

# Mordecai Matters



## 2007 CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

*Mordecai Restaking and Measure*  
Saturday, April 29th, Time TBA

*Trustees Meeting*  
Friday, April 28th,  
7:00 PM, Molly Allison

*SWMER II Project*  
Saturday, June 9th, 7:30 AM  
Meet at Molly Allison

*Trustees meeting*  
Friday, June 22nd, 7:00 PM  
Molly Allison Sailing Center

*Sunset over Mordecai*  
Cocktail Party Fundraiser at LEHYC,  
Saturday, July 21st, 6:00 PM

*Annual Meeting*  
Sunday, August 26th, 3-4:30 PM  
Emergency Operations Center

*Fall clean up and Restaking*  
Saturday, September 15th, Time TBA

*Cocktail Party and Art Show*  
September, Time and Place TBA

*Trustees Meeting*  
Friday, September 28, 7:00 PM  
Molly Allison Sailing Center

Don't know when your membership expires? The date on your mailing label is your expiration date. Use the enclosed envelope to renew or become a member today!

## Trust for Public Land Minigrant Share Day

On November 30, 2006, MLT's Jeanne Runne and Southern Regional Middle School science teacher Sarah Line participated in the second annual "Minigrant Share Day" hosted by the Trust for Public Land and Barnegat Bay National Estuary Program at the Ocean County Library in Toms River, NJ.

The purpose of the Minigrant Share Day was to gather recent winners of TPL and BBNEP Minigrants to share information and materials regarding their projects and to serve as a resource for groups considering applying for future grants.

Jeanne and Sarah were there in connection with the Mordecai Island Ecological Survey Project held on September 18, 2006, which was made possible in part through a grant from the TPL's Barnegat Bay Environmental Grant Fund. TPL was designated as the administrator of the Bay Fund through a donation from Ciba-Geigy Corporation to the State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

At the Minigrant event, Sarah Line presented the slide show that she and SRMS students have been working on. The slide show includes data and pictures from the September 18<sup>th</sup> field trip in which members of the SRMS ecology club and others students interested in science participated.



*Southern Regional Middle School students participate in the Mordecai Island Ecological Survey Project, September 18, 2006.*

Steve Evert, director of The Richard Stockton College's Marine Science and Environmental Field Station, and several members of his staff conducted the field trip, which was an enormous success with the SRMS students.

Under the direction of Steve Evert and his staff, the students engaged in three separate activities, including identification of fish, crustacean and invertebrate species; examination of water composition and quality; and identification of plant and bird species common to Mordecai Island.

The students enthusiastically reported on the field trip to the Southern Regional School District Board of Education at a recent Board meeting and they plan to present the finished slide show on SNN, the cable channel that covers Manahawkin and LBI, in early 2007.

## Phase II in the Works

Once again in 2007, the Mordecai Land Trust is partnering with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) through the *Partners for Fish and Wildlife* program to implement a shoreline erosion protection and restoration project on the southwestern portion of Mordecai Island.

The primary goal of Phase II is restoration. Subject to receiving the required permits, two sills consisting of a sand filled geotextile tube will be placed along one of the most eroded portions of southwestern Mordecai.

Each sill will be between 260 feet and 310 feet, with a 75-100 foot gap between. This allows nesting turtles and spawning horseshoe crabs to access the sandy beach known as Terrapin

Beach, and for juvenile fish to seek shelter inside the sill.

Placement of the sill will range from approximately 10 to 65 feet seaward of the current shoreline. This will be augmented by installation of: eelgrass landward of the sill; a small amount of additional sand on Terrapin Beach to enhance the area's habitat value; a phragmites control plan; a shore perpendicular current deflector to reduce erosion caused by tidal current; several more biologs; and additional marsh grass.

This is an ambitious plan that likely will take two years to complete and require significant volunteer help to install and fund. Stay tuned!

## Survival of the Fittest: Biolog Update

Over six months have passed since our Phase I SWMER project biolog installation weekend in June. Volunteers responsible for monitoring the project have kept a watchful eye on seasonal storms, high winds and waves, and heavy boat traffic that continue to batter the island. We have made frequent trips to the island, routinely photographed the area and hoped for the best.

Recently, Ed Gorleski, oceanographer with Ocean and Coastal Consultants walked the SWMER area, taking the pictures to left, right and below, and making assessments for Phase II, the next step in not only preserving the island, but more aggressively pursuing some reclamation and long term protection.

As predicted by project members, biologs on the western edge of the island sustained the most damage from exposure, while biologs on the eastern and southern edges are doing remarkably well.

“In general, Gorleski said, “most of the missing



*Biologs with southern exposure*

biologs are from the western side of the island. I'd say that close to 100% of the biologs on the eastern side of the island are in good shape. It's the logs on the western side that are exposed to more wind, waves and wake that appear to be in worse condition.”

The good news/bad news for the Trust is that all biologs have remained in place, although some on the western edge have receded into the water, and the grasses planted near the water's edge and on the biologs did not fare well and have all but disappeared. Those planted upland, however, were thriving at the end of the summer.

Despite these setbacks, the calving effect in those areas has still been minimized.

The Trust is currently actively working on the next phase of the project. According to Bill Pilling, project manager, “most of the biologs are surviving the winter and this demonstrates the need for other solutions being pursued in Phase II.”



*Missing biologs facing west.*



*Western exposure*



*Facing East*

## Flounder and Soft-shells and Eels – Oh My!

Seventh and eighth grade Ecology Club students from Southern Regional Middle got a close up—and wet—look at the life on Mordecai during a September field trip sponsored by The Trust for Public Land's Barnegat Bay Environmental Grant Fund and Richard Stockton's Marine Science and Environmental Field Station.

Students were treated to a rare look at a crab molting, took water samples testing temperature and salinity, and scrutinized the tiny fish that live in one of the island's small inland ponds, before really getting their feet wet by dragging the bay with a seine net collecting aquatic creatures to survey.

At first hesitant to wade into the bay, by the end of the morning 27 very damp and excited students arrived back at the Molly Allison Sailing Center and boarded buses back to school.

Steve Evert, manager of the Marine Science and Environmental Field Station, staffer Elizabeth Zimmerman, and Stockton student Ed Hale, guided the students, teacher and Ecology Club advisor Sarah Line and teacher Caroline Murphy through the three stations.

Evert, who directed the effort, said that the college uses the island

for research because it is a good fish habitat with a lot of diversity.

Students will follow up on their visit with a Power Point presentation that will air on LBI's local cable station early in 2007 (see article page one).

Jeanne Runne, who wrote the grant for the project, and MLT president Linda Colgan were pleased at the enthusiasm of the group and of the awareness of many of the students on environmental issues. Several decided that day that a career in marine biology would be a cool option for the future.

The Trust hopes to sponsor more student trips to the island through educational grants and fundraising efforts.



*Students Eric Sullivan, Mike Rossie and Jake Rossine collecting fish and crustaceans with Steve Evert's seine net.*

## Introducing our new Trustees: Margo Pellegrino . . .

Margo Pellegrino literally arrived at our doorstep. Last spring, she heard about the biolog project and paddled her canoe to the island prepared to work. "The Mordecai project is a really interesting one and I feel very lucky that I stumbled on it. I was browsing the American Littoral Society's site, looking for ways to get involved. Now I'm curious to follow the project through to see how it turns out. It's a real "living" experiment in sedge island preservation! After doing some paddling around the Great Bay area and then around Ocean City, NJ, it seems that Mordecai really is unique. I have not seen the variety of bird life, especially the skimmers, anywhere else."

Margo is a Jersey girl. Born in Camden, she now resides in Medford lakes with her husband Carl and her two children Billy and Julia. She received a BA from Rutgers with a degree in Labor Relations, and says that Labor Studies, particularly the history of labor in the US, fascinates her. Her other interests are art, history, and biology.

To call Margo earthy would be an understatement. She stated that "Maybe I like the Mordecai project because it satisfies the latent "gardener" in me. Both of my grandfathers had great gardens that produced tons of tomatoes, green beans, flowers, and other good

stuff. Here in the woods, we have too much shade for a garden, so the Mordecai plantings fill that urge to dig in the dirt and plant things!"

She is also an incredible and unique athlete. She paddles her canoe all over New Jersey and now is planning to paddle from Miami to Maine. She expects the trip will take about 3 months and will be a true challenge. Knowing Margo, you can be sure of her determination.

Margo remembers a poem written by a Christian abolitionist Edward Everett Hall. This poem inspires her and has greatly influenced her thinking.

*I am only one  
but still I am one.  
I cannot do everything  
but still I can do something.  
And because I cannot do everything  
I will not refuse to do the something I can do.*

We are proud that Mordecai truly matters to Margo Pellegrino!

## . . . And Doug Walker

Mordecai Land Trust is proud to have Doug Walker join our board. Doug brings a great deal of experience to Mordecai from his long association with Ducks Unlimited and other non-profit organizations.

Doug was born in Idaho and moved to New Jersey when he was six years old. He has been here ever since and now splits his time between his homes in Mt. Holly and Long Beach Island. He has three sisters and two brothers and he and his wife Nancy have two daughters, ages 13 and 9.

He attended Villanova University and Southwest Missouri State University and holds a BS in Political Science. After graduating from SMSU he came back to New Jersey and joined the Hallowell Company. After seven years at Hallowell he and his wife started the Atlantic Concrete Cutting Corp in 1991. They also now preside over the Atlantic Subsurface Imaging Company.

After hours, Doug likes to do things outdoors. He is an experienced hunter, loves to fish, and is a member of the Beach Haven Marlin & Tuna Club. He plays golf at Burlington Country Club, and boats at the Spray Beach Yacht Club. He pursues his passions with enthusiasm and respect for the environment.

Doug is one of those rare individuals who has to be involved with groups relating to his love for hunting and fishing. He joined Duck Unlimited in 1982, became Burlington County Chapter Chairman in 1990, District-Zone Chairman in 1994, State Chairman in 2004, and is presently the Jack Dorrance Chapter Chairman.

As you can see, Doug gets involved! We are sure Doug's experience will be a great asset to the Mordecai Land Trust.

## Terrapin Release September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2006

Mordecai Land Trust volunteers kicked off a new association with the Wetlands Institute this September with an inaugural terrapin release on the island. The trust has designated an area on the southwestern edge of the island as Terrapin Beach, where new diamondback adoptees will be released in the future.

Participating in the September 9<sup>th</sup> release were Beach Haven mayor Tom Stewart, Ilene Eberly from the Wetlands institute, Doug Gaffney of Ocean and Coastal Consultants, MLT president Linda Colgan, and members and families of the Trust. The turtles, aptly named for quarterbacks Payton, Donovan, Eli and Big Ben, were given a send off into the bay, although all promptly swam back into the grasses by the island, blending into the green hued water before testing their new aquatic home.



## Bird's Eye News



- Mordecai Land Trust thanks the Garden Club of LBI for their generous \$2,000 contribution toward Phase II of our SWMER project.
- Keep a lookout for the January/February issue of *Coastal Living* magazine. The Trust is featured as the recipient of this year's Sea and Shore Preservation Award.
- Check out the Beach Haven environmental page online <http://www.beachhaven-nj.gov/Environmental.htm>. Mordecai is listed there. You will also find more pictures of the terrapin release (left). Beach Haven Mayor Stewart sits on the Trust's Executive Board and is an active and enthusiastic board member and environmentalist.
- Coming this summer: more signs! Four new signs depicting Mordecai's inhabitants are planned for installation on the street ends of Pearl, Ocean, Pelham, and Engleside.

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Address Correction Required

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*Mordecai Matters*

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**We're on the web! [Mordecaimatters.org](http://Mordecaimatters.org)**

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*Don't forget us this winter season.*

*Even as Mordecai sleeps, wind and waves continue to pound her shoreline, and we continue to work toward protecting her and the bountiful life she harbors.*

*Help us give Mordecai another spring.*

*Your donations are tax deductible.  
We welcome matching grants from your businesses and corporations.*

*Contact us at [info@mordecaimatters.org](mailto:info@mordecaimatters.org) for more information*

*Photo by Ralph Berglund*