

# Friends of Clifton Park Open Space

June, 2014

## The Town's First Open Space Day A BIG Success!

### *Friends and Other Local Groups Participate*

The Town of Clifton Park Town Board and the Open Space, Trails & Riverfront Committee members invited the public to come outside and explore the best natural places within Clifton Park on Saturday, May 17, 2014 for an inaugural Celebration of Nature & Open Space Day. The day included gentle walks thru eight beautiful parks and nature preserves in town guided by the town's open space community and other volunteers. Trail maps and information about each hike were available at each site, and at the central meeting spot of Historic Grooms Tavern.

In between the day's guided walks, families gathered at Historic Grooms Tavern for a bake sale and refreshments, and a presentation by town staff and officials on Clifton Park open spaces and natural areas.

"We are pleased to offer such a diversity of public natural areas and invite residents all over town to find out more about these great local places. We have locations convenient for everyone, with Dwaas Kill Nature Preserve,

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## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President, Frank Berlin

Vice President, Bill Koebbemann

Secretary, Ray Seymour

Treasurer, Margaret Catellier

Web Master, Susan Burton

Visit our Web Site: [www.cpopenspace.org](http://www.cpopenspace.org)

## First in 2014..More to Come Next Year

*Save the Date: May 16, 2015*



North Woods Nature Preserve, Ushers State Forest and Kinns Road Park in the northern reaches of town, to Garnsey Park and Mohawk Landing Nature Preserve in the western part of town, and Vischer Ferry Nature & Historic Preserve in the southern end of town," said Philip Barrett, Town Supervisor.

"We hope to bring awareness to all residents about the great natural resource jewels here in our own backyards," said David J. Miller, Co-Chairman of the Town of Clifton Park Open Space, Trails & Riverfront Committee.

Several town parks and nature preserves, such as Mohawk Landing Nature Preserve, Vischer Ferry Nature & Historic Preserve, and Ushers Road State Forest, have additional online Wildflower Field Guides available here that were produced by a local volunteer, David Behm.

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## The Honeybee Project

By Glenn Griffith @CNWeekly

The cryptic email read, "Houston, we have a swarm" and had been sent to 27 residents of southern Saratoga County. For anyone who may have received it erroneously the email made no sense. But for most of those on the recipient list, the news brought joy and excitement. Though it had been sent rather late on a Tuesday night the replies began pinging away on all the recipients' smart phones as the replies began to come in. Each one came with either a verbal pat-on-the-back or words of thanks.

The swarm mentioned in the message referred to the Clifton Park honeybee Swarm Project, an initiative undertaken by 35 residents to give wild swarms of honeybees the option of a home rather than exterminating them.

The project began mid-summer 2013 with a few volunteers and the help of David Wood, the president of the Southern Adirondack Beekeepers Association. All involved admitted it was a late start but promised 2014 would be better. Though the project is driven by volunteers it has the solid support of town government. All involved would like to see the project go county-wide in the future.

2013 Wood and Frank Berlin, the de-facto



director of the Swarm Project, put out half a dozen empty wooden bee hive boxes around town hoping a swarm would find one and declare it their new home. It never happened.

In April 2014 project volunteers distributed 29 of 35 boxes to eager participants on a cold wet Saturday morning from the Elks Lodge pavilion off MacElroy Road. The other six boxes were hand delivered and made ready on site. Then the waiting began.

As June turned to July with no sign of a swarm hints of disappointment began to set in among the hive watchers and other project volunteers. Then the July 15 email announced that a swarm had taken refuge in hive number four. Finally, the project's plan to save wild swarms and show people the value and ease of doing so was generating some success.

"Swarms are bees that are survivors," Wood said. "They have characteristics that might help beekeepers. Their characteristics might survive our modern way of life and beekeepers are interested in getting those that do survive into their stock just for that reason."

Hive number four had been placed with Lynda and Michael "Skip" Turiel. The green box had been strapped to the trunk of a shady oak tree in the couple's backyard about 10 feet off the ground. On Thursday night Wood and Berlin sealed the hive closed with wire meshing and planned the removal for 9:30 a.m. the next day, Friday, July 18.

"We wanted one of the hives because we viewed it as an experiment to see if we could draw

## HONEYBEES, CONT

draw them into the area," Skip Turiel said as the hive was being removed from his tree. "Plus our eight-year-old daughter Julie is into nature. She would check it every day. And we have three apple trees so we figured they would be good for pollination." Once on the scene for a second time Wood wasted no time as he and Berlin removed the strap and carefully brought the hive to the ground. Once transferred to a new observation hive the bees will be part of the Southern Adirondack Beekeeper Association booth at the upcoming Saratoga County Fair. The booth will be set up in the Townley Building. However, Wood said the Clifton Park swarm will be rotated in and out as other beekeepers man the table and won't be there every day. Still, he was glad for some success with the project.

"Since we started this collection process we're learning," Wood said. "Next year we may put something in the hives that attracts them. Every swarm has its own characteristics. They may be more resistant to diseases or have better wintering characteristics. Those are a couple reasons why keepers like swarms. Plus, wild swarms have about a five percent survival rate each year."

Berlin noted that without the bees our diets would be much different. "Almost all our crops are pollinated by bees," he said. "There are some crops that are pollinated by the wind but with most, it's bees. Think what we'd be eating without bees." On a visit to China a few years ago, Berlin said he saw groups of people pollinating fields of plants using feathers due to the lack of bees.

Skip Turiel was happy to be the first project participant to have a swarm move into a project hive. "We put (the hive) out around the end of May and we were getting kind of disappointed," he said. "Then one day I looked out and they were swarming around. That quickly made things pretty exciting around here."

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### SPECIAL EVENT

PLACE: GROOM TAVERN

TIME: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2014 7:00 PM

Friends Monthly Meeting

### SPECIAL EVENT

PLACE: TOWN RECYCLING CENTER

TIME: TUESDAY, OCTOBER, 7, 2014 5:00 PM

Sow Wildflower Seeds with the Girl Scouts.