

It all happened at Nahanton Park . . .

At 5:30 am, when preparations for the June Doin' got under way, it was raining—quite heavily.

By 7:00, the skies were clearing, and the first families showed up to fish. Board members Bill Hagar and Mat Calabro, experienced fishermen Rolly Johnson, Judy Dore—the Parks and Rec staff member who oversees the park—and her assistant, Dave Foley, taught the kids how to fish. Within half an hour, young angler Brennan Fankhauser caught the first fish—a yellow perch!

Then, the youngest participant, Penelope DeMedeiros caught the smallest fish of the day, a little sunfish. The kids caught several more sunnies—and two turtles came to explore the worm bait and narrowly escaped. (All fish were returned to the river.)

A small intrepid group of adults left the Nature Center for a bird walk at 7:30. Experienced birder (and regular columnist for this newsletter) Pete Gilmore was the leader.

Noted fern expert Don Lubin, who spent one day earlier in the week identifying the ferns in the park and another long day clearing the trails around the ferns, led a fern walk through trails on both sides of Nahanton Road.

As people started to arrive to take out canoes and kayaks on the Charles River, Brandeis ecologist and master storyteller Eric Olson arrived with a pair of cecropia moths. The children were entranced even before they started their Bug and Small Critter Safari.

The Invasive-Plant team of Katherine Howard, Ann Dorfman, and Agnes Olshanksy showed families what plants we're trying to remove from our environment: garlic mustard, the increasingly prevalent black swallow-wort, Oriental bittersweet, and Japanese knotweed.

Agnes even delivered one talk in Russian to a group of seniors spending a relaxing afternoon in the park. As they looked at the examples of invasive plants, visitors could see Oriental bittersweet twining up the tall trees throughout

the park. The trio ended the day by spending time removing garlic mustard in the woods behind the community gardens—with the help of the intrepid Portia Chenevert and her mother.



Children who arrived while the safari was under way enjoyed learning how to tie fishing flies with Rolly Johnson and Bill Hagar. Alison Scorer from the Newton Community Farm showed them how to plant green bean seeds in recycled newspaper pots.

As soon as the critter safari returned, Eric Olson donned his climbing harness and explained how tree workers can get a rope over a tree limb in order to climb the tree. First he threw the

rope; then he showed how a slingshot

could help get the rope over a higher branch. There were “oohs” and “ahhs” from the children as he pulled out his bow and arrow to show how a scientist surveying the tree canopy can get the rope to even a very high branch. After securing his rope, Eric climbed up to the branch and showed how to descend safely, too. Remind your kids (and grandkids) of the classic disclaimer: “Do not try this at home!”

Late in the morning, the second bird walk left: this one led by birder Ted Kuklinski. Those of us staying behind by the Nature Center could hear their exclamations and laughs as they disappeared into the woods.

The last event of the day was Eric Olson's Nature and Plant walk. He, too, disappeared into the woods, like the Pied Piper, but leading the adults as well as the children—and then returned them after they'd had a magical learning adventure.

The Board of the Newton Conservators has decided that the second annual June Doin' will take place next year. If you missed the adventure this year, don't miss the fun next June! ■

Beth Wilkinson

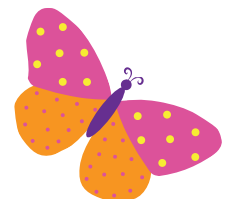


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SUZETTE BARBIER ©2015



PHOTO: HENRY FINCH

Critter Safari



PHOTO: HENRY FINCH

Tree-Climbing Demo



PHOTO: HENRY FINCH

Live Cecropia Moth

Fern Walk



PHOTO: DAN BRODY

Bird Walks



PHOTO: BETH WILKINSON

Fishing

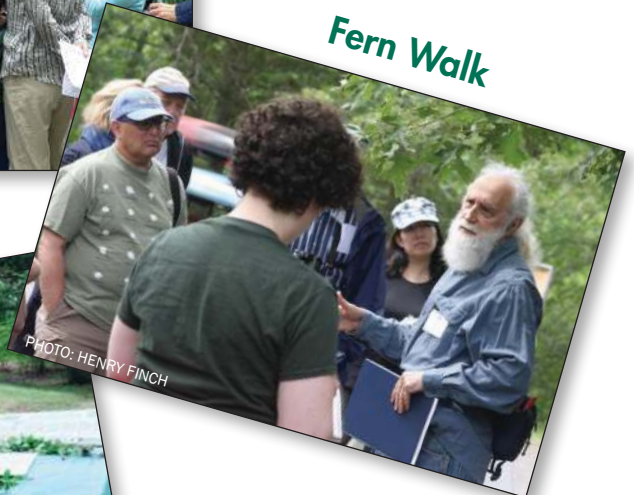


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Bugs



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Invasive ID's & Pull



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And more...



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Fly Tying