crosses over a creek flowing over lime stone and with fissured banks, then there will be harebells, loveliest and most delicate of wild flowers, whether seen in June or November. If it climbs a hill and crosses a stretch of sour soil, then there may be fringed gentians. If it skirts a swamp of rich muckland, ladies' tresses may betray their presence by their delightful fragrance. Pale yellow evening primrose and light pink-purple self-heal are never through blooming until zero weather is here to stay. Mustard and ragweed, two well known pests, are also hard to discourage. It is interesting to see how varied a collection of blooms can be made along a country roadside in the so-called bleakest month.

Woodchucks have gone into their holes for the winter, since they do not like cool weather; squirrels are scurrying about gathering the last of their store of nuts to keep them through the long, cold season ahead; chipmunks are laying up their supply also; butterflies of the species that hibernate are searching to find just the right place to spend the winter; "wooly bear" caterpillars are forever crossing the road; the frogs are piping a few last notes; and rabbits alone seem to be undisturbed by thoughts of the future. They scurry to shelter from the side of the road much the same as in summer.

The country roadsides in November do not seem to be as cheerless as they are commonly painted, even though they are not exactly the same as in summer. ■

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## From the Director

Dear Nature Center Community,

The crispness in the air is just what some of us yearn for all year – a time to prepare for the cold days ahead, a time to sit back and watch the landscape erupt into color, a time to gather with family and friends, a time to reflect. The summer was nothing short of wonderful, with the relaunch of our beloved Voyageur Canoe headlining our water programs this year. We had a few members take advantage of their free Voyageur excursions, trips with staff from neighboring parks, many enjoyable outings with the park visitors, and a wonderful “Island Hopping” excursion to Grindstone Island to wrap up the season. We were also busy with two-per-week kayaking programs, some in partnership with Save The River.

The summer also provided us with an opportunity to share our wonderful seasonal staff and NYS Parks Corps/SCA interns who all shine in their respective areas and have brought amazing and diverse programs to all who attended. Some gems were Saturday morning’s *Birding with Joe and Walt*; the *Edible and Medicinal* series with Faith, Elijah, Colin and Bree; the *Night Sky Adventure* series in collaboration with local amateur astronomers; and the summertime *Pack Basket Workshops* with Bree, Paula, Dana, and Faith. Though some of our seasonal staff has departed for educational obligations, there is still time to come out and meet most of our seasonal staff and take part in upcoming hikes and craft programs.

Be sure you have your calendars marked for the return of our Autumn Festival on Saturday, October 12! Many of you know that last year’s festival was postponed due to construction on Nature Center Road. We’re planning an amazing event and hope you can all come out and be part of it.

As we transition into Autumn and the blooms begin to fade, we will reflect on Minna’s article, “Flowers Seen Along the Roadside”. While the fading of these blooms is bittersweet, they are making way for the bright spots of November flowers. We hope you’ll come out and find us to be like one of Minna’s lovely November blooms, a bright spot in the shorter days. We’d love to have the opportunity to meet each of you and share the bounties of our island paradise!



*A dog enjoying an autumn walk on the Nature Center’s trails.*

Gabriela Padewska

*Director, Minna Anthony Common Nature Center*

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## For Your Consideration

### **Our Gift Shop Has Reopened!**

The Friends’ gift shop reopened August 16 and new stock is arriving every week! It is currently open from 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM, Monday – Sunday. Since it is manned totally by our awesome volunteers, please feel free to call 315-482-2479 to make sure it is open when you want to come. A big thank you to our veteran store volunteers, Maggie Lort, Nancy Kuhl, and Wink Beadel who have come back to help as well as our new store volunteers, board members Karen Allen, Joe Leskoske, & Kris Kratzert!

Would you like to donate a few hours each week working at our store? If so, please email Mary Jean Jones, our bookkeeper, at [mjj2598@gmail.com](mailto:mjj2598@gmail.com) and let her know your availability. Our schedule is divided into two-hour morning or afternoon shifts every day through Columbus Day weekend when the Nature Center goes on its winter schedule of being open Wednesday – Sunday.

10% gift shop discount for our volunteers!

# Fall Calendar



Scan to see the calendar of events on our website

\*Preregistration required for some events.  
Please email [MACNatureCenter@parks.ny.gov](mailto:MACNatureCenter@parks.ny.gov)  
or call **(315) 482-2479** to register.

## Recurring Events:

### \*FULL MOON HIKES

Thursday, October 17 5:45 pm  
Friday, November 15 3:45 pm  
Sunday, December 15 3:45 pm

### \*PACK BASKET WORKSHOPS

Friday, October 18 3:00 pm – 7:00 pm (Mini) \$50 fee  
Friday, November 8 3:00 pm – 7:00 pm (Mini) \$50 fee  
Sunday, December 8 9:00 am – 4:00 pm (Full) \$100 fee

### NATURE FUN DAY

Sunday, December 1 10:30 am – 3:00 pm (drop-in)  
Saturday, December 28 10:30 am – 3:00 pm (drop-in)

## October:

**Apple Stamping Saturday, October 5 11:00 am**

**Minna Anthony Common Nature Walk Sunday, October 6 10:00 am**

**Autumn Festival Saturday, October 12 10:00 am – 4:00 pm**

**Fall Harvest / Foods to Eat in NY this Fall Sunday, October 13 2:00 pm**

**Waterfowl Guide Saturday, October 19 10:00 am**

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**Turtle Time Sunday, October 20 11:00 am**

**Bat Fest Saturday, October 26 11:00 am – 2:00 pm**

**Birding with Walt Sunday, October 27 9:00 am**

## **November:**

**\*Nature's Table (\$10 fee) Saturday, November 2 10:00 am**

**Daylight Savings Debunked Sunday, November 3 1:00 pm**

**\*Natural Garland Workshop (\$10 fee) Saturday, November 9 10 am**

**\*Barn Quilt Workshop (Fall Leaves 2x2, \$40 fee)  
Sunday, November 10 10:00 am – 3:00 pm**

**\*Mini Barn Quilt Stars-n-Stripes Monday, November 11 10:00 am**

**Native American Heritage Day Saturday, November 16 1:00 pm**

**National Hiking Day Sunday, November 17 1:00 pm**

**Bald Eagle Hike Saturday, November 23 10:00 am**

**We're Going on a Bear Hunt Reading Sunday, November 24 1:00 pm**

**Black Friday Hike Friday, November 29 11:00 am**

**\*Pinecone Wreath Workshop (\$5 fee) Saturday, November 30 10 am**

## **December:**

**\*Ornament Making Workshop (\$5 fee) Saturday, December 7 10 am – 1 pm**

**Holiday Bonanza Saturday, December 14 10:00 am – 3:00 pm**

**Winter Equinox and Luminary Hike Saturday, December 21 5:30 pm – 8:30 pm**

**Turtle Talk Thursday, December 26 1:00 pm**

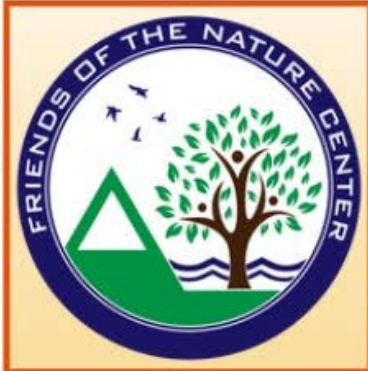
**Fur Talk Friday, December 27 1:00 pm**

**\*String Art Sunday, December 29 11:00 am**

**\*Year-End Bonfire Tuesday, December 31 5:00 – 8:00 pm**

**\*Registration Required**

MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER



44TH ANNUAL

# AUTUMN FESTIVAL



**PUMPKIN PATCH**  
SCARECROW BUILDING CONTEST  
PETTING FARM, AND MORE!

**CASH ONLY EVENT**  
ATM AVAILABLE AT WELLESLEY ISLAND MARKET  
CHILDREN (12 & UNDER):  
\$1 OR FREE WITH  
NONPERISHABLE  
FOOD DONATION  
ADULTS: \$3  
SENIORS (65+)  
& MILITARY: \$2



**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12TH**

**10 - 4PM**

**MAC NATURE CENTER**

**THANK YOU to the following 6 *Friends* for joining or renewing their membership recently!**

David Cushman Watertown, NY  
 Gary & Robin Smith Spencerport, NY  
 Dawn Rusho Clayton, NY

James Tague & Lori Thistle Alexandria Bay, NY  
 James & Martha O'Donnell Lakewood Ranch, FL  
 David & Ann Hertzog Yardley, PA

**New Members of the Friends of the Nature Center Board**

**Peter Adler**



Peter Adler was born in Chicago and spent his youth living in places such as Parkersburg, WV; Scotland; Holland; Ridgefield, CT; Greenville, SC; and Minneapolis, MN. By the time he finished, he had more addresses than most people have socks. After finally settling down in the Washington DC area, he practiced international corporate, privacy, and security law, and government relations for 35 years, before deciding to semi-retire.

Peter now splits his time with his wife, Elizabeth Wilmot, between Breckenridge, CO, and Wellesley Island. Elizabeth introduced him to Wellesley Island where her family has had a presence since the late 1800s. He promptly fell head over heels for the entire Thousand Islands region—not just for the area’s beauty, but also for its incredible history and charm. Summers at the old family cottage have become a favorite pastime, along with hiking, boating, swimming, biking, international travel, music, and relaxing with family and friends. Visits from his two daughters and grandson rank high on his list of things that make him smile.

When he’s not soaking up the outdoors, Peter is busy serving on the board of a biotech start-up. He joined the Friends of the Nature Center Board as he is a strong believer in environmental issues and teaching people to love all things outdoors.

**Emma Dundon**



Emma Dundon has been spending time at the River since her parents bought a cottage on Grindstone Island when she was 10 years old. After retiring from her career as a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner and Nursing Professor in Western Massachusetts, she decided to settle in Clayton year-round. After visiting the Nature Center and attending a few programs in the past year, it seemed like the perfect place to support with her experience and passion for nature and outdoor education opportunities for kids and families.



**MISSION STATEMENT**

The Friends of the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center support environmental education programming that fosters conservation of local ecosystems, encourages outdoor recreation, and inspires our visitors to develop an increased respect for the natural world.

The Friends of the Nature Center, Inc. works in partnership with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

**Minna Anthony Common Nature Center**

Wellesley Island State Park  
44927 Cross Island Road  
Fineview, NY 13640  
(315) 482-2479

**Off-Season Hours (October 15 —May):**

*Trails Open Sunrise to Sunset Daily*  
Nature Center open Wednesday—Sunday  
9:00am—3:00pm  
Closed Mondays and Tuesdays

**THE FRIENDS OF THE NATURE CENTER, INC.**

**BOARD MEMBERS**

- Robin Colello-Poplaski, *President*
- Gifford Lewis, *Vice President*
- Kerry Roberge, *Treasurer*
- Karen Allen, *Secretary*
- Peter Adler
- Lori Arnot
- Jane Arras
- Emma Dundon
- Richard Gefell
- Sue Johnson
- Kristen Kratzert
- Joseph Leskoske
- Eileen Price
- Jeffry Weldon

**WELLESLEY ISLAND STATE PARK**

Paula Torino, *Assistant Park Manager*

**MINNA ANTHONY COMMON NATURE CENTER**

- Gabriela Padewska, *Director*
- Darlene Sourwine, *Community Outreach Coor.*
- Dana Higgins, *Visitor Services Assistant*
- Bridget Foley, *Environmental Educator*
- Gary Phillips, *Maintenance Supervisor*



**New York State  
Parks, Recreation and  
Historic Preservation**



Thank you, **The UPS Store** of Alexandria Bay, for your quality printing services.