



Forked River Mountain Views

Newsletter of the Forked River Mountain Coalition

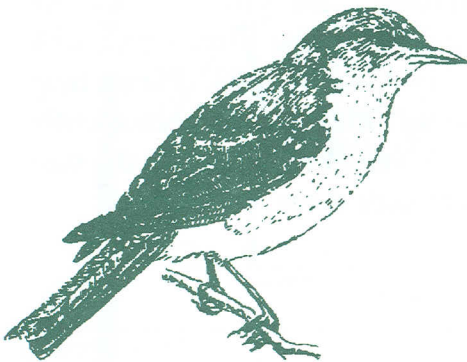
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COALITION ESTABLISHES OAK LEAF PRESERVE

During the spring of 2002, the Forked River Mountain Coalition acquired a 34-acre parcel of land in Lacey Township. The property, named for the adjoining neighborhood and forested area, comprises our Oak Leaf Preserve. The preserve is in the Cedar Creek watershed west of the Garden State Parkway and north of Lacey Road. The tract is completely forested. The majority of the property contains an upland oak forest. A small one-acre portion, however, contains wetlands where suitable habitat exists for Pine Barren treefrogs.

The parcel was purchased from the Christian Herald Association who operates the Bowery Mission in New York City. Maps show that the property was once utilized as part of a vineyard back in the 1800's. More recently, the property was slated to be sold and developed into a major subdivision. Luckily these plans never did materialize. The Coalition used part of its Green Acres matching grant to acquire the parcel. Additional grant funds from the New Jersey Conservation Foundation's local assistance program were also utilized to help cover acquisition costs. The land will be managed in its natural state.



BLUEBIRD MONITORS WANTED

The Coalition's bluebird nest box trail continued to produce results during its fourth year. Our nest boxes fledged a total of eight bluebirds. We are again in need of a few dedicated individuals to help monitor the nest boxes during the fifth year of the project from March until August. If you would like to volunteer as a bluebird nest box monitor, please call the Coalition at 609-971-1635 no later than March 1, 2003.

SAVE THE DATES

Field Day . . .
March 8, 2003

Forked River
Mountain Cleanup . . .
April 13, 2003

Annual Meeting . . .
May 14, 2003

Cedar Creek Canoe Trip . . .
May 26, 2003

Treefrog Hike . . .
June 6, 2003

Barnegat Bay Festival . . .
June 7, 2003

Blueberry Festival . . .
June 28, 2003

more details in future
newsletters!

A LOOK BACK... A LOOK AHEAD...

For the past year, the Forked River Mountain Coalition has been busy working to permanently protect this vast wilderness. Below are just some of our accomplishments for 2002 and some of our future goals for 2003, and beyond.

Accomplishments

- ❁ Purchased a valuable 34-acre parcel of uplands within the Forked River Mountain area. The property will be known as our Oak Leaf Preserve.
- ❁ Received grants to continue our vital work with threatened and endangered species.
- ❁ Began improvements to create the first public hiking and interpretive trail in the Forked River Mountain area. A spring 2003 dedication is planned.
- ❁ Sponsored two Eagle Scout projects to enhance public access and enjoyment of conservation lands within the Forked River Mountain area.
- ❁ Incorporated a new Preserves Profiles page to our web site to better educate and inform the public about natural areas we are permanently protecting as open space.
- ❁ Conducted our Ninth Annual Spring Cleanup. Over 44 tons of trash was removed from the forest. To date, more than 259 tons of debris have been removed from the woods around the Forked River Mountains.

Goals

- ❁ Acquire more land. Precious little time remains if we are to protect the entire Forked River Mountain area as open space.
- ❁ Continue plant and wildlife studies. We must understand the habitat requirements of threatened

and endangered species if we are to ensure their survival here and else where.

- ❁ Continue work on a comprehensive trails system for the Forked River Mountain area. Eventually over 20 miles of hiking, interpretive, mountain biking, horseback, cross-country skiing and motor vehicle trails are possible.
- ❁ Maintain and expand our web site to bring you all the important information and news you need to know about the Forked River Mountain's and the Coalition.
- ❁ Continue to monitor our bluebird nest box trail and expand other conservation and stewardship activities within the Forked River Mountain area.
- ❁ Conduct the tenth annual spring cleanup, our annual canoe trip and treefrog hike and participate in the annual Barnegat Bay Festival, Pine Barrens Jamboree and other educational events to promote greater awareness about the importance and significance of the Forked River Mountain area.

But we can only realize our goals with your help. If you are not currently a member of the Coalition and would like to join, or if you are a member and have not yet renewed your membership, simply complete the registration form in this newsletter. Be sure to mark the appropriate box and return the form along with your \$15 membership dues for 2003. Please help support the grass-roots initiative to permanently protect the Forked River Mountains and the vast wilderness that surrounds them.



COALITION SPONSORS EAGLE SCOUT PROJECTS

During 2002 the Forked River Mountain Coalition sponsored not one, but two Eagle Scout Projects. Each project was designed to help improve public access and enjoyment of conservation lands within the Forked River Mountain area.

Ed Graff of Lacey Township Troop 156 undertook the first project. Ed was charged with constructing the hiking and interpretive trail in the Forked River Mountain Wildlife Management Area that we plan to dedicate in the spring. The first phase of the project involved a general clean up of the area. This was accomplished during the annual spring cleanup. The next phase of the project involved trimming the overgrown brush from along the sides of the trail and then blazing the trail route with red paint. The final phase of the project involved constructing and installing numbered posts for the various stations that will correspond to a trail guide. Ed's project involved over 300 volunteer hours from him and his troop. Woodhaven and A's Hardware made donations for the project.

Jeff Hamilton of Lacey Township Troop 156 undertook the second project. Jeff was charged with constructing a walking path and small gathering area in our Oak Leaf Preserve where a future memorial is planned. Like the first project, there was a general clean up of the area. Then the walking path and gathering area had to be trimmed. The next phase of the project involved the placement of woodchips along the path and in the gathering area. The final phase of the project involved constructing and installing two benches in the gathering area. Jeff's project involved over 200 volunteer hours from him and his troop. Johnson Rents and Gan's Tree Service made donations for the project.

In each case the Coalition decided to utilize existing trails for these projects rather than to construct new ones. The two main reasons for doing this is that it would have less of an impact and be easier to maintain. We are looking forward to sponsoring additional Eagle Scout projects in the new year to further advance the initiatives that these two fine young men have started. THANK YOU Ed and Jeff for a job well done!



Support the Forked River Mountain Coalition

<i>Mouse Pad</i>	<i>\$3</i>
<i>Shot Glass</i>	<i>\$3</i>
<i>Cap</i>	<i>\$5</i>
<i>Mug</i>	<i>\$5</i>
<i>Pin</i>	<i>\$5</i>
<i>Tee Shirt</i>	<i>\$10</i>
<i>Sweat Shirt</i>	<i>\$20</i>

***** New *** Long-sleeve Tee Shirt \$15**

**Available at : Odd-it-Tees, 405 Route 9, Forked River, NJ 08731
Telephone: (609)693-Tees**



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*Forked River Mountain Coalition
P.O. Box 219
Forked River, NJ 08731*

Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (____) _____ Day (____) _____ Eve _____

E-mail address _____

- I have enclosed my membership dues of \$15. I have enclosed an additional contribution of \$_____
- Please circle: New Renewal I would like to volunteer, please call me.

Please make checks payable to:
and mail to:

Forked River Mountain Coalition
P.O. Box 219, Forked River, NJ 08731

All contributions are tax deductible. Thank you!