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Gordie News, June 2007

West Chester University of Pennsylvania

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GORDIE NEWS

(June 2007) 1:6

Erika Szonntag, editor

Gordon Natural Area for Environmental Studies

West Chester University of Pennsylvania

(A Certified Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife Federation)



Special Announcements & Dates-

November 10, 2007 Workday

Help save postage: If you have an E-mail we can add you to the Friends of the Gordon Natural Area mailing list. You will be notified of the latest Gordie News (<http://darwin.wcupa.edu/gordon/>) and other activities

Contact Erika Szonntag with feedback or ideas for articles at es631042@wcupa.edu

:: *What's New?* ::

Gombe Reserve - Coffee for Conservation

The February issue of *Gordie News* introduced Dr. Jane Goodall's "Conservation Coffee" initiative; an effort to increase the conservation of the chimp population's habitat and the economic stability around the Gombe National Park in Tanzania through the coffee trade. Now, Dr. Goodall has teamed up with Green Mountain Coffee Roasters and the Kalinzi Cooperative coffee farmers in Tanzania to market an environmentally and economically savvy coffee.



Over the years, Dr. Goodall has understood that increasing education, economic prosperity, and quality of life for those living around the Gombe National Park is essential to reviving its fading chimpanzee population due to deforestation. By improving these aspects of the local Tanzanian community, the Gombe ecosystem has a better chance at prosperity.



Says Goodall: *"Our effort to involve local citizens in restoring the forests and practicing sustainable agriculture is the most important work we can do to ensure a future for the Gombe chimpanzees and the people of Africa."*

The program gives Kalinzi cooperative farmers incentive to preserve this environment. These forests provide the shady, ideal conditions in which to grow coffee. Consequently, preserving the forests yields a higher quality harvest which earns farmers substantial profits, and preserves the chimpanzees' habitat.

Gombe Reserve coffee is available online at www.greenmountaincoffee.com. This medium-bodied, "special reserve" roast offers floral notes atop hints of honey with a smooth, clean finish. Profits will benefit the Tanzanian community and chimpanzee research and conservation. [Dr Hertel and his wife purchased and tasted this coffee..."it's great, close your eyes as you take a sip & imagine yourself in Gombe National Park!"]

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Garden for Wildlife

If you enjoy gardening and supporting local ecosystems, have your property certified as a Backyard Natural Habitat site by the National Wildlife Federation! Check out how it can benefit you and the environment:

- It's fun; you'll attract beautiful songbirds, butterflies and other interesting wildlife to your yard. Watching wildlife can be fun for the whole family. Trumpet Honeysuckle, at right, attracts hummingbirds.
- Replacing barren lawn with beautiful wildflowers and other native plants makes your property a more appealing place to spend time and relax.
- *Habitat restoration is critical* for wildlife where commercial and residential development has eliminated most natural areas. Restoring such natural habitat nurtures wildlife, especially during cold winter months.
- It's great for the environment! Gardening practices like reducing chemicals and conserving water benefit not only wildlife but improve air, soil, and water quality as well.
- Your yard will be certified as part of the National Registry of Backyard Wildlife Habitat sites. You will receive a certificate of recognition and with permission be published in your local newspaper announcing your certification. *So far, over 70,000 sites have been certified!*
- You can automatically become a member of the NWF and receive the quarterly newsletter *Habitats* to help you maintain your backyard natural habitat.



Getting started is quite easy; just incorporate these elements when constructing your natural habitat:

Remove Invasive, Restore Native – Integrating native plants into your backyard is the first step to gardening for wildlife. They are easier to manage and healthier for the environment while still offering interesting and colorful variety. They require less effort in pest control, stabilize natural soil nutrients, and require little to no fertilizer compared to non-native species.

Food – To feed wildlife, the NWF’s website offers a Top Ten List of Native Plants for any state. Native plants are more effective and appealing than bird feeders as a food source; they naturally attract an array of wildlife while making your backyard more aesthetically pleasing.

Water – Bird baths or small ponds are an excellent source of water. Bird bath-water should be changed at least every other day to maintain cleanliness.

Shelter – Wildlife greatly appreciate brush piles for nests and birdhouses. For the amphibians, “toad abodes” can be made from old clay pots and are lots of fun for the kids!

Sustainable Gardening – Conservation is key. Mulch, for example, prevents evaporation by allowing soil to retain moisture, allowing more water to be reserved for plants. Consider it the “icing on the cake” for any garden.

Visit www.nwf.org/backyard/ for more details, and get started today

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Trees in Memory – Remembering and Reforesting

“He who plants a tree, plants a hope.” – Lucy Larcom

The Gordon Natural Area offers the opportunity for you to plant a tree in celebration of a birthday, an anniversary, a wedding, or the life of a loved one. Planting a tree provides both a living remembrance and a way to re-forest the Gordon Area. A native tree (>6ft tall) can be planted by you, or on your behalf, in the Gordon Area, along with which you will receive a certificate in recognition of your donation and GPS coordinates for the tree. Planting a tree is a sure way to keep both a memory and a forest alive.

-Contact Gerard Hertel for more information.

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Keep an eye out for these flora and fauna in the Gordon Area this summer

Spicebush

Bearing simple, elliptical, alternate leaves and clusters of bright red berries in the summer, the native Spicebush is a nutritional powerhouse. Migratory birds feed on the berries to acquire energy for flight and butterflies and other insects seek Spicebush for its nectar. The shrub is Common in the GNA and harbors the spice bush caterpillar. A broken twig will emit a pungent, peppery scent, hence the plant's name. During the Civil War, soldiers brewed tea from the leathery leaves and the greenish rubbery twigs



Solomon's Seal

A close relative of Lily-of-the-Valley, Solomon's Seal is an elegant species whose bell-shaped flowers attract hummingbirds and other pollinators, such as bumblebees. The plant comes to bear midnight-blue berries by late summer which provide food for animals, and turns golden yellow come autumn.



Eastern Box Turtle

This native of eastern North America, pictured at right, is a long-term resident of the GNA. This familiar species actually does resemble a box when the hinged, lower portion of the shell, or plastron, is closed when the animal feels threatened. Shells are darkly colored with various patterns of orange and yellow. In addition, male box turtles have bright orange and red colored eyes while females have dark red or brown. Adults reach five to six inches in length and are often found in fields and forests, usually only emerging from underbrush to feed. Box turtles hibernate from October to April underground and usually live for 30 to 40 years.



Birds of the Gordon

American Goldfinch

These birds often seem like nothing more than sunny flashes of yellow soaring through fields and orchards. This black and yellow finch is common throughout North America and is Washington's state bird. Females have more drab plumage compared to males, though during winter months both take on duller, olive colors. American Goldfinches commonly consume seeds and are particularly fond of thistle. Interestingly enough, their breeding season corresponds to the height of thistle seed abundance during mid to late summer.



Carolina Chickadee

As its name suggests, the black-capped chickadee trills a familiar “*chick-a-dee, chick-a-dee*” call. Though seemingly simple in nature, the bird's song possesses linguistic qualities which communicate predator alarms, contact calls, and flock identity. It is a small (4.5 inches), short-billed bird. Its cap is black & cheeks are white, whereas the wings & tail are darker gray. The bib is black & distinct.

Cool fact: When winter conditions are extremely cold, Carolina Chickadees roost in cavities where they literally lower their body temperatures to induce a state of hypothermia. Carolina Chickadees do this to conserve energy; they may remain in this state for as long as 15 hours.

Tufted Titmouse



These small, pearly gray songbirds have been steadily increasing in population in the northern United States since the early 1900s. Experts have suggested that the abundance of winter bird feeders and global warming may be causes for this trend. Tufted Titmouse pairs will generally remain in the same territory for most of their lives, with one member of offspring usually remaining with its parents into the following year to help raise young.

:: Check out these Websites ::

American Beauties – Native Plants

www.abnativeplants.com

Here is a simple source to help you garden with native plants or design your NWF backyard habitat! *Abnativeplants.com* offers an astounding array of attractive native plants and landscape plans for gardens in the shade or sun, with moist or dry soil, to attract birds or butterflies. Complete lists of necessary plants for particular gardens are provided with a profile and pictures. Be sure to check this site out before you get outside to dig.

Yahoo! Green

<http://green.yahoo.com/>

Make your homepage green! Yahoo is one of the top search engines on the web, and now Yahoo! Green brings you “green” facts, news, how to take action, and more. There is even a way to “calculate your carbon footprint.” Next time you go to surf the net, take a few seconds to read up on what’s new and “green” on Yahoo! Green.

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:: Arts and Music ::

Nature Stories Podcast

“Audio Downloads of Great Stories and Great Places”

The Nature Conservancy is now bringing you the weekly *Nature Stories* audio podcast. You’ll be able to download captivating informational pieces and personal tales of adventures with Mother Nature, along with recordings of humpback whales’ songs and bird calls. Listen online or download to your iTunes® or MP3 player and “take your nature on the go!” Visit <http://support.nature.org/site/PageServer?pagename=podcast> to hear about adventures and wildlife from around the world.

Artists for Conservation

Supporting Nature through Art

The Artists for Conservation Foundation is an organization dedicated to celebrating and conserving the precious environment through artistic expression. Says their website: *“Our mission is to support wildlife and habitat conservation, biodiversity, sustainability and environmental education through art that celebrates our natural heritage.”* Through paintings, photographs, sketches, and sculptures, these artists work to spread environmental awareness globally. Currently, exhibitions and festivals are being held nationwide for artists to present their artwork and raise money for conservation efforts. Visit www.natureartists.com for more information on upcoming exhibitions, programs, and how your talents can help the environment.

Billion Tree Campaign

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has launched a campaign to plant trees all over the world. The Gordon Natural Area has pledged 100 trees thus far. World target-pledged-planted/the Gordon Natural Area

Target



1,000,000,000/100

Pledged

1.042,464,711/100

Planted

22,852,596/64

Visit <http://www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign/>



GNA Supporters:

2004: Presidential Initiative (WCU); Environmental Council (WCU); USDA Forest Service; Henderson High School Environmental Club; Friends of the Gordon Area

2005: Wegman's; Yellow Springs Farm Native Plant Nursery; Environmental Council; Henderson High School Environmental Club; Friends of the Gordon Area

2006: Yellow Springs Farm Native Plant Nursery; Valero Energy Corporation; National Wildlife Federation; Henderson High School Environmental Club; Friends of the Gordon Area

2007: Pennsylvania Department of Natural Resources; WCU Alumni Association; Darlington Biological Society; MENTA Cafe

Contact: ghertel@wcupa.edu; 610-436-2722; 484-883-3371

NO TRAIL BIKES ARE ALLOWED IN THE GNA – They have increased the length of trails by 300% and are impacting the biodiversity in the GNA.

DOGS NEED TO BE LEASHED – Students doing laboratory assignments have been attacked by unleashed dogs.

WCU Public Safety: 610-436-3311