

# Chip Notes

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE BIRDS OF VERMONT MUSEUM  
Volume 29

Spring 2015



## BRIDGES TO BIRDS

The flood that devastated the Museum's walkway in July 2013 created an opportunity for the Museum to reinvent our entranceway. We have been researching outdoor spaces, exploring accessibility products, discussing native plants, learning about water movement and how to prevent erosion, working with engineers and bridge designers, and writing grants.

The time for planning is over. Construction begins this summer. The streambed will be rebuilt to prevent erosion while allowing for the safe passage of organisms up- and downstream. The banks will be stabilized for safety and to prevent sedimentation of the stream. The parking lot will be regraded so runoff will not erode banks nor enter the stream. Stormwater will be kept away from the building to maintain stability and bar moisture from entering the Museum below grade. The banks will be planted with native plants, increasing habitat for birds, pollinators, and other native wildlife. For humans, we will build a bridge and boardwalk, creating a safe and accessible entrance to the Museum. There will be places along the entranceway to pause, to listen to water, birds, and other sounds. We will place informative signs so visitors can learn more about streams, plants, and wildlife.

We could not have reached this stage if not for many of you! A grant from Vermont Community Foundation *Sudden and Urgent Needs* raised \$5000, and members, friends, and a variety of fundraisers raised another \$17,000. These funds covered tree removal and emergency electrical work, design work for the streambed and bridge, and dedicated staff time to plan, write grant applications, and spread the word of our project. Close to \$7000 of these initial funds will go to

construction related costs. We would not be this far without all of you; thank you!

The next phase—construction—will be expensive. The estimate for streambed repair, parking lot regrading, yard drains, plantings, signage, material, and labor is \$50,000. The building of the bridge itself, including boardwalk and lighting will cost \$39,000. This too is reachable!

Already, the State of Vermont awarded us a \$10,000 grant through the *Better Backroads Program* and one for \$15,000 through the *Ecosystem Restoration Program*. Both of these are matching grants, so together we need to come up with \$17,500 to receive those funds. We applied for another grant for the bridge (also a matching grant and we hope to hear good news about this next month). We do have reserve funds from previous donations. *You* can help; we're enclosing a brochure with details about the entrance way construction and some of the wonderful *thank you gifts*. Please share it, get in touch with questions, or call if you wish to see the detailed plans.

We'd like to highlight some of you who have been instrumental in our success so far. *Words do not fully express our gratitude* to M.C. Baker, Libby Davidson, Denver Holt, Hank Kaestner, Stewart Kirkaldy, Shirley and Bob Johnson, Dean Grover, Josh Ryan and Engineering Ventures, Tucker McLane, the estate of Barbara Ovitt, Mike Ovitt of Woodscapes Forestry, Norman and Dorothy Pellett, Pat Speilman-Morris and Jim Morris, Michaela Stickney, Elizabeth Spinney, Kate Schubart, Dave Johnson and the Essex Rotary Club, Roland Wilbur, and Chip and Joanna Wright. *Thank you.*

— Erin Talmage, Executive Director



## CONNECTIONS IN THE CANOPY

The Birds of Vermont Museum's treehouse debuted one year ago, much to the delight of the Museum community. Constructed by the students and instructors at the Center for Technology, Essex, the new structure, tucked into the trees above Sherman Hollow Brook, has already proven its immense value as an observation deck and a learning lab. Children attending our Nestling's Nook story hour and Fledglings Junior Birder programs have enjoyed the treehouse's outdoor adventure atmosphere as they explore the connections birds have with the environment. Girl Scout troops from the Green and White Mountains Council incorporated the treehouse into their nature walks while participating in three special programs at the Museum this past year. School groups following our *guiding questions* packet ponder sensory input, such as sight, sound, smell, and touch, to develop an understanding of the elements of natural systems in their midst. Interpretive drawings of living and non-living components in the bird-filled habitat surrounding the treehouse help young people make connections within food webs and nutrient use and recycling.

Many visitors to the treehouse linger over a picnic lunch as they take in the 360-degree view of life within

### BOB'S MEMORIAL

Many of you generously donated to Bob Spear's memorial. We have and are doing a number of things to honor Bob in and around the Museum. We have reorganized the workshop and created an exhibit there, dedicated to Bob's life and carving. It displays how Bob made the carvings, interspersed with pictures and mementos of his amazing life. A video is in the works to show Bob carving, and talking about carving; this will play in the background. Visitors continue to have the opportunity to witness his ingenuity, tenacity, and dedication to bird conservation and the art of woodcarving.



### STEWART KIRKALDY

One of our beloved volunteers, **Stewart Kirkaldy** passed away in May of this year. He will be greatly missed. A special tribute to Stewart will be included in our fall newsletter.



the tree canopy. Bob and Gale enjoyed regular lunch dates there throughout last summer while connecting with the magic of the Vermont birds. Situated over the brook, the treehouse enables new and experienced birders to hear and glimpse birds which favor habitats featuring flowing water, such as the Louisiana Waterthrush. During the spring breeding season, *Early Birders'* walks regularly finish at the treehouse for debriefing and bird chats.



It's been a joy to see how accessible and enlightening the treehouse is for our visitors; we look forward to new experiences in the coming days and months. We hope you will join us there too!

— Allison Gergely 

### More Thanks:

- ◆ Early Birder leaders: Shirley Johnson, Bill and Mae Mayville, Tom Jiamachillo, and Ali Wagner
- ◆ Workshop teachers: Kent McFarland of Vermont Center for Ecostudies, Dave Tuttle, Craig Newman of Outreach for Earth Stewardship
- ◆ Volunteers: Thank you for helping out at Volunteer Work Day, Herrick's Cove, and with visitors this spring
- ◆ Chris Snyder for electrical work
- ◆ David and Becky Cozzens for new display shelves
- ◆ Shawn Rouleau and Brian Japp of Center for Technology, Essex, and Erny Palola, for removing sheds and cleaning area in preparation for construction
- ◆ Artists who contributed to *Birds of a Fiber*
- ◆ Vince Franke Peregrine Productions
- ◆ The Estate of Faith Emerson
- ◆ Bill and Mae Mayville, Dick Allen, and Jim Osborn for equipment donations.

## WORKSHOPS, BIRDING & MORE

### BIRDS of a FIBER:

#### 2015 Community Art Exhibit

Daily, May—October • 10am – 4pm

From fabric to feathers, in craft and art, discover new ways of looking at and understanding birds.

Included with admission

### PILEATED WOODPECKER CARVING CLASS with DAVID TUTTLE

Saturday, June 20 • 9am – 3pm

in the workshop at the Museum

Carve and paint a woodpecker with us! Wood blank and eyes provided. All levels welcome! Please bring tools and gloves if you have them; if you don't, let us know. Please bring your lunch; we provide coffee and tea.

Great for teens and adults—and makes a great Father's Day present!

\$25 for Museum and GMWC members,  
\$35 for everyone else • Please pre-register

### ANNUAL BUTTERFLY AND BUG WALK

Sunday, July 12 • 10am – 12pm



Explore our meadows, lawns, and forests with Vermont Entomological Society naturalists and entomologists! Bring binoculars, magnifying glass, and an insect net if you have one. Pack a lunch if you would like to picnic after the walk.

Free, donations welcome

### THE NATURAL SKETCHBOOK with LIBBY DAVIDSON

Tuesday, August 4 • 10am – 12pm

Sketch under the guidance of artist Libby Davidson and enjoy a new perspective on nature. Bring your sketchbook and pencils, pens, and (if desired) portable watercolors. Hats, camp stools/chairs, and bug repellent/sunscreen are helpful.

\$20 for Museum members, \$30 for non-members. • Please register early. Class is limited to 10 people!

### EARLY BIRDERS MORNING WALKS

Sundays, May—June • 7:00am – 9:00am

Join other birders to listen and watch for returning migrants, year-round residents. No birding experience necessary; please bring binoculars and dress for the weather. Finish the walk with bird-friendly coffee in the Museum!

Great for adults and older children.

Free, donations welcome • Pre-registration is helpful but not required

### STORYTIME in the NESTLINGS NOOK

Second Tuesdays • 10:30 – 11:30am

Listen to stories and then enjoy a craft project, music, or nature walk. Got a favorite book about birds? Share it with us!

Intended for pre-schoolers but all are welcome.

Free with admission; donations welcome

### SUNDAYS for FLEDGLINGS: KIDS + BIRDS = FUN

Alternate(ish) Sundays, June 14, 28, July 12, 26, and more • 2 – 3pm

Birds! From feathers to flying, from art to zoology. Develop mad skillz in observation, research, and goofing around. Kids can earn a Junior Birder Badge! Perfect for kids aged 5-9 (siblings welcome).

Free with admission, donations welcome • Pre-registration helpful!

### BIRD MONITORING WALKS

Last Saturdays, June 27, July 25, August 29 • 7:30am

Explore Museum property with experienced birders. End the walk with cocoa, coffee and tea at the Bird Viewing Window inside the Museum. Please bring your own binoculars and dress for the weather.

Free • Please pre-register



All events are at the Birds of Vermont Museum unless noted otherwise.

Check our website for updates and additions:  
<http://www.birdsofvermont.org/events.php>

## SAVE THE DATES

June 20 Pileated Woodpecker Carving Class  
July 12 Bug and Butterfly Walk  
August 4 The Natural Sketchbook

*Daily:* Birds of a Fiber Community Art Exhibit

*Repeated:* Early Birders (Saturdays, May–June)  
Nestlings (Second Tuesdays, May–October)  
Fledglings (alternate Sundays, May–October)  
Bird Monitoring Walks (Last Saturdays)

Details inside and on our website! To register,  
call (802) 434-2167 or email [museum@birdsofvermont.org](mailto:museum@birdsofvermont.org)

*The mission of the Birds of Vermont  
Museum is to provide education, to nurture an  
appreciation of the environment, and  
to study birds and their habitats using  
woodcarvings and other Museum resources.*

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*Please send comments or changes of address to*  
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