

FRIENDS MAINTENANCE PROJECTS

The Parker River National Wildlife Refuge has been understaffed for the last several years. As the Friends of Parker River, we have been concerned about the refuge staff's ability to maintain the many refuges for which they have responsibility, including Parker River, Great Bay in New Hampshire, and other scattered refuges. As a result, the Friends have assumed responsibility for a number of significant projects to assist refuge staff.

One of the most noticeable projects has been the on-going restoration of the Pollinator Garden at the entrance to the Visitor Center on the Plum Island Turnpike. (Left)



Black Pines are an invasive tree on the refuge. Friends volunteers removed seedling Black Pines from the area along the pathway to the Bill Forward Pool observation deck.

The Friends have been very actively maintaining the amazing new boardwalk at the Hellcat Wildlife Observation Area and the paths at the Pines Trail. During the spring and summer, Friends volunteers cut back vegetation that was encroaching on the trails and blocking views from the observation platforms.



What was recently an overgrown thicket of invasive plants is now a beautiful garden and focal point for educational programs, including a recent program for young families. This educational experience was a cooperative effort with the Newburyport Public Library, and the Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm. If you haven't seen the garden, I encourage you to come, sit in the rock circle, admire the beautiful wildflowers, and look for butterflies and other pollinating insects.

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Interpretative signs and posters are important to the mission of the refuge. They are designed to educate the public about our amazing wildlife heritage. The Friends have constructed two kiosks and 6 large display frames for installations at both Parker River and Great Bay.

At the entrance to the Visitor Center, the Friends have fabricated 8 wooden covers for the bollards that restrict vehicles from entering pedestrian areas. The old bollard covers that date from the initial construction of the center were rotting and, quite honestly, an eyesore.



The Friends have a number of new projects on our calendar. We will replace a deteriorating boardwalk that leads to the back entrance of the Visitor Center, install navigation signs along the Hellcat boardwalk, construct an ADA compliant picnic table for the Visitor Center, and refurbish doors and door frames on several buildings. Other projects are sure to be added to our list.



Due to the current staffing situation, refuge personnel simply would not have time to undertake the construction and maintenance projects the Friends are addressing. If you would like to join the Friends in supporting our refuge, please let us know. We work hard, have a lot of fun, and get a strong sense of accomplishment. You can reach us at friends@parkerriver.org.

Bill Gette, President