

To enhance and encourage
the public use and awareness
of Sessions Woods



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Summer 2018

The Friends of Sessions Woods was established
as an all-volunteer organization in 1998 to facilitate
projects and programs that enhance the value of
Sessions Woods.

The Busy Beaver Marsh

One of the highlights at the Sessions Woods Wildlife Management Area is the beautiful beaver marsh located about one mile west of the Conservation Education Center. Approach quietly and you may see a diversity of wildlife. Beaver activity is evident by the high water level encountered walking across the boardwalk and the greatly enlarged lodge visible from the viewing blind. Beavers continue to maintain dams as long as they hear running water and will remain in the area if there is adequate food, such as aspen and other fast-growing trees.

The work by beavers in creating marsh habitat benefits many other animals. During summer, a lucky observer may see a wood duck hen with young trailing in the water behind her.

Great blue herons may be spotted wading along the edge, using their long spear-like bills to catch fish or frogs. Tree swallows are seen hawking for insects, and the call of the red-winged blackbird resonates throughout the wetland.

Three amphibian species are common in the marsh: green frogs, bullfrogs, and red-spotted newts. Green frogs are distinguished by their call, sounding much like the plucking of a banjo string. Bullfrogs characteristically sing "jug-of-rum" or "rum...rum...rum." Patient observers may see red-spotted newts, the aquatic stage of the species, swimming below the water's surface. Not so long ago, these newts were the red eft salamanders walking the forest floor the morning after a good rain.



The most commonly seen insects in the marsh include the whirligig beetles and water striders found on the water's surface. Whirligigs have divided eyes, two seeing above the water and two below at the same time. Water striders are able to skate on the water's surface due to water repellent hairs on the legs.

Beautiful dragonflies patrol the beaver marsh. Look for female dragonflies dipping the tips of their abdomens in the water to release eggs while males hover above ensuring that their genetic material is responsible for fertilizing each egg. Another possible sight is a dragonfly "wheel" with males holding onto females as they mate.



There's so much animal activity at a beaver marsh in summer. Maybe your visit will include some of the wildlife noted here. One sure bet though, is that a trip to the Sessions Woods' Beaver Marsh is always worth the effort it takes to get here!

Article by Laura Rogers-Castro
Photos by Paul Fusco

Welcome New Friends!

The Friends of Sessions Woods would like to welcome the following new members:

Bettcher Family
Jaroslav Bil Family
Alan Chartier Family
Griffin Family
Nancy & Jerry Lemega Family
Mark & Diane Philippe Family

On the Trail...

....Summer is butterfly season and look for these beauties fluttering about the meadows and forest edge at Sessions Woods. Some of the more common butterflies seen here include members of the Satyridae family of insects, such as the little wood satyr or common wood nymph.



Both of these butterflies have what appears to be eyespots on their wings. These markings may help the butterfly escape predation by appearing larger in size.

....While on the topic of insects, another wonderful sighting includes the black-winged damselfly. This insect is found near brooks and streams and recognized by its black wings and iridescent blue/green body.



....One cannot forget about the delicious blueberries, blackberries, and black raspberries which ripen during the summer. The birds certainly know when these berries are just ripe enough! Berries are referred to as "soft mast" by wildlife biologists. Many habitats



increase their suitability to wildlife when berries are abundant. Black bears, deer, bluebirds, robins, catbirds, turkeys, foxes, chipmunks, and mice are among the animals that eat soft mast.

Sessions Woods Calendar of Events

The Sessions Woods Conservation Education Center's Public Program Series is a cooperative venture between the CT DEEP Wildlife Division and the Friends of Sessions Woods. Please pre-register for these programs by calling 860-424-3011. Programs are free unless noted. An adult must accompany children under 12 years old. No pets allowed!

August 1, 2018 (Wed.), 9:30 a.m.
Nature Drawing for All with Artist Judy Bird

The Friends of Sessions Woods is co-sponsoring a special workshop for adults and children, focusing on developing observational skills and nature drawing with artist and FOSW member Judy Bird. The program will include a 2-mile roundtrip walk to the beaver marsh at Sessions Woods. Judy will provide a lesson on observing and drawing in the outdoors. This free workshop is supported by the generosity of the Newman's Own Foundation. All materials will be provided.

Judy Bird has a B.A. in Art Therapy from The College of New Jersey and is an Expressive Arts Educational Facilitator. She currently teaches art at Hunter Montessori School in New Hartford.



September 6, 2018 (Thurs.), 4:00 p.m.

Late Afternoon Walk to the Marsh

Join CT DEEP Wildlife Division Natural Resource Educator Laura Rogers-Castro for a late afternoon walk to the beaver marsh at the Sessions Woods Wildlife Management Area. There will be stops to talk about the flora and fauna seen in the woodland and field habitats along the way and additional conversation at the scenic beaver marsh. The walk is approximately two miles roundtrip and suitable for ages 5 years old and up. Participants should bring water and wear proper footwear. Meet at the flagpole in front of the Sessions Woods Conservation Education Center.



Save the Date

Wednesday, December 5, at 6:00 p.m. "Eastern Cougars" presented by Wildlife Division Biologist Jason Hawley. Pre-register by emailing laura.rogers-castro@ct.gov. This program will likely fill early!

What's New at the Center?

The exhibit cases are sporting several new mounts as of this past spring. There is a beautiful red-bellied woodpecker, along with a male and female American widgeon, New England cottontail rabbit, eastern cottontail rabbit, and red squirrel. Thanks to Mark Hints for the waterfowl donations and the FOSW for the taxidermy of the other mounts.

Have You Renewed?

Memberships are now due for renewal. The membership year runs from May 1 until April 30 and coincides with the FOSW Annual Meeting in April. If you have not already renewed, please use the form on the newsletter to send in your renewal today. Thanks!



Membership Renewal & Special Projects Fund Donations

Please Print

Name _____

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Town _____

State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

Check one:

I am a new member _____

I am renewing my membership _____

Check one:

Annual Membership Levels:

Student (under 21) \$6

Individual \$15

Family \$20

Patron \$50

Corporation \$100

\$_____ Donation for Special Projects Fund

Memberships run annually from July 1 through June 30 of the following year. Each membership receives *Connecticut Wildlife* magazine.

For new members only: Memberships received during the months of January to June are effective through June 30 of the following year.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

We gratefully accept your contributions. Fees and contributions are fully tax deductible. My check for \$_____ is enclosed. Please send your check, made payable to Friends of Sessions Woods, to:

Friends of Sessions Woods
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