



The Sketchbook

From the Superintendent

According to my watch as well as my thermometer, fall is fading away. National parks run on seasonal calendars following the ebb of visitor trends and geographic patterns. Here at Weir Farm, we are definitely riding the top of the wave. This summer has been a flurry of programs including Junior Ranger Retreat with our star Teacher Ranger Ken Dunaj, bus loads of girl scouts –some just arriving from Haiti, Groundwork teens keeping the landscape at its best, and many new junior rangers from around the country who have hiked the pond trail and painted the stone walls to their hearts' content. A true childhood rite of passage for which you are never too old! In the Weir House, furniture and metal conservators are working to restore original furnishings, stoves, and artifacts including Weir's etching press. Many other objects are being conserved off-site. The park continues to accept donations and make purchases of other items from private collections. Reuniting each item with the house, no matter how small, is a stroke of genius. Other items we are purchasing as close matches or having custom made, like a number of rugs which we want visitors to feel free to walk on. But as you know, some of our best resources are park staff and volunteers. So while Weir Farm National Historic Site remains one of the best parks in Connecticut to visit, it is by far the best national park to work at in the state. Come see us, get outside, take the pond walk, and paint your own masterpiece.

Linda A. Cook

Linda Cook
Superintendent

A Summer of Science at an Art Park



Amphibians are just one of the many natural resources that have been part of the inventory and monitoring projects conducted by the National Park Service Inventory and Monitoring team.

For all the park rangers you see at national parks, there are many National Park Service employees who work behind the scenes to conserve parks' natural and cultural resources. One such group is the National Park Service Inventory and Monitoring team.

As part of the Northeast Temperate Network of national parks, Weir Farm National Historic Sites's ecological conditions are regularly monitored by this group in areas such as forest health, water, wetlands, and biological integrity. Why? As stated by the Northeast Temperate Network, "the information obtained through long-term natural resource monitoring will have multiple applications for management decision-making, research, education, and promoting public understanding of park resources." This summer, Weir Farm underwent several inventory and monitoring projects. In June,

a group conducted a bat inventory using acoustic monitoring and mist nets at twenty locations around the park. Additionally, a water quality monitoring team made six visits to the site, testing water in the Weir Pond for pH levels, clarity, nitrogen and signs of invasive aquatic plants. A breeding bird monitoring team was also onsite for two days.

In addition to the summer inventories, two inventories were completed this spring, including a study of the park's vernal pools, and another of a species of ground beetle that is of special concern in Connecticut.

The Northeast Temperate Network was established by the National Park Service to monitor ecological conditions in twelve parks located in seven northeastern states as well as six additional states through which the Appalachian National Scenic Trail passes.

Over 900 Junior Rangers Inducted



Girl Scout sketching at the Weir Pond.

Weir Farm National Historic Site now has more than nine hundred new official junior rangers amongst its ranks, thanks in large part to three special programs conducted over the course of the summer.

In a special arrangement with the Wilton public school system and the National Park Service's Teacher-Ranger-Teacher program, Weir Farm utilized the skills of local government and social studies teacher Ken Dunaj. Ken developed and presented four day-long Junior Ranger Retreats, summer camp sessions in which campers painted, sketched, hiked, and learned the history of Weir Farm. More than one hundred campers – ranging from ages six to thirteen – earned their Junior Ranger badges and patches.

Weir Farm also recently partnered with the Girl Scouts of Connecticut to bring underserved girl scouts from the Stamford area to their local national park. Hundreds of girls spent time at Weir Farm this summer hiking, drawing, painting, learning about the natural world and J. Alden Weir, and earned their Junior Ranger patches in the process.

Finally, Park Ranger Emily Bryant brought a bit of Weir Farm to campers at the neighboring Woodcock Nature Center in Wilton this August. Campers devoted part of their day to painting with watercolors, and added almost one hundred more names to our list of Junior Rangers.

Keep in mind that anyone can become an official Weir Farm Junior Ranger, simply by picking up one of two activity booklets at

the visitor center. Use clues to search for hidden stamps while Letterboxing, or make nature observations and sketches on a hike to the pond with the Pond Pack. Earn your Junior Ranger badge and patch today at Weir Farm National Historic Site!



Teacher Ranger Ken with aspiring Junior Rangers.

Artist-In-Residence Studio Opens

The new Artist-In-Residence Studio was completed in May 2010. A modern facility in a rehabilitated historic structure, this studio opens on to native woodlands and the translucent, filtered sunlight that Weir and his colleagues sought. Designed by Faesy-Smith Architects of Wilton, the studio

Weir Farm Flora On Exhibit



Joan Smith-Walleck, *Cornus florida* - Dogwood.

Winter may be approaching, but you can still find beautiful botanicals in bloom! *Weir Farm Flora: Botanical Paintings on Porcelain Tiles* by Joan Smith-Walleck presents 34 works which feature botanicals found in and around the farm's gardens and grounds each season of the year. Joan, a porcelain painter for over 40 years, was inspired to complete this exhibition after she learned of J. Alden Weir's connection to the Tile Club - a group established in New York City in 1877. Tile Club members - artists, writers, architects, and musicians - met regularly to paint on tiles while exchanging ideas and sharing good fellowship, and took sketching expeditions that contributed to the development of American Impressionism. Come see how Joan is keeping the tradition of tile painting alive at Weir Farm!

has already welcomed six artists. Visitors can view this creative space, speak with the current artist, and learn how Weir Farm is keeping its artistic tradition alive and energized. For more information, call (203) 834-1896 x13.



New Artist-In-Residence Studio.

VIP Pat Hegnauer Receives Award

Earlier this year, volunteer Pat Hegnauer was chosen by the Northeast Region of the National Park Service to receive the Hartzog Enduring Service Award for her outstanding volunteer service in support of Weir Farm.

For the past 15 years, Pat has been the anchor, catalyst, and a tireless source of volunteer energy in the accomplishment of so many critical tasks, projects, and programs at Weir Farm. She embodies all of the qualities of the ideal Weir Farm volunteer – she is a talented artist, expert gardener, steadfast preservationist, dynamic educator, and an active community organizer. It's because of Pat's unending and impassioned efforts that she was chosen to receive this prestigious award.

The Hartzog Enduring Service Award is an award that is bestowed on an individual who has had a sustained, positive impact on the National Park Service.

Conservation Corner



Dave Arnold conserving a historic etching press.

For two weeks in late August, Weir Farm National Historic Site welcomed the expertise of two conservators from the National Park Service's conservation labs at Harpers Ferry Center, West Virginia.

Larry Bowers, a specialist in wooden artifacts, and Dave Arnold, an expert in metals, both set to work in the Weir House, Weir Studio, and Young Studio, conserving some of the larger pieces in the park's collection – or those too fragile to transport to the labs. From a 19th-century handcrafted Dutch sideboard the Weirs acquired on their honeymoon, to

Bob Fox Recognized for Excellence in Cultural Resource Management



Bob Fox in front of the Weir Studio.

The staff at Weir Farm also had cause to celebrate this year when one of their own, Facility Manager Robert Fox, was a recipient of the National Appleman-Judd-Lewis Award. This award honors National Park Service employees for excellence in cultural resource management. With limited resources, Bob laid the framework for the development of projects that stabilize,

preserve, and make accessible many of Weir Farm's structures and cultural landscape. National Park Service Director, Jon Jarvis, presented Bob with the award in a ceremony at the Department of the Interior building in Washington, D.C.

The recognition of Bob's long-time dedication to cultural resources couldn't have come at a better time as he recently announced his retirement. Although Bob's 27-year career with the National Park Service (18-years of which was spent at Weir Farm National Historic Site) has come to a close, his contributions to the preservation and protection of America's treasured places will be appreciated and enjoyed for generations to come.

We wish Bob all the best as he embarks on this new chapter in his life, knowing that we will see him often as he will continue to stay involved as a Weir Farm National Historic Site volunteer.

Visitor Center Hours and Tour Schedule

April through December

Visitor Center Hours
Thurs. through Sun. from 10-4

30-Minute Introductory Tour
Wed., Fri., and Sun. at 11, 1, and 3
Thurs. and Sat. at 11 and 3

1-Hour Stone Wall Tour
Thurs. and Sat. at 1

January through March

Visitor Center Hours
Sat. and Sun. from 10-4

30-Minute Introductory Tour
Sat. at 11 and 3
Sun. at 11, 1, and 3

1-Hour Stone Wall Tour
Sat. at 1

Teacher Tours at 10 on these Saturdays:
12/11, 1/15, 2/19, 3/19, 4/16

The grounds are open daily from dawn to dusk. Admission and tours are offered to the public free of charge.



Larry Bowers conserving a historic painting easel.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Weir Farm National Historic Site
735 Nod Hill Road
Wilton, CT 06897

Take Part in Art and
add your masterpiece
to our growing collection
of visitor artwork!



EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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Site Information

(203) 834-1896
www.nps.gov/wefa

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Things To Do:

Reading Ranger*

Join a park ranger for a read-aloud story in our cozy historic barn, followed by an activity exploring the farm's fascinating landscape.

10:00-12:00 on the following Saturdays:
12/4, 1/8, 2/5, 3/5, 4/2

Art of Restoration Tour*

Get a behind-the-scenes look at the restoration while learning about the farm's enduring tradition of preservation.

1:00-2:00 on the following Sundays:
12/19, 1/16, 2/20, 3/20, 4/17

Winter Plant Ramble*

Saturday February 26, 10:00-12:00
Embark on a nature walk and learn the art of identifying plants during the winter season.

Weir Farm Flora On Exhibit Through April 2011, Visitor Center Hours

See how local artist Joan Smith-Walleck is keeping the tradition of tile painting at Weir Farm alive with this delightful exhibit that features botanical paintings on porcelain.

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter. To join our mailing list, send your name and email to wefa_interpretation@nps.gov

Take Part in Art

Visitor Center Hours

Discover your inner artist while sketching *en plein air* with art supplies provided.

Junior Ranger

Visitor Center Hours

Earn a Junior Ranger badge and patch while exploring Connecticut's only national park.

Group Visits*

Visitor Center Hours

Organized groups are encouraged to visit the farm year-round! School groups and scout groups should ask for information on the Art Alive! curriculum-based program and Scout Ranger program.

*** Registration is required. To register, please call (203) 834-1896 x12.**