



Monthly Newsletter of Friends of Pachaug Forest



More Photos from the most excellent CCC Statue Unveiling event!

Judy Jones aka ENERGIZER led a group of willing participants for some serious aerobic fun with hula hoops.

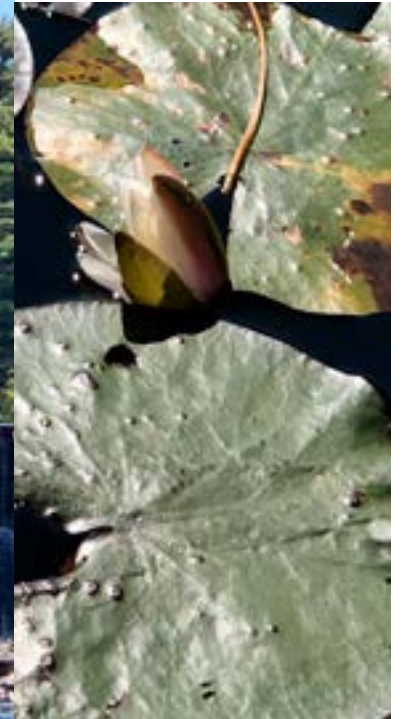


Our thanks go out to Boy Scout Troop #74 and their leader Aaron Beaulieu. You did a great job guys! And big thanks to Voluntown, especially First Selectwoman Tracy Hansen and her staff for all their help in making this event possible!





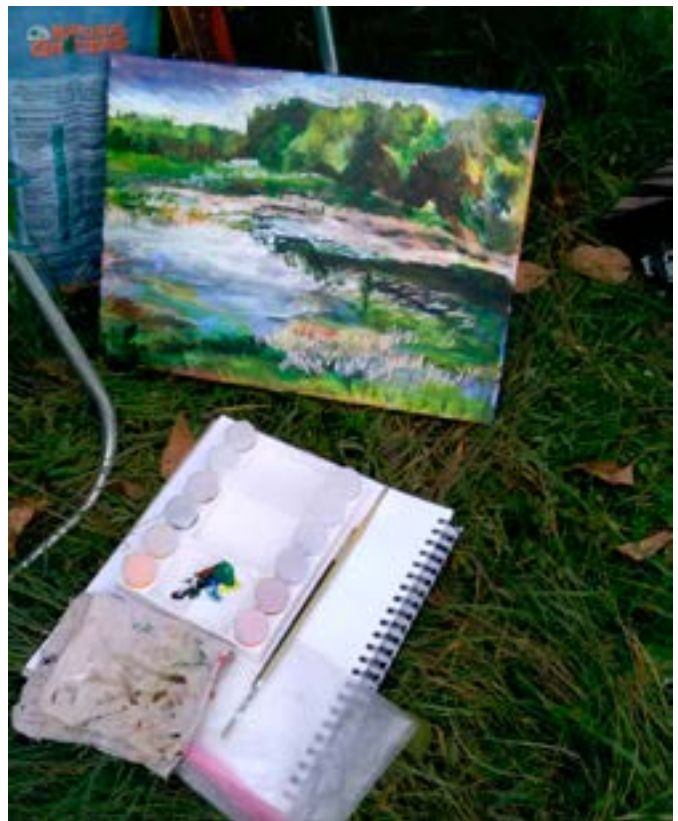
Saturday, October 5 - A Kayak Excursion on the Pachaug River - It was a beautiful day on the river as our entrepid crew set off. Over the next several hours we took in beautiful views and wildlife, such as a family of ducks. It was a great send off for the season!



Plein Aire painting on October 6th.

A small group gathered once again at Heron Marsh at 9am. There is something special about making art outside with friends! The day cooperated by being perfectly lovely until noon time when it started getting cloudy.

All mediums were welcomed!



A tiny art critic arrived to help us keep our inspiration strong!

Walktober 2019

Sunday, October 13

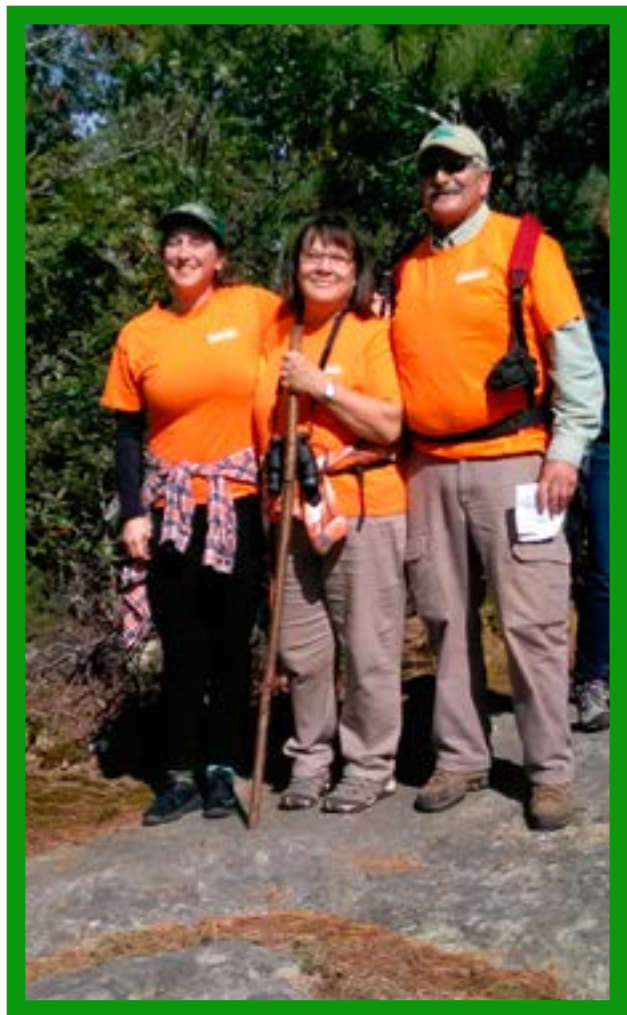
We were graced with another beautiful weekend for FoPF's contribution to The Last Green Valley's Walktober program. Bob, Jen and Becky Panko led a group up to Mt. Misery in a leisurely fashion, commenting on and checking off on a list the tree and shrub species we found on the way.

We learned the difference between White Pine and Pitch Pine needles, and between Red and White Oak. White Pine needles come in groups of five and they are pliable and soft. Pitch Pine needles come in groups of three and are stiff and prickly. Once you know the difference you can't see them the same way anymore. Red Oak leaves have points, even the more rounded Black Oak which is in the Red Oak group. White Oaks have rounded leaves. If you have a white oak on your property, consider gathering acorns and bringing them to the Rangers office in Pachaug. They want to plant them on Laurence Rd. where there was recent logging due to the Gypsy Moth infestation.

Bob made observations about plagues and pests that have affected the forest in recent times. The forest road leading up to Mt Misery has been closed for several months due to

the devastation created by the Gypsy Moths. Bob pointed out how you can tell if an American Chestnut has the blight. Yes, there are still Chestnuts, but they rarely get very big anymore because of this long-standing plague. The Eastern Hemlock's were hit with the aegilid mite, and more recently foresters are on the alert for the Emerald Ash Borer which has taken so many of the White Ashes in New York.

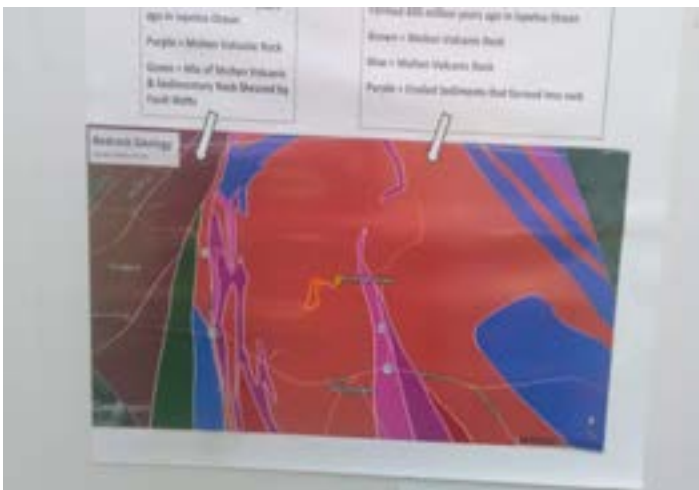
Becky introduced us to the world of lichens and mosses. Lichens are a handy combination of green algae and fungi. We saw many varieties on rocks and tree trunks on the way. Becky pointed out a moss that had filamentous sporo-





A Blighted Chestnut

Winged Sumac



phytes sticking out of it. The spores on the end of these sporophytes will be broadcast by the wind. Mosses like the one we saw have both sexes at different times. The sporophytes are the male stage.

Another tree we identified was the Black Gum. It's brilliant orange leaves distinguish it this time of year. Becky pointed out the difference between the Winged Sumac and the invasive "Burning Bush" or *Euonymus alatus* which has been sold popularly in nurseries. The Black Cherry or *Prunus serotina*, is a pioneering species native to the area, as is the Eastern Red Cedar which isn't really a cedar at all. When Europeans first saw it growing here in profusion, they thought it looked like the cedars where they came from, but our Red Cedar is really in the Juniper family (*Juniperus virginiana*). It's berries have been used by the native peoples for seasoning. It is also the species used for cedar chests and storage even though it really isn't a cedar! Thanks to the Pankos for another excellent Walktober event!



October 13 ~ Pumpkin Painting!

Following the hike, some of us stuck around to paint a pumpkin. We were joined by an enthusiastic group of youngsters (and a few dogs), and a good time was had turning the innocent pumpkins into scary monsters. Some of us got more paint on ourselves than on the pumpkin! It was a great opportunity to bring families together and enjoy being outside.



Growing Season ~ by Lauren Blair Churchill

I was late to get bulbs in this year. I am hoping that a week before the freeze we are supposed to get this Saturday will have been enough for my new babies to have settled in so that I can look forward to surprises next spring. Between now and then, if you are a gardener or horticulturalist, no doubt there is little time to waste before considering what next year's garden should look like. The "off" season is planning season!

What can we begin to consider as we hang up the rake and the shovel for the last time and water the tender plants we brought in to winter? For starters, what did you like most about the garden this year? What didn't you like? Perhaps you expanded this year and did well. Or maybe you bit off more than you could chew. The answers you give to questions such as this determines your design for next season. Maybe you noticed that there is a little more light where a tree had to be cut, and are considering what kind of light-loving native species can go there. Maybe you had to say good-bye to a long living perennial that has been fading away. Maybe you were amazed by the way the Cone Flowers you planted pop up in places in the garden you did not put them, and at the way they persisted and flowered anyway after being chomped by deer. I never meant my garden to be a grocery store for our local deer, but they seem to think I have. The next steps in planning next year's garden will involve making lists and even some drawing. Stay tuned to next month's newsletter for more information along those lines!

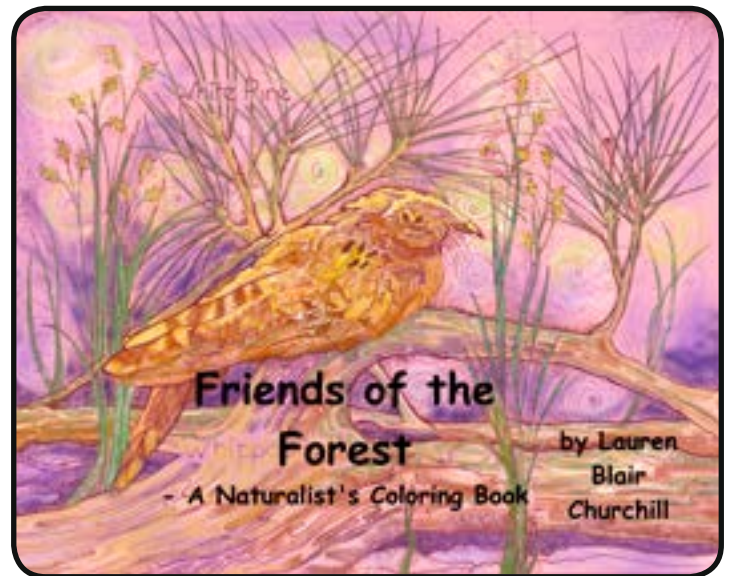
As I look into next year, I hope to expand this newsletter and publish articles, photos and drawings by any of our members old and young. This is our newsletter and we need your voices! Please contact me with your material:
lauren.b.churchill@gmail.com
I am looking forward to our collaboration!

<Be Well>

Clean-ups are ongoing! If you would like to help Keep Pachaug Clean, contact Sharon Viadella at Viadella.l@att.net or 860-333-7320



Now Available! At long last "Friends of the Forest; a Naturalist's Coloring Book" is here! Enjoy 20 pages of illustrations featuring 20 forest friends in their natural habitat. Learn something about these unique creatures and plants with the accompanying descriptions.



Order yours through PayPal by sending \$25.00 to FriendsOfPachaugForest@gmail.com. All proceeds go to benefit **Friends of Pachaug Forest!**

Upcoming Programs for November - December 2019

November

- **6 - Ceremonial Stonework: The Enduring Native American Presence on the Land**, 6:30 PM at the Wheeler Library, 101 Main Street, North Stonington. Presentation by Markham Starr. This slideshow takes the audience on an extended walk through the woods to see the ceremonial stonework left behind by the indigenous population that occupied New England for 12,000 years. Native Americans built nearly two dozen distinct types of structures in our area, ranging from cairns to stone serpent effigies, and these spiritual offerings remain standing in now long abandoned woods. While Native American stonework is widely recognized out west and to the south, New England's stonework remains obscure, having blended back into the woods. This slideshow, from the book by the same name, comes from photographs of over 8000 objects and ceremonial sites in North Stonington. This talk will be followed on Sunday the 10th of November, with a guided tour of a local site to give those interested a first-hand experience of the stonework.

- **10 - Native American Ceremonial Stonework Hike**, The hike will leave promptly at 9:30 am, from the paved, public boat launch on Wyassup Lake Road. (From the Fair Grounds head out Wyassup Road and turn left onto Wyassup Lake Road. Go approximately .7 miles to the launch area on the right.) Over 12,000 years ago, the first people to inhabit New England wandered into the area on the heels of the retreating glacier that had covered Connecticut with more than a mile thick sheet of ice. While it is well known by most that these people hunted with spears tipped with beautifully worked points of stone, fewer people are aware that later generations built ceremonial stone structures that still exist by the thousands, just in our town alone. This hike will take you off well-worn trails and into the woods to see some of the two dozen types of stone structures they left behind. As these structures are generally found in the worst terrain North Stonington has to offer, a hiking stick is highly recommended along with appropriate footwear. Length of hike in time depends on group size – it is probably considered a moderately difficult hike in terms of terrain. Although the overall distance is a little less than 2 miles, plan on a total trip time of at least three hours. If you are interested in learning more about this type of ceremonial stonework before the hike, the library has a copy of Ceremonial Stonework: The Enduring Presence of Native Americans on the Land. Hike led by Markham Starr, who has mapped and photographed over 10,000 of these structures in North Stonington and the surrounding towns. A hiking stick, proper footwear, camera, water, snacks and a bag lunch (if staying for the 1:00 pm hike) are suggested.

- **10 -Wyassup Lake, High Ledge Overlook Hike**, picnic lunch at 12:30. The hike will leave promptly at 1:00 pm from public boat launch on Wyassup Lake Road. This is considered a moderately difficult hike in terms of terrain and steep elevations. Overall distance is 1.5 miles, plan on a total trip time about 2 hours. A hiking stick, proper footwear, camera, water, snacks and a bag lunch are suggested. The foliage and views should be stunning.

In **December**, Join Friends of Pachaug Forest for a Holiday Dinner with "Friends"
Limited Seating Available



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