

Friends of Greenwich Point



P.O. BOX 711 • OLD GREENWICH, CT 06870 • Winter 2022

Eighteen Years of Bird Walks!

Congratulations to Cynthia Ehlinger and Meredith Sampson on their eighteenth year of leading the First Sunday Bird Walks at Greenwich Point! The birding group gathers at 9AM on the first Sunday of each month. This past year the size of the parties ranged from fifteen to thirty-five people. When the group is large it is split into two smaller groups.

Cynthia began birding with her mother, and after college continued with Cape May Bird Observatory, Brooklyn Bird Club, Greenwich Audubon, and Connecticut Ornithological Association for more advanced birding and hawk watching.

Meredith Sampson, who started the bird walks in 2004, oversees the non-profit Wild Wings Wildlife Care and Conservation as wildlife rehabilitator and environmental educator. The bird walks help teach the importance of preserving the biodiversity of native plants and wildlife, a value Meredith, Cynthia and FOGP hope to instill. FOGP has co-sponsored the bird walks with Wild Wings since 2019.

The bird species one can see at the Point are always changing. During colder months, many rafts of winter ducks are easily visible just offshore. In the Spring, colorful song birds fly between the tree tops. In June through early fall, shorebirds are plentiful. In Summer, Osprey can be seen and heard overhead.

On a typical bird walk, after a bird is spotted, Cynthia often takes out her guide book and shows the group the plumage differences between the male and female, the young and the mature, the breeding and non-breeding... the variations seem endless! When ducks are far offshore Cynthia will set up her scope on a tripod so everyone can take a look.

If you would like to participate, come to the main concession stand on the first Sunday of each month and look for the people with binoculars. If you don't have binoculars, Friends of Greenwich Point have some to lend to you!



photo credit: Cynthia Ehlinger

photo credit: Dale Atkins

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Photos from Paige Davis, Old Greenwich Photographer

Map of Greenwich Point in Holly Grove Shed



The wonderful map of Greenwich Point, located in the shed by the Holly Grove, that was created and donated by Ruth and Robert Fujitani in 1980 has a new cover. Jonathan Durazno of Marine Facilities helped FOGP install a new plexiglass cover to protect the map for many years to come.

Robert was best known for his pen and ink comics, most notably Flash Gordon. He won the prestigious Comic Con Comics Award in 2005.

According to their daughter, Susan Meller of CA, Ruth and Robert lived close by and never missed a day of walking at the Point. Robert was invited by Helen B. Kitchel, in whose memory the Holly Grove was created, to join the Greenwich Point Committee, which later became Friends of Greenwich Point.

Robert was an avid fisherman who collected the specimens and maintained the first aquarium at the Point. Both Ruth and Robert were artists and nature enthusiasts and would be happy to know all of the care so many groups put towards keeping the Point the special gem that it is. The Fujitani's also donated two paintings that hang in the Innis Arden Cottage - one of Tod's Point and the other of Great Captain's Lighthouse.

Continuing our Conservation Work at Greenwich Point

Conservation work at Greenwich Point is focused on the eradication of invasive non-native species, and with the help of volunteers, dozens of trees and shrubs were liberated from vines in 2021. We welcomed over forty volunteers to our annual clean-up of the Holly Grove in November. Many of the volunteers were Greenwich High School students who helped cut vines, clear brush, move boulders, and plant over 1500 daffodil bulbs. At the end of December, a dozen volunteers met to continue the vine cutting effort.

You may notice vines cut at eye-level hanging from trees. We do not pull the vines, so as to not harm the tree's branches or foliage. Invasive vines, including porcelain berry, honeysuckle and bittersweet reach the tree canopies, smothering native trees and shrubs by blocking sunlight, adding weight to the host's limbs, and competing for water and nutrients. We are very grateful to the volunteers who have helped. The new year is off to a great start; we have already gathered to cut vines on three cold mornings in January. It's quite a hardy, hardworking, dedicated bunch that seeks to restore native plants and habitat to the Point.

FoGP will be hosting additional habitat events in 2022 and we would love to have more volunteers!



Upcoming dates for vine cutting are:

- Friday, February 25
- Thursday, March 10
- Friday, March 25

If you would like to volunteer for one of our future vine-cutting events, please contact Diana Klingner at 4kling@gmail.com. We have lopping shears we are happy to lend you.

COME BE PART OF THE DE-VINE EXPERIENCE!

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photo credit: Cynthia Ehlinger

Bald Eagles - From Rare Visitor to Local Nester

Over the last few months, Bald Eagles have been frequently spotted at Greenwich Point. The large dead tree snag, near the first parking lot, seems to be a preferred spot for them to roost during the day.

In 1994, only one Bald Eagle nest was active in Connecticut. Today, there are approximately 75 known nests in the state with one nest located near the Point. Bald Eagles start to establish their breeding territories in early winter, often having eggs in their nest in February. Their large nests are often found near the tops of evergreen trees. Bald Eagles are almost always found near large bodies of water such as the Long Island Sound, the Mianus River, or our reservoirs.

Bald Eagles are identified by their large size with straight plank-like wings. The white heads and tails associated with adult birds often take 4 to 5 years to develop. Young Bald Eagles will be of similar size as adults with darker bodies and white mottled feathers on their underside.

During late summer and into fall, Bald Eagles may migrate south. Bald Eagles that nest further north may migrate into Connecticut during the winter months if these large bodies of water remain open and unfrozen.

Safe Roads Sundays

FoGP continues to sponsor Safe Roads Sundays through April 11th.

Traffic is restricted between the hours of 9:00 am and 12:30 pm so you can enjoy a safe and picturesque route to walk and ride your bikes. **Only sanctioned cars will be allowed in during this time - including, but not limited to, emergency vehicles, boat owners, handicapped drivers and park employees - so please be alert and let them by.**

FoGP Holiday Party

The Innis Arden Cottage was transformed into a winter wonderland for the annual holiday luncheon for approximately 28 town employees who work at Greenwich Point. Friends of Greenwich Point works closely with these employees to implement a range of projects, such as tree plantings, removal of invasive plants, Safe Roads and more. The luncheon is our way to thank the employees for their hard work over the past year. After the luncheon, a dozen gift cards from local merchants were raffled off. A special thank you to Sound Beach Pizza and Garden Catering for generously donating cards.



2021 Ornament Sold Out

It was another successful year for our Holiday Ornament fundraising project. The 2021 ornament, which was a picture of the Holly Grove in the winter, sold out in the beginning of December - all 540! They continue to be a favorite holiday item and we'd like to thank everyone who purchased one or more this year. Next year will be the 10th in our series and we are considering bringing back all ten in limited quantities.

Save the Date

On Wednesday, May 4 at 7pm, join a conversation with Paul Greenberg, author of the James Beard Award-winning bestseller *Four Fish* and *American Catch* and a regular contributor to *The New York Times*. This event will be offered in person at the Perrot Memorial Library and live streamed. Organized by Friends of Greenwich Point, in partnership with Perrot Memorial Library, Greenwich Shellfish Commission, The Foodshed Network and Greenwich Conservation Commission.

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P.O. Box 711
Old Greenwich, CT 06870



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www.FriendsofGreenwichPoint.org

Join the Friends of Greenwich Point! This year your membership will support:

- Habitat Restoration
- Dune Planting
- Tree and Shrub Planting
- Safe Roads Sundays
- Nature Education
- Summer Concert Series
- Winter Bird Feeding
- Quarterly Newsletter
- Holly Grove Improvement
- Osprey Platforms

Please help preserve and enhance the beauty and enjoyment of Greenwich Point!

You can also join on our website,
www.friendsofgreenwichpoint.org



@friendsofgreenwichpoint

Membership Form



Become a member of The Friends of Greenwich Point and join us in preserving and protecting Greenwich Point and promoting safe, sustainable recreation.

Please make your tax-deductible check payable to: Friends of Greenwich Point and mail to P.O. Box 711, Old Greenwich, CT 06870. Or you can use PayPal – www.friendsofgreenwichpoint.org - membership section.

Annual Family Memberships

\$25.....	EGRET
\$50.....	HOODED MERGANSER
\$100.....	OSPREY
\$250.....	EAGLE

Name _____

Address _____

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Email _____