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Camp to Lighthouse International in 1927. The entire 200 acre farm had 4 dwellings, each built on a knoll, as well as a barn, 3 wells, cultivated fields and a corn crib. The salt marsh was used for harvesting salt hay, duck hunting and later for pasturing cows.

• The thought of bulldozers destroying this grade A site distressed us all as we hiked. A view of Barnegat Inlet, Red Cedars and Highbush Blueberries, a tall Maritime Forest, and a natural path to the sandy beach on the bay-incomparable! How many feet walked over this ancient path to the sea, and for how many years did they use it? Good questions!

Generations of Bowkers lived here along the edge of Barnegat Bay, working in a resource based way of life. Like other bay families that lived in the Barnegat Bay tradition, they farmed, raised livestock, harvested salt hay, hunted, clammed, and fished, grew blueberries and cranberries, and built their own homes, tools and boats. We are thrilled that Elizabeth Morgan's dream to save this ecological and cultural treasure has finally become a reality.

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

Greetings members. I am happy to report on some recent developments that will benefit the Foundation. First, I would like to formally introduce Eileen Giffoniello, our new "powerhouse" consultant. She is aggressively pursuing grants, governmental dollars, and new fund-raising opportunities (see "Macy's Mall Day Fund-raiser in this issue). In addition she is very active in several other projects including: replacing bedding at the camp in preparation for this spring's guests, cleaning up the dormitories, and putting together a n exciting, new "corporate presentation package."

Even with Eileen's projects underway, there is still much more to be done, to make the Lighthouse Camp a premier environmental education site. The board is hard at work in several committees but would love to have more member assistance and input. Our event committee is under staffed and could benefit from a committee treasurer and secretary. E-mail me at Nancy.Eriksen@exeloncorp.com if you are interested.

I am extremely pleased with the addition of the Bowker property. Terry O'Leary and Chris Claus have put together a prescribed burn plan which includes mechanical management of phragmites. Terry is working with volunteers on some access management issues and the Ocean County Mosquito Commission on mosquito control issues.

Overall, the last few months have been very busy but the work has certainly been worthwhile. I look forward to your active support into the future.

Nancy

Visit the website for updates - <http://www.experiencebarnegatbay.org>

Naturalist's Notebook

By Terry O'Leary

Great Horned Owl

Bubo virginianus

Physical Description: This is one of the largest owl in North America, with a length of 18-25", a wing span of 45-60", and a weight of 32-88 oz. Females are 10-20% larger than males. Their coloration varies from reddish-brown to gray, mottled black and white. The underside is light gray with fine brown bars and a white band of feathers on the upper breast. They have large, keen yellow-orange eyes with an orange-buff facial disc and a dark beak. "Ear Tufts" of feathers are not actually horns or ears. Great Horned Owls have an acute sense of hearing, and are stealth hunters with silent flight. They have large feet feathered to the large, razor sharp talons.



Habits: These top predators are active in late afternoon, at dusk and until midnight as well as early morning. They are very aggressive toward intruders when nesting. Their sound ranges from deep booming hoots to shrill shrieks; the male's "hoo-hoo-hooooo-hoo-hoo" is lower pitched than the female's call. Other sounds include meowing, barking, cooing, and beak snapping.

Hunting: Perching on snags and high branches, Great Horned Owls watch for prey, and also glide slowly above ground level, diving down with wings folded to snatch their prey, which are usually killed instantly with the grasp of the large sharp talons. Their meal may be 2-3 times heavier than the owl. Rabbits and rodents are swallowed whole, while larger victims are ripped to pieces at feeding perches. Birds may be plucked first, with legs and wing tips discarded. Prey includes small mammals including the nocturnal skunk, opossum and raccoon. Occasionally they will feast on birds (including smaller owls), and reptiles. After an evening of eating, they regurgitate a dark gray pellet about 3-4" long, containing indigestible bones and fur or feathers.

Breeding: During January and February, both males and females hoot and bow with drooped wings, rubbing and preening each other. They do not build a nest, utilizing hollow trees, other bird's or squirrel's nests. The clutch of 2-4 eggs is incubated by both parents for about a month. Young "Branchers" cannot fly for 9-10 weeks, and are weaned shortly thereafter. The young scatter in autumn, but adult pairs may stay in the same 1 square mile area, although they remain solitary until mating season.

Life Span: Great Horned Owls, which may live up to 13 years, are extremely adaptable, using diverse habitat such as dense forest, open fields, and city parks. Found throughout the Americas, these top predators can fall prey to only a few native animals. Human impacts, such as collisions with cars and electrocution from perching on electric wires are responsible for many deaths each year. At the Lighthouse Center, Great Horned Owls have been spotted perching in the maritime forest, and gliding over the salt marshes and along the coastal thickets.

STAR PARTY AT THE LIGHTHOUSE

FRIDAY, MARCH 3RD AT 7:00 PM

The A.S.T.R.A. Club from Ocean County College Planetarium has agreed to host a Star Party at the Lighthouse Camp. All members are invited free of charge. Anyone who has a telescope is invited to bring it. The A.S.T.R.A. Club will be setting up about 6 telescopes in our grassy clearing near the entrance to the Bowker property. Refreshments, including: "Out of this World" homemade caramel cookies, "Celestial Teas", and "Starbucks coffee", will be served. Join Us!

BARNEGAT BAY ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATORS ROUNDTABLE

APRIL 26TH FROM 3:00 - 8:00 PM

2006 marks the ninth anniversary that informal educators in the Barnegat Bay Watershed join forces. The team will provide teachers with *in situ* lessons and information. Are you an educator? Come join us for what promises to be an informative and adventurous program: exploring our watershed, networking with environmental educators, gathering resources, ideas and lesson plans to take back to your school. Check the Ocean County Soil Conservation District website for more information and applications. www.ocscd.org

Help Wanted

Are you familiar with Quicken Pro? Do you have some spare time to assist our Treasurer? Then please call Luke at (609) 698-4706.

Are you an Electrician, Plumber or Carpenter who wants to donate time to the Center? Please e-mail Chris at cmclaus@yahoo.com.

Wanted: Volunteers with elbow grease and a burning desire to make a difference. Watch the website for Volunteer Workdays.

Natural Resource Education
Foundation of New Jersey
P.O. Box 747
Waretown, NJ 08758

MACY'S MALL DAY FUNDRAISER

APRIL 4TH, 9 AM- 10 PM
\$10 PER TICKET

First 1,000 people in door get \$10 gift card back. Look for deep discounts and promotions at Macy's that day. For tickets, e-mail Eileen Giffoniello at emgiffoniello@yahoo.com

