

# Comments on Connetquot



Published by the Friends of Connetquot River State Park Preserve

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings Friends!

As summer gracefully transitions into the golden hues of autumn, Connetquot stirs to life in countless ways. The river now flows with a refreshing chill, and hungry trout dart through its crystalline waters. Pollinators buzz busily in the garden, aware that the vibrant summer blossoms are waning. Cooler weather allows our educators to resume indoor classes, and historic house tours beckon curious visitors.

But there's more—a palpable excitement as we prepare for the next season. As fall leaves begin their colorful transformation, we invite you to join us in celebrating a momentous occasion: the NYS Parks 100th Anniversary! On Saturday, October 5, from 10 am to 3 pm, our Centennial Celebration awaits. Picture environmental and educational booths, children immersed in arts and crafts, guided tours of the historic Grist Mill and Clubhouse, and even fly-fishing instruction. And don't miss the grand opening of the Hatchery Exhibit—it promises to be a highlight of the festivities.

But that's not all! As autumn deepens, we'll embrace the spookier side with Haunted Halloween from October 11 to 13. And come December, our annual GALA will celebrate recent accomplishments, followed by festive holiday decorating. Oh, and rumor has it that Mr. and Mrs. Claus themselves will pay us a visit on December 22nd!

So mark your calendars, gather your loved ones, and let's revel in the magic of Connetquot's changing seasons together.

See you soon,  
Janet Marie



## *Board Spotlight: The Invasive Species Strike Team*

By Yuriy Litvinenko



The Invasive Species Strike Team is the regional Environmental Stewardship Office's crew of four seasonal workers who survey for and remove invasive plants. For the last 7 years, we have been hiring technicians to get their hands dirty with eradicating invasives and this year we have Lauren Kelly, Rebecca Greenwald, Patrick Muccini, and Mark McHugh (pictured from left to right). Their work is vital to keeping invasive plants in state parks under control, whether that means eliminating small infestations, suppressing larger infestations, or monitoring sites of interest. They are all extremely hard workers who can be found managing problematic plants throughout the region. From Jones Beach to Montauk Point, the strike team targets a wide variety of plant that would be exhaustive to list, but includes Canada Thistle, Mile-a-Minute vine, Water Chestnut, Japanese Barberry, and much more. Without their intense attention, many of our parks would have a lot less biodiversity. Keeping invasive plant populations out of our vulnerable natural communities allows for native plants and animals to thrive and our strike team happily defends these communities even in the face of heat, thorns, ticks, and mosquitoes. Next time you see them out in the field, be sure to say hello and ask them about what species they're going after; they'll be glad to show you.

### *What's Happening in the Park*

Connetquot Park Manager Jessica Anderson-Ruiz Park sent us the following:

With the heat of summer past us (hopefully!), the fish are very happy with the normal river temperatures. Matt Caputo, Hatchery Manager, has been stocking regularly. With the nursery project at the hatchery complete and predator proofed, the brook trout we stripped last fall are thriving in their new home.

Through support from Belmont Lake State Park, we procured two kayaks. They are available for rent for \$50/kayak. We are offering two sessions, 8AM to 11:30AM, 12PM to 3:30PM. At this time, the rental kayaks can only be launched in the Main Pond. They can be used for fly-fishing, bird watching, and wildlife viewing. Rentals can be made on a first-come, first-serve basis at the Park Office.

We now carry binocular rentals. You can rent a pair for the day for \$7. Great for birding and other wildlife viewing.

Mid-August we assisted the DEC Fisheries Unit with their annual electro fishing. It's always a great time, partnering with the DEC and collecting samples from the river.

Fri 10/11 Sat 10/12, and Sun 10/13 is the Haunted House and Grounds event. Reservations will be taken on [eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com). This is a family program for ages 8+. Wander the Clubhouse and trails of the Preserve in search of ghosts and monsters based on local Long Island myths and legends.

## *Hoof Beats*

By Carole Scialdone



The Summer started off, as summers do, so very hot and humid. Suddenly, everything turns green and lush. The tree lined trails provide the much needed shade, but they don't help very much with the humidity. The warmth of Summer does, however, bring out all the wildlife in our amazing park preserve. The whitetail deer are plentiful and, if you're lucky, seen with their adorably curious fawns on almost every ride. There are lots of turkeys trotting around with their poults and we get to see the Eastern Box Turtles sunning themselves on our sandy trails. My favorite of all, though, are the beautiful and robust American red fox. They were very active and curious this year. I just love their playful antics.

The Park staff has done a phenomenal job keeping our trails trimmed and graded this past Summer, even with all the rain we had. They were busy every day, trimming branches, removing fallen limbs and trees, adding sand where needed and dragging/leveling the trails. All their hardwork is very much appreciated by horses and riders alike. Connetquot has a new Park Ranger. Ken is responsible for checking fishing and bridle path permits and is a friendly face that can be seen patrolling the Park daily.

While it's always difficult to say goodbye to Summer, the upcoming Fall promises to be cooler and much more colorful with crimson, tangerine and golden colored leaves. Connetquot's Fall colors never disappoint. In my opinion, there is nothing better than spending a beautiful, brisk, sunny day riding one of your favorite horses with a group of great friends.

### *Save the Date!*

Please Join the Friends of Connetquot  
At our Annual GALA  
Thursday, December 5 beginning at 6:00 PM

We invite you to join us for our fundraising gala, this year celebrating our many accomplishments in 2024, projects we hope to take on in 2025 and bestowing the honoring of the Gil Bergen Award to SSSC Historian Keith Snedecor.

Enjoy passed appetizers, drinks, dinner, raffle prizes, great music that you will want to dance or sing to thanks to the talents of Tommy Duck. A beautiful evening at the gloriously decorated Snapper Inn on our beloved Connetquot River.

If you would like to help the gala committee with the planning, raffle prizes and tickets please email Janet Soley at [janetmariesoley@gmail.com](mailto:janetmariesoley@gmail.com)





## *Grist Mill Repairs*

By John Remmer

In 1855 work was done to upgrade the mill. Part of this work was the installation of a set of gears for each of the new mill stones. When the mill was restored in 2015 these gears were not set back in place, but rather put on display in front of the entrance. Powderpost beetles, carpenter ants and the ravages of time have taken their toll, and one of them collapsed. Having one gear still intact as a pattern we wanted to repair the rotted one. The first step was to locate the wood (oak) to be used for the shaft and the spokes. Trees from the Park which had been damaged were inspected. We were looking for one with a 50 inch circumference (15.5 inch diameter) after stripping the bark. A big tree! Logs were selected and the one for the spokes was prepped. First the outer slab was removed. Next we moved the gear ring to our work site and set it on work posts. The bolts which attached the spokes to the ring gear were first removed. It was then possible to remove the spokes, which were moved into the Carpenter's Shop. Next, templates for the new spokes made. There are three spokes, each being notched in the middle so that they nest where they pass through the shaft. Additional cuts were made to provide the planks for the spokes. Two of the planks are shown in the photo below with the patterns for the spokes resting on them.





## *Grist Mill Repairs (cont'd)*

### **South Shaft**

In the spring of 2020 work was completed on the activation of the South Shaft. This spring the shaft developed "hiccups" which were traced to wear of the support bearing assembly. Possibly because of several extraordinary high tides, the grease fitting in the circular raceway had become badly corroded and fell out, and the hole enlarged, allowing some of the ball bearings to escape.

Notice, in the photo below, the hole and some of the damaged balls inside the bearing.



Damaged support bearing

In addition, the overrun clutch assembly at the top of the shaft froze. This assembly prevents the inertia of the rotating shaft from tearing loose the drive mechanism when the gear motor is shut off.



Overrunning clutch and bearing assembly



## Elevator Belt

Age takes its toll on many things, especially those in the grist mill. The machinery is old to start with, and weather and operation fatigues many of the moving parts. The grist elevator belt broke this summer and required splicing. Eventually we will have to replace the belt which is made of a cloth material similar to the covering on old fire hoses

Comment by Janet Soley: John says it so well...Age takes its toll on many things. Our mill needs you, our patrons, to keep it safe and operational for visitors. Please consider making a donation towards it's upkeep at [www.friendsofconnetquot.org](http://www.friendsofconnetquot.org)

## *History Team Update*

By Ritamarie Weigand

A Story about “Before and After”



The History Team recently hired book conservator, Paul Belard, to begin restoration work on some of the Club’s membership records and ledgers. On September 6, 2024, the restored books were returned in beautiful condition as seen in the above photo on the right. One of the conservator’s restored books will be included in our agreement with Long Island Library Resource Council (LILRC) for digitization of our clubs amazing history. LILRC archivist, Robert Anen, began work on September 9<sup>th</sup>. The Archivist is scheduled to scan our three “Duck” books dating from 1884 to 1944 and at least six of our SSSC scrapbooks at the LILRC facility in Bayport with their large overhead scanner for our oversized books. The scans will be the beginning of the Friends of Connetquot site on the NY Heritage web site available to view on the internet. LILRC will also train FOC staff how to use their equipment to continue scanning our SSSC books to continue our presence on the NY Heritage web site.

Does this sound interesting to you? Contact us at [www.friendsofconnetquot.org](http://www.friendsofconnetquot.org) and join the History Team for this next phase of our historic project!



**Connetquot River  
State Park Preserve  
Centennial Celebration**  
SATURDAY OCTOBER 5, 2024  
10AM- 3PM





- Informational Exhibits
- Childrens Crafts/Games
- Fly Fishing Instruction
- Historic House & Grist Mill Tours
- And Much More!

For more info contact the Park Office  
631-581-1005  
4090 Sunrise Hwy, Oakdale, NY 11769

ALL ACTIVITIES ARE FREE!  
SE Parking Fee in Effect

New York State  
100 Years  
Parks, Recreation and  
Historic Preservation  
1862-2024

## *Give Us Your Best Shot*

Share your photos of the Preserve with us! Send us up to four photos, in .jpeg or .png digital format, for a chance to win a free year's membership in FOC. Photos must be current (within a year of submission) and shot within the park. Please give the approximate location of the scene whenever possible. DEADLINE for next issue: **December 2, 2024.**

Send your files to Janet Soley at [janetmariesoley@gmail.com](mailto:janetmariesoley@gmail.com)

## *5th Annual Long Island Women's Fishing Expo*



Luisa Collins with her instructor Ed Koehler



Tricia Walter and her instructor John Vatalaro

photos by Janet Soley

The event held on September 14<sup>th</sup> was fantastic! The weather and the fish cooperated. Approximately 40 women received instructions and most caught their first fish on a fly! Many thanks to Art Flick TU, Long Island TU, Long Island Fly Rodders and Idle Hour Fly Fishers and the DEC!

# Friends of Connetquot Programs at Connetquot River State Park Preserve

## *Friends of Connetquot Fall Fishing Outing*

Friday, October 18 - 7:30 AM

The Friends would like to invite all to enjoy a day of fly fishing and a tasty lunch with beverage from the Snapper Inn. Note: all park rules still apply. Admission is \$80 per person. We are sorry, but there will be no refunds for cancellations. The event is limited to 25 people, so please apply as soon as possible. Reservations must be received by October 14th so lunches can be ordered.



## *Holiday Decorating*

Saturday, December 14 – 1:00 PM

Help the Friends get the Clubhouse ready for the holiday season and Santa's visit!

Refreshments will be served



Community Service  
hours available

## *Claus's at Connetquot*

Sunday, December 22, 2024 – 1:00 PM



Enjoy the afternoon at the clubhouse with a visit from Mr & Mrs Claus! The decorations will sparkle, the candy canes will be super minty and the hot chocolate will be extra chocolately!

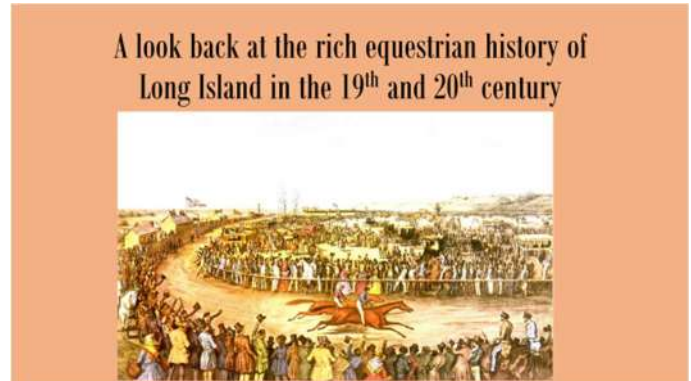
Enjoy stories by the fireplace. Bring your letter for Santa and wear your festive best!



# *The Equestrian History of Long Island*

Saturday, January 18, 2025 – 1:00 PM

Jerry and Rita Trapani, lifelong equestrians have created a look at the rich equestrian history on Long Island. Let's go on a trip back through time and see the racetracks, estates, parks and shows that have made Long Island one of the most important equestrian venues in the world. We'll also see how many celebrities and Olympic equestrians started right here on our small island. We'll look at polo and foxhunting and how they have changed over the years. Hop on the time machine and hold on tight.



## *Great State Park Programs!*

**Reservations are required and are taken beginning 2 weeks prior to each program.**

To make a reservation, visit [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) and search #NatureAdventure (Notice that's "Ed" not "Ad").

Fees: \$4.00 per adult, \$4.00 per child and children under 3 are free.

Seasonal Parking Fees are required.

Outdoor programs are rain or shine, so please dress appropriately.

**Haunted House and Grounds (Family Program)** **FREE** **Fri, Sat, Sun - Oct 11, 12, 13th 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM**  
Wander the Clubhouse and trails of the Preserve in search of ghosts and monsters based on local Long Island myths and legends. Ages 8+ recommended.

**Living History Clubhouse Tours (Family Program)** **Sunday, October 20th 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM**  
Learn the history of the tavern & the high society club through living history characters telling their experiences from decades of clubhouse history.

**Haunted Trails on Trails (Children's Program) Saturday, Oct 19th 10:00 AM - 11:00 & 11:00 - 12:00 PM**  
Collect prizes along the trails as you unravel haunted myths of Halloween! Feel free to dress in costume to celebrate!

**Colonial Games (Family Program) Sunday, Nov 24<sup>th</sup> 1:00- 2:30 PM**  
Test your coordination with a ball and cup. How far can you roll a hoop? Take a journey to the past and visit Colonial America!

**Historic Clubhouse Tours (Family Program) Sunday Nov 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, Dec 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> 1:00 PM – 3:00PM**  
Learn the history of the tavern and the high society club which shaped the Preserve into what it is today.

## More Great State Park Programs!

### Nighttime Hikers Special (Adult Program)

Sunday, Dec 8<sup>th</sup> 2:30 – 6:30 PM

Join us on an evening hike to the park's Northern Trails to experience landmarks and sights not frequently seen. Bring a packed lunch.

### Holiday Wreaths (Adult Program)

Friday, Dec 13<sup>th</sup> 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Create a Holiday wreath with nature inspired decorations found around the habitats of Long Island.

### Owl Prowl (Citizen Science Adult Program)

Saturday, Dec 28<sup>th</sup> 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Survey and discover the raptors of the night in a citizen science program to study the owls of Connetquot.

### Tiny Tots Programs!

**Making Monsters** - October 23rd

**Falling Leaves** - Nov 6th

**Pumpkins** - Nov 20th

#### Reservations are required and are taken beginning 2 weeks prior to each program.

To make a reservation, visit [Eventbrite.com](http://Eventbrite.com) and search #NatureAdventure (Notice that's "Ed" not "Ad").

Fees: \$4.00 per adult, \$4.00 per child and children under 3 are free.

Seasonal Parking Fees are required.

Outdoor programs are rain or shine, so please dress appropriately.

## Reminders

We've mentioned these items in past issues, but they're worth repeating:

**Trail maps to go:** You can carry a Connetquot trail map in your pocket. Type Connetquot Park on your phone browser or go directly to the park website, <https://parks.ny.gov/parks/8/details.aspx>; scroll down to a "Maps" button on the right side of the screen, and click on the Download button. This works for iOS and Android phones and is free.

**Centennial Challenge:** Again, don't forget New York State Parks' Centennial Challenge, celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> year of our park system. Parks has assembled a list of 100 tasks covering virtually every conceivable activity offered at its facilities, ranging strenuous to sedentary. You have until the end of the year to complete 24 out of the 100 to earn a commemorative Centennial prize and have your name entered into a drawing for one of 24 three-year Empire Passes and a Centennial "swag bag."



Download the app at <https://www.parks.ny.gov/100/challenge> to track online, or print out the list at <https://www.parks.ny.gov/documents/100/OPRHPCentennialChallengeChecklist.pdf>.



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**Mission Statement**

The Friends of Connetquot is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation, conservation and history of the 3,473-acre Connetquot River State Park Preserve. We work to help management protect a pristine environment and historic buildings and artifacts. We also support educational programs, fishing facilities and hiking and equestrian trails.

The records of the Friends of Connetquot can be viewed in our room at the Preserve. The New York State Office of Charities Registration holds copies of the annual charities reports required by law.

PLEASE NOTE: Automatic defibrillators are available in the administration office, the BOCES room, the main building and at the hatchery. Park staff is trained in their use.

For Emergencies in the Preserve: Call the New York Park Police at 631-669-2500.

Also notify the Entrance Booth at 631-581-1005.



Photo by Carole Scialdone

The fox have been so playful! Have you seen them? Take a hike and look!



*We'll see you out there*

**Upcoming Events**

- October 5 – Centennial Celebration
- October 11-13– Haunted Connetquot
- October 18 – Friends Fishing Outing
- November – Indigenous History Month
- December 5 – FOC's ANNUAL GALA
- December 14 – Holiday Decorating
- December 22 – Claus's at Connetquot

Visit us at [www.friendsofconnetquot.org](http://www.friendsofconnetquot.org)



FRIENDS OF CONNETQUOT  
BOX 472  
OAKDALE NY 11769

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 96  
Smithtown,  
N.Y. 11787



**SAVE THE DATE**

**Saturday, March 8, 2025**

9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

**RADISSON HOTEL, HAUPPAUGE, NY**



The Friends of Connetquot thanks Parks and Trails New York and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation for their support of our efforts.

