

New Volume 2 Edition 3
THE RANCOCAS CREEK
ASSOCIATION

The New Creekside News



The "New" Creekside News is an e-newsletter for, about, and by the Rancocas Creek Association - free to all, published quarterly (**January, April, July, October**). The Creekside News was previously distributed weekly (1930's) to all residents free of charge - for the first copy - any additional copies were sold for 2 cents per copy!

*Click to check us out on [Facebook!](#)
Or online at www.rancocas creek.org*

Creekside News July 2018

The RCA is thankful that our membership, and our fellow creek residents are safe and dry after the never ending rains of June. Should anyone require assistance in navigating the waters, please contact President Rich Astorino. While the high water levels may be attractive to many, especially the wildlife, please be reminded that the water quality may not be at its best, so it is recommended to stay out of the water until it subsides.

The Ornithologist Corner

Contributed by Ranger Jacob



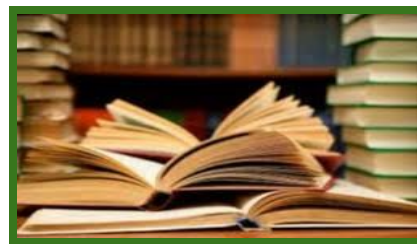
The Habitat Engineers - Woodpeckers

One of the many benefits of creek-life is the scenery surrounding you and the dependent wildlife. The mixed oak forest uplands adjacent to the Rancocas provide plenty of habitat for wildlife. The dead trees, or snags, found in the forest are no different! Of the seven species of woodpecker found in New Jersey, all rely on these snags found throughout the forest. They use their strong beaks to excavate cavities in these trees for suitable nesting sites. They are equipped with chisel like beaks and reinforced skulls so their

brains do not rattle while they're drumming away!

Most woodpeckers feed on a variety of wood destroying insects and will actively search for the bugs destroying the trees on your property. To reach their food, they utilize their tongue which can reach up to 4 inches long to dig out their meals! They also have fine hairs in their nostrils to avoid any sawdust issues from their hard-work.

As long as it is not a safety hazard for your home, it is wise to keep snags on your property. The presence of woodpeckers not only keeps the wood destroying insect population in check, but woodpeckers are also a keystone species. Other birds such as bluebirds, wrens, and owls rely on old woodpecker cavities for nesting sites. The very unique flying squirrel relies on them too. So we can thank the woodpeckers for keeping our homes pest free and also for adding biodiversity to our beloved Rancocas Creek.



Ellie's Corner

"To me it is important not to live in a throwaway society...that you respect what came before." Eleanor Gesensway.

It is only fitting to begin "Ellie's Corner" with the section on *John Hennessey* as he was a fixture on the Creek. Please enjoy these excerpts from Ellie's book - "An Oral

History Project: Life Along the North Branch of the Rancocas Creek between Mount Holly and Smithville, New Jersey".

Everyone knew him and loved him. Born in 1922, Mr. Hennessey left us way too early. Mr. Hennessey retired from the Naval Supply Depot and did volunteer work. He spent some of his time doing woodcarvings mostly as therapy to strengthen a hand that was hurt during his tenure as a governmental employee.

Mr. Hennessey moved to the Creek in 1958, bought the cabin, and rented the land from the Smith Estate! In 1964, he was able to purchase the land as well.

"I was told by an old gentleman a long time ago that the canal was the original creek, this might have been in the 1880's or so...that the Smiths, in order to use that power, diverted the creek. I don't know how true this is, but that canal had barges on it at one time that Smith used to run stuff down to Mount Holly. There is a canal society in New Jersey. I don't know if they'd know anything or if there is any history on this."

"...I've seen the changes over the years. I've been in a lot of floods, but a lot of it was mismanagement of the gates. Years ago, they had what they called "hand boards" on the dam. They were 10" boards and they would walk on the dam (Smithville Dam), put up these boards, and that would hold back more water up above. Then as soon as the water got high, they would pull those hand boards off before they even worked the gates. So we would get 10" extra of water coming down. We used to get flooded an awful lot. There was no management then."

Mr. Hennessey spoke of the old railroad. "I used to listen to that train...whoo, whoo. A couple of mornings I went out and I just missed it." "The county bought the

ground...and we are actually in the county park even though we own the ground."

If you would like to read more about John Hennessey, please let Sharon know. We certainly miss him - he would religiously work on keeping the creek clean, picking up debris, as well as monitoring and cleaning the canal pipes.

We certainly miss you, "Keeper of the Creek"!



Happy Birthday to *Judy Loane and Fred Poinsett* - wishing you an Jocular July!

Happy Birthday to *John McNamara and Gary Pollak* - hoping that you have an Awesome August!

Happy Birthday to *Morgan Astorino and Teri Montgomery* - a Spectacular September to each of you!

Birthday wishes for Beau Francis Astorino - bratty but loveable black lab - Happy Happy July!



Welcome to our newest members:

Jody Mallon, Tyler Mallon, Michael Grace, Karen Harkaway, and Ian Taylor - so happy to have you join us!



Smithville was a village originally established as Shreveville in 1831 by Jonathan and Samuel Shreve as a textile village on our beloved Rancocas Creek.

Hezekiah Bradley Smith purchased the land in 1865 and renamed it "Smithville" - not to be confused with the Atlantic County Smithville! Smithville had its own post office from 1866 to 1962.

Smithville grew from a typical, small mill operation on the Rancocas Creek to a major industrial plant known for its high-quality woodworking machinery, the Smithville-Mt. Holly Bicycle Railroad, and the Star high-wheeled bicycle. Smithville was well ahead of its time in town planning, sustainability, and workers' rights and

welfare. Smithville offered its residents and workers a variety of recreational, artistic and educational opportunities.

In 1975, Burlington County purchased the property and created the first park in the county. It is listed on the National and New Jersey Registers of Historic Places as the Smithville Historic District. If you haven't already experienced it, the Mansion Tours are most interesting.



Thank you to Claudia McNamara for arranging for our guest speaker. It was an informative and interesting addition to our meeting.

Thanks for the photos of our most recent 'flood event' June 2018 - Teri Montgomery, Phil Joiner, Gary Pollak, Craig Katz, and Sharon Astorino. The creek was tracked at 13 mph - pretty fast!



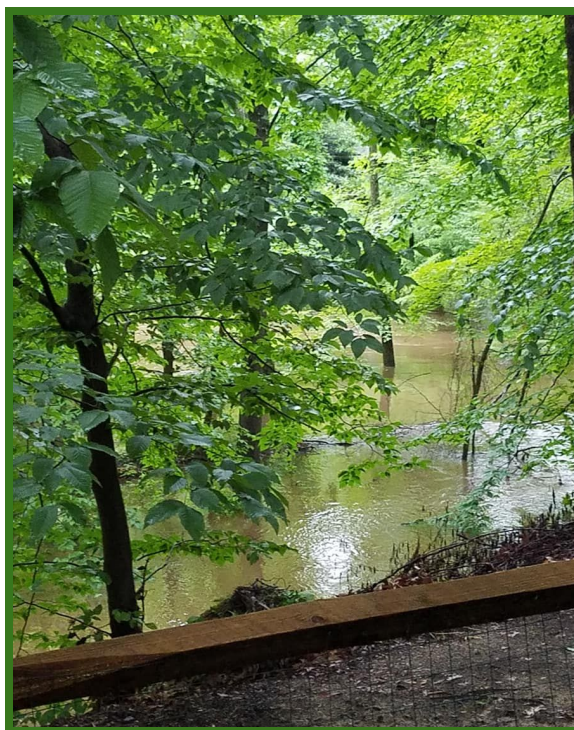
Phil's beautiful hot tub became one with the creek.



"Life along the Creek"



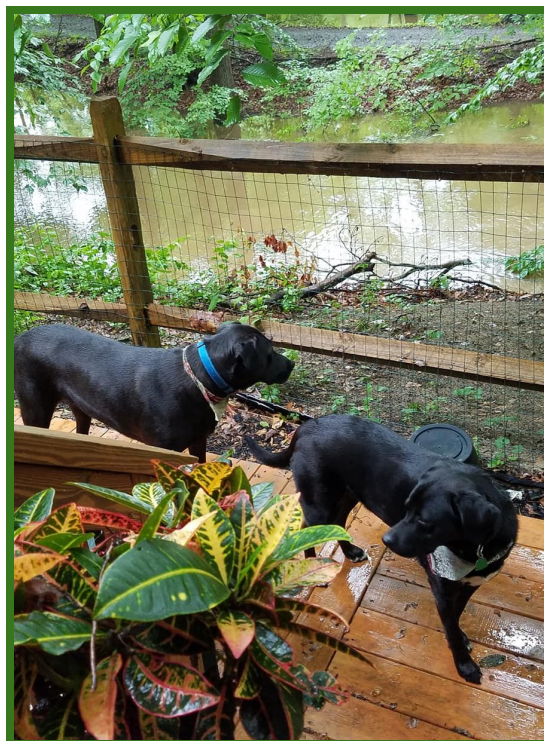
Rabbit Run went a-hopping along with the water!



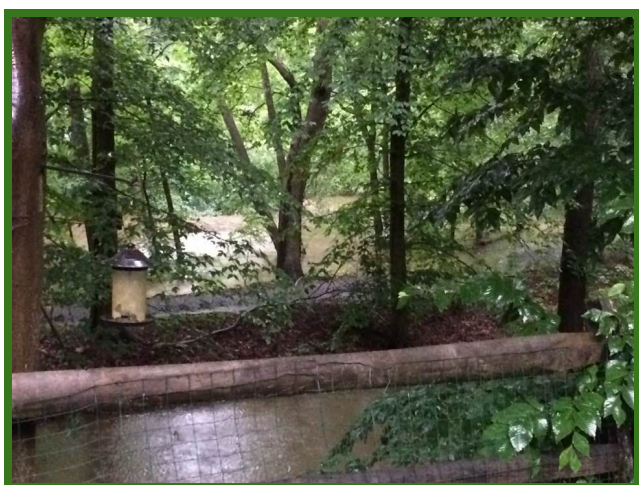
The water was running quite swiftly,



Seems like egress shall be by boat!



The beavers - and dogs - were enjoying every moment.



Partnerships



"Situation inconvenient but not serious."

The RCA is looking to partner with other organizations in an effort to best serve our creek, and achieve our goals. The first partnership is with the Boy Scouts of America! We shall track each project's progress in our newsletter to keep everyone abreast

Guest Speaker - June 2018 Meeting



Pinelands Preservation Alliance

Isabella Castiglioni from the Pinelands Preservation Alliance (PPA) was the guest speaker at the June meeting.

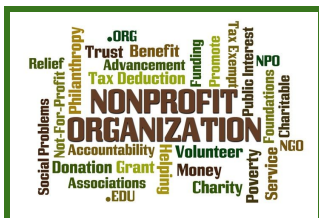
The PPA will be a great resource in identifying the best flora for our project to buffer the creek banks and to assist with reducing the erosion.

The Rancocas Creek Watershed covers 360 square miles, the North Branch (that would be us!) drains 167 square miles.

Ms. Castiglioni discussed the non-point source pollution: fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and animal waste that end up in the water.

A wonderful question and answer session followed.

A heartfelt thank you to Isabella for her time and for sharing the wealth of knowledge and experience!



The RCA is a non-profit organization.

Tax deductible donations may be forwarded to RCA at 249 Shreve Street, Mount Holly NJ 08060.

Rancocas Creek National Water Trail

The RCA has offered their support for the creation and designation of the Rancocas Creek as a National Water Trail. The State of New Jersey, Burlington County, the municipalities of Westampton, Mount Holly, Eastampton, Lumberton, Delanco, Riverside, and others, and private organizations, clubs, groups, schools will partner together to create a National Water Trail that flows through the heart of Burlington County.

The Rancocas Creek National Water Trail is a candidate for designation as a National Water Trail. The Rancocas Creek National Water Trail will:

1. Provide multiple public access points to the Rancocas Creek for many communities;
2. Instill values of outdoor ethics and stewardship;
3. Provide multi-use recreation and increase safe paddling and boating skills for all ages;
4. Allow enhanced access to cultural, and historic sites attesting to the Creeks 400 years of maritime heritage and the 12,000 years of man's impacts;
5. Provide for year-round multi-use recreation;
6. Support provision of improving water quality for all residents and visitors alike.

The Rancocas Creek is full of New Jersey and America's heritage, history, and culture, as well as many wonderful environments, ecosystems and ecology not found elsewhere in the State or the Mid-Atlantic region.

The RCA shall track and share the progress through partnership with Rancocas Pathways although impact to us - the Northern Branch - should be negligible.

Burlington County Farm Fair 2018

July 17 (4pm) to July 21 (6pm)

The Burlington County Farm Fair, Inc. is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote agriculture, social life, and youth as well as educating the general public by conducting a yearly agricultural fair with exhibits, livestock, and farm products. Located on the beautiful Burlington County Fairgrounds in Springfield Township, NJ, the fair offered a variety of activities to the tens of thousands of visitors that attended.

Visit: www.burlingtoncountyfarmfair.com



2018 Meeting Schedule

April 22 - Astorino
May 20 - Katz
June 17 - McNamara
July 15 - Barber / Joiner
August 12 - Champion / Pollak
September 9 - Loane
October 7 Potluck - McNamara

The Creek Clean-Up date(s) is yet to be set; however, the picnic shall be at Tallula's (Gary and Jenna have promised to assist!).

Due to the excessive rains, tree damage has been identified as "significant". RCA is looking into the cost of removing some of the trees in the water that may affect our membership. Should you identify tree(s) in the waterways off your property that obstructs paddling, please let President Rich Astorino know - how many trees, and where they are located. RCA shall attempt to liaise with tree removal services.

Volunteers Needed

The RCA would like to participate in area events. We need volunteers to man the booths, create displays, etc. If you are interested, please let Sharon know. Thanks!

Inventory

We do have a few products left for sale, please contact Richard if anyone interested in purchasing:

Hooded sweatshirt - forest green:
1 medium (\$25) and 3 XXXL (\$28)

Zippered hoodie - forest green:
2 XXXL (\$31)

Long sleeve tee - forest green:
2 XXL (\$14) and 1 XL (\$14)

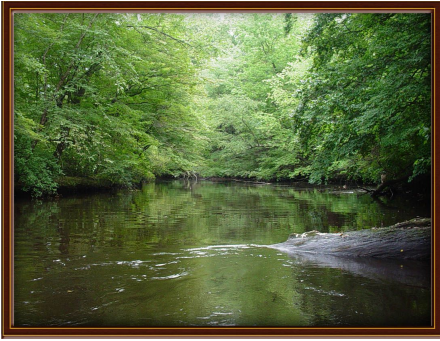
Tee - forest green:
1 XXXL (\$15)

Totes - forest green (water resistant):
5 draw string (\$15)

Golf towels - forest green:
8 (\$15) (we were told these make great fishing towels.)

Our Newsletter

Anyone interested in writing an article for our newsletter, or have news that they would like to share, should contact Teri Montgomery or Sharon Astorino. You may use our personal emails or our WebMaster will forward mail to us that is sent to Rancocas@gmail.com.



President: Richard Astorino
Vice President: Kerry Sharps
Secretaries: Claudia McNamara
Judy Loane
Treasurer: Tom Kempton
Parliamentarian: John McNamara
Editors: Teri Montgomery
Sharon Astorino
Webmaster: Kerry Sharps