

Audobon releases study on Closter Nature Center

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CLOSTER

In an effort to determine the overall health of its woodlands, the Closter Nature Center Association has sought the assistance of New Jersey Audubon.

Starting in early June, field researchers with the group began a forest stewardship study of the 136 acres of borough land that make up the nature center property. That study was recently completed.

Jeremy Caggiano, project coordinator for the study, said there were three main things impacting the health of the nature center's forest: white-tailed deer, a "thriving" population of non-native species and closed overstory.

Caggiano explained that with closed overstory conditions, light is inhibited from reaching the forest floor and thus it does not allow for native tree regeneration.

Overall, he described the nature center woodlands as "a shade tolerant, even-aged forest that has a poor floristic quality, which is probably due to the combination of non-native species and long-term impact of white-tailed deer."

As for the troubles with white-tailed deer, Caggiano said the animal's choice of food is the problem.

"Their choice of food is preferably native vegetation, less than four feet in height...they

don't desire exotic non-native species and therefore many areas of the Closter Nature Center property are left with invasive non-native species in the understory."

Mary Mayer, former president of the Closter Nature Center Association, said that with the data collected, New Jersey Audubon will, "draft a forest stewardship plan that will detail steps that can be taken by both volunteers and paid staff which will address problem areas discovered through the survey."

"The plan will also recommend short- and long-term steps to protect the forest and increase its overall sustainability and resilience to changing environmental conditions," she said.

Mayer said that New Jersey Audubon is one of the few organizations in the state that holds the highest certification level from the Forest Stewardship Council to perform such studies.

Mayer said that in the coming months the nature center board will be "accepting funds" to help cover the costs of the study.

An important reason given for conducting this study centers on "environmental stresses" to the forest brought on by climate change.

"A changing climate is expanding the range of new pathogens and invasive species and extreme storm events are causing the uprooting of large mature trees," said Mayer. "While in the past we assumed our forest was naturally resilient, this is no longer the case."

Better forest management moving forward was cited as another important reason to conduct the research. Mayer said the results of the study will be in a report that New Jersey Audubon will issue in the fall. Recommendations on what needs to be done to manage and address steward-

ship issues regarding the nature center property will be part of that report.

"This project is the first step at us being able to better manage our forest in the future," said Marc Gussen, a naturalist/educator for the Closter Nature Center. "One of our biggest issues is trying to pre-

serve what is natural and prevent the taking over of non-native invasive species."

Gussen listed mile-a-minute, mugwort and garlic mustard as three very common invasive plant species that grow in the nature center's woodlands and wetlands.

Photo courtesy ClosterNatureCenter.org



White tailed deer in the Closter Nature Center forest.

NORWOOD

Faith Formation registration is now open

Registration for the Faith Formation program at Immaculate Conception Church, 200 Summit St., Norwood, is open for new and returning students for September. This is a Catholic faith program for children attending non-catholic

schools.

The program is open to all students entering grades 1-9 in September.

Classes for grades 1-5 are held on Tuesdays, grade 6 meets on Monday and grades 7-9 meet on Sunday.

Registration forms and additional information can be found at www.iccnorwood.org, or you may call the rectory at (201) 768-1600. Registration forms are due by Sept. 1, with all classes beginning mid-September.

NORTHERN VALLEY

TOURNIQUETS DONATED TO LOCAL POLICE FORCES



Shown here is Lafe Bush, director of emergency services, The Valley Hospital, with representatives of the police forces from Closter, Demarest, Emerson, Haworth, Hillsdale, Northvale, Norwood, Old Tappan, Oradell, Park Ridge, River Vale, Westwood and Woodcliff Lake.

Photo courtesy Valley Hospital

The Valley Hospital recently presented tourniquets to representatives of several Pascack and Northern Valley area police forces for use in on-scene emergency trauma response. The tourniquets, called C-A-T tourniquets, are military tested and approved for trauma scene needs.

The availability of a tourniquet can make a significant difference in a life or death situation. If a law enforcement officer is shot or injured in an extremity, they could apply the tourniquet to themselves. Without the tourniquet, he or she could bleed to death prior to help arriving. It can also be

used to respond to traumatic accidents involving a member of the community with a severely injured extremity.

Last year, Valley's Department of Emergency Services has donated tourniquets to 16 towns in the northwest section of Bergen County.