



The Boyden Bulletin

Spring 2023

Vol. 11 No. 1



Happenings - Past and Future

Boyden Refuge Sign - Creating a new sign for the entrance to the Gertrude Boyden Wildlife Refuge has been in the works for awhile. Jennifer O'Keefe produced the design for the sign and it was made by Luka B Signs. The O'Keefe family donated funds for the cost of the sign. We are searching for someone to build a wooden structure to hold the sign and then it will be installed near the road.

Surveillance Around the A.C. Bent Cabin - There has been discussion about how to discourage vandalism of the restored A.C. Bent cabin. Surveillance of the cabin is being considered and researched.

Use of the Office at Boyden Refuge - City officials continue to have discussions about the future use of the building at the Boyden Refuge. FOBR hopes to be able to use the facility to hold programs and store some items.

Osprey Nest - An Osprey nest has been built by Dana Sullivan. The Taunton Municipal Lighting Plant will install it; however, an accessible location still needs to be found where it can be placed.

Boyden Meadow Clean Up - In January and February, workers from Taunton Parks and Recreation spent several days working on various tasks at Boyden. They first removed invasive plants and shrubs from the meadows at the front of the property. The meadows were also mowed. This had been done every two or three years in order to discourage the growth of the invasive vegetation, but had been neglected recently. Tree work was also done.

Fallen trees across the trails - Trees often fall across the trails and cause accessibility problems for some people. In March several trees across popular trails were removed.

Friends of Boyden Annual Meeting - The Friends of Boyden Annual meeting will be held on April 29, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. at the Boyden Refuge. All members are welcome to attend. There will be a review of activities during the previous year.

TRWA River Festival - The Taunton River Watershed Alliance is holding its annual River Festival this year on Sunday, June 11th, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Friends of Boyden will participate again this year. Last year we had scavenger hunt bags and pencils to pass out to children, copies of our newsletter, membership applications and a big poster of the new trail map. Look for us, stop by, and see what we do this year!



FOBR Nature Programs 2023

The Friends of Boyden Refuge Inc. has scheduled monthly programs for 2023. Below is a list of programs with dates and a short description. Mark your calendars and join us to learn a bit more about the flora and fauna that inhabit the Boyden Refuge! Reminders will be on the web page and Facebook page.

“Annual City Nature Challenge” — 4/29/23 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Have you ever wondered what the plants and animals around you are?

Join Dr. Caitlin Fisher-Reid from the Department of Biological Sciences at Bridgewater State University as she introduces you to the “iNaturalist” app and helps you participate in the annual City Nature Challenge (CNC). Come learn how to contribute valuable data to scientific research on the distribution, behavior, and life stages of the organisms you see!

CNC is a world-wide “bio-blitz” in which cities around the world compete to see who can document and identify the most species. Become a scientist by taking photos of the organisms you see, then uploading what you find. You will quickly learn how to use the app and make good observations. Then we’ll walk the trails and discover Boyden Refuge’s biodiversity. Bring your phones and your curiosity.

*We recommend downloading iNaturalist and creating an account beforehand.

Go to: <https://www.inaturalist.org/>

For more information: <https://www.citynaturechallenge.org/>

<https://www.zoonewengland.org/>

<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/city-nature-challenge-2023-boston-area>

“Hunting for the Jewels of Spring” - 5/20/23 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Rain date - 5/21/23

Join Botanist, Ron Aakjar, and the Friends of Boyden Refuge as we search for flowers and plants that emerge in springtime before vanishing in the heat of summer. These plants, such as Spotted Geraniums, Starflowers, and Golden Alexanders are known as “ephemerals.” Handouts will be provided to help “teams” of participants search and identify as many species as possible. All ages will enjoy this scavenger hunt while walking through the beautiful nature trails of the Boyden Wildlife Refuge.

“Snooping for Snakes!” - 6/17/23 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Rain date - 6/18/23

Join Chris Rezendes, Friends of Boyden Refuge Board member, for this popular program on snakes. Come search for local snakes in the Boyden Refuge and learn about their fascinating habits, diet and their important role in the ecosystem. Chris will also have live snakes on display How many snakes do you think we can find in the Refuge?

“Monarchs ‘n’ Milkweeds” 7/22/23 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Rain date - 7/29/23

Join Sally Spooner, Vice President of the Taunton River Watershed Alliance and Chairperson of the Bruce Spooner Education Center, and the Friends of Boyden Refuge for a fascinating program about the Monarch Butterfly. Learn about its lifecycle, migration, and its reliance on the milkweed plant. This hands-on program is suited for children and adults who might be interested in raising monarch butterflies or preserving their essential food source, milkweed. Materials will be provided.

(Programs continued on page 3.)

“Birding Connects us to Nature” 8/12/23 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Birding is a wonderful way to share the joys of nature and lifelong learning. Our feathered friends thrive in all corners of the Earth. Join Doug Lowry and staff from Mass Audubon on this fun adventure of spotting, listening to, and identifying some of the birds in the Boyden Wildlife Refuge. More popular than ever, birding allows us to witness and understand “phenology,” which is the study of cyclic and seasonal nature phenomena. All ages and levels of birding experience are welcome for this interactive program. Binoculars encouraged but not required. Field guides and infectious enthusiasm will be provided. No pets please.

September - A program will be scheduled. Check the website boydenrefuge.org

“Secretive Salamanders” 10/14/23 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 Rain date - 10/21/23

Back by popular demand, this interactive nature program literally uncovers one of the most abundant vertebrate animals in New England forests. Join salamander biologist, Dr. Caitlin Fisher-Reid, as she helps you locate these hidden gems of forest biodiversity and learn more about their biology, behavior, and role in keeping our woodlands healthy.

Eagle Scout Project



In October, 2022, Eagle Scout Jacob Brennan of Troop 79 made a presentation before the Taunton Conservation Commission. Along with a video presentation, he described his Eagle Scout Project. Jacob refurbished the A. C. Bent cabin at the Gertrude Boyden Wildlife Refuge. His project took place earlier in the summer in June, 2022. Two members of the Friends of Boyden, Inc. attended the meeting in order to show appreciation of his hard work and his accomplishments.

A Scout who had recently completed a project at Boyden, suggested that refurbishing the cabin would be a good project for Jacob. Once Jacob saw the state of disrepair of the cabin, pictured at left, he decided to take on the task of restoring it to its original condition.

Jacob spent four months of planning which led to the execution of the actual work. He received donations of materials from Home Depot and Lowe’s. EFH Remodeling donated labor to work on the project. With the help of fellow Scouts and his family, work on the cabin took three days. The graffiti, which covered much of the cabin, was sanded off and the cabin was repainted, inside and out. The deteriorating roof was replaced. Troop 79 Eagle Project coach, Mike Leydon, did a wonderful job of refinishing the sign that hangs over the door of the cabin. The project, including planning and execution, took several hundred hours overall to complete. Jacob said that the most enjoyable part of the project was seeing the slow transformation from a neglected eyesore to a beautifully refurbished cabin. Eagle Scout Jacob and a fellow scout are pictured at the refurbished cabin. Jacob is on the right.



The members of the Taunton Conservation Commission showed appreciation and applauded Jacob for the outstanding job he did. At the end of the presentation, Jacob gave Margaret Travis, the President of the Friends of Boyden, a check for \$749.30, leftover from donations that he collected. It will be used for the ongoing support of the Boyden Wildlife Refuge.

Marla Isaac, a Treasured Friend of Boyden Refuge

The Boyden Wildlife Refuge lost a friend and ardent supporter when Marla Isaac passed away on December 16, 2022. Marla, who grew up in Taunton, was an avid environmentalist and wildlife enthusiast. She was described as a self-taught naturalist by her son. Marla was a state and federally licensed caretaker of all kinds of animals, caring for 200 different species of animals in her home at various times. Animals included alligators, rattlesnakes, anacondas, boa constrictors, pythons, and birds of prey. Marla is pictured at right.



Marla shared her passion for animals in many different ways. She taught animal programs for children in schools and organizations all over New England. Marla also conducted presentations for various organizations bringing along snakes, birds of prey and other critters to educate the public. She was also a state certified member of the Taunton Conservation Commission for many years.

Marla was involved in the beginnings of the organization Friends of Boyden Refuge Inc. in 1969. Denise Cabral, Conservation Commissioner Director at the time, asked Marla about forming a group to support the Boyden Refuge (at Mayor Nunes's request). Marla asked Carol Traverse, who is still a Board member, to join her. Don and Betty Gregg and Dick Paulson were also members of the original Board. Don has since passed away, but Betty and Dick are still members of the Friends Board.

Marla supported the Gertrude Boyden Wildlife Refuge by participating in and leading all kinds of activities. She belonged to the Friends of Boyden Wildlife Refuge, Inc., serving as President and Vice President. Marla managed a summer Conservation Internship Program for children at the Boyden Refuge along with Don Gregg and Dick Paulson. The children participated in many activities, including having a camping out sleep over and walking the trails to learn about the animals that live in the Boyden Refuge. Marla also headed a 4-H group that met at the Refuge. Years ago Marla, along with other Friends of Boyden members, planned and put on an impressive Fall Festival.

Marla will be remembered as an environmentalist and wildlife enthusiast who had a enormous impact on the lives of people and animals locally and in the New England area.

Meat Raffle Fundraiser - Taunton Lodge of Elks Friday, June 16, 2023

Join the Friends of Boyden Refuge, Inc. at a fundraiser at the Taunton Elks Lodge, 775 John Quincy Adams Road, Taunton, MA. It will include a **meat raffle**. There will also be a **basket raffle** with all kinds of items. Come early - the Elks have a **menu available** with items such as fish and chips and other tasty choices that you can order for a very reasonable price!

Tickets for the two raffles will begin to be sold at 6:00 p.m. You may buy tickets for just one raffle or both. **Tickets will be drawn at 7:00 p.m.**

Board of Directors

Margaret Travis, President/Program Chair; Barbara Hathaway, Vice President/Corresponding Secretary/Publicity Chair; Carol Traverse, Treasurer; Betty Gregg, Clerk; Joan McKenna, Newsletter Editor; Dick Paulson; Chris Rezendes; Russell Spooner; Richard Easterbrooks; Greg DeMelo; Michelle Handley; Dan Rezendes; and Elizabeth Sisskind.

Friends of Boyden Refuge, Inc. P. O. Box 247, Taunton, MA 02780 (boydenrefuge.org)