

Andover Naturally

# The World From Mud Pond

By Lee Carvalho  
Beacon volunteer

Mud Pond, located on Proctor's woodlands north of the campus, is a delightful place to spend an hour or so observing the natural world. On recent trips I've watched wood ducks nibbling their way along the pond's edge, hooded mergansers diving for food, and yellow-rumped warblers flitting through branches.

In the woods, trailing arbutus has given way to Canadian mayflowers, and tiny yellow violets bloom along trails. I was entertained the other day by an otter diving for fish – and then suddenly eating one before my eyes.

It takes about 30 minutes to walk to Mud Pond from the campus; if you'd like to visit and need directions, just contact me at the e-mail address below.

Further up the side of Ragged Mountain, at the eastern end, is a cliff face known as The Bulkhead. According to Chris Martin of New Hampshire Audubon, the pair of peregrine falcons occupying the cliff is not incubating young. It is thrilling to see them; I was fascinated to spend a couple hours watching them perch, fly, dive, harass the nearby ravens, and chase interlopers away from their territory.

The Bulkhead was a regular nesting place for peregrines before the DDT era, when they disappeared. According to Chris, "We first began seeing peregrines here again in 2007, but the site has yet to produce young. The two birds seen here on May 10 this year are at least the third different female and at least the second different male occupying the site since 2007."

Although it is a challenging walk to

get there, the talus slope at the bottom of the cliff is a perfect place to observe the birds. Again, contact me if you would like directions.

In her terrific book, *Naturally Curious*, Mary Holland claims that "June is a month of possibilities." To appreciate those possibilities as they develop here in Andover, look and listen for:

- White admirals, those dark butterflies with a white band across their wings, on roads or near mud
- June bugs banging into your screens
- Female snapping turtles looking for nesting sites in sand, light soil, or gravel
- Indian cucumber roots, bunchberry flowers, and lady's slippers in the woods
- Warblers returning from the Caribbean
- The loose-banjo-string "plunk" of green frogs hoping to attract a mate
- The hatching of loon eggs. According to Mary Holland, the downy chicks make their way to water within two hours and are able to swim immediately.

My idea is to collect observations of the natural world here in Andover from our community, collate them, and share the news with our *Beacon* readers. Where is the best heron rookery these days? Who knows which of our lakes and ponds have nesting loons? Where is a good place to see showy lady's slippers? Who has had an exciting encounter with a wild animal?

Please send your stories and suggestions to me at [AndoverNaturally@AndoverBeacon.com](mailto:AndoverNaturally@AndoverBeacon.com).

## FNRT from page 18

**June 4, National Trails Day rides:** Myra shared the cycling details of the seven rides that will cover most of the 46 Northern Rail Trail miles.

**Fourth of July plans:** Plans are in place for the Firecracker 5K on the Rail Trail, and we'll host our table on the Village Green as well.

**Recreational Trails Program grant plans:** We have been awarded the grant for \$30,000 for the next section of trail building. Big thanks to Nita for all her work.

**Strategic planning:** It was suggested that we hold separate meetings for strategic planning but not use a strategic planner. We will have a special meeting on Wednesday, September 28.

**Letter to Concord Monitor about horses on Rail Trail.** Hannah Howard of the Blackwater Trail Riders came to talk about horses and their riding on the trail. She read her letter to the *Concord Monitor* in response to the May 11 letter complaining about damage to the trail. She also shared an article on horse manure outlining its harmless qualities.

Bill Egge spoke about two New

Hampshire statutes (RSA 147:13 and 163-b:13) about leaving horse manure in public locations. Bill had inspected and cleaned up the trail near Depot Street (where the author of the first letter lives) and removed horse manure. He observed very little trail damage.

Bill also shared a document that the BTR uses entitled *Minimize Your Impact on the Trail*. He is willing to remove horse manure any time there is a problem. Craig Heim noted on May 2 that he noted horse hoof marks and suggested that horses only walk when the trail is soft.

Alex requested that the BTR help to create signs to identify the new (softer) trail section from Potter Place to the Danbury highway shed with instructions on the best use for those conditions. Hannah said the BTR are happy to do so. Alex will send Hannah the language and in addition to the new section, they will post the signs around the Mills Ford Bridge in Danbury.

Bob noted that a major Abenaki (Peponki) trail ran along the Northern Rail Trail, and this could be a historical aspect of the rail trail we can share in the future.

# Co-op Extension Workshops Continue In Boscawen

## BAC press release

The Town of Boscawen Agricultural Commission (BAC), The Merrimack County Extension Office, and the Natural Resources Conservation Services announce the next in their series of lectures.

## How To Make Good Compost

With Ann LaCroix, Master Gardener, on June 6

The first portion of this workshop will be held at the Boscawen Town Office Meeting Room, 116 North Main Street, Boscawen, starting at 6 PM on Monday, June 6. For the first part of the workshop Ann will show slides and

teach us the principles and theory of Lagsagna Composting, using a pop bottle. We will then go up to the Community Garden at Woodbury Lane and Corn Hill Road for a "hands on" experience and a question-and-answer session.

Ann completed her Master Gardener training in the fall of 2010, and has the most recent knowledge about composting.

While registration is not required, it helps ensure that we have enough free handouts for everyone. Please contact us at [Agriculture03303@gmail.com](mailto:Agriculture03303@gmail.com), 796-6241, [Alan@TownOfBoscawen.org](mailto:Alan@TownOfBoscawen.org), or 753-9188.



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