



River Currents



Spring 2020

www.gehwa.org

Issue 72

Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association's Member and Friends Meetings & Programs for 2020 are Temporally Cancelled due to the Covid-19 Pandemic

We are doing our part to help end this pandemic. We hope everyone stays well and safe.

We would also encourage each and everyone of you to spend part of each day enjoying the emergence of spring. Nature has so much to offer. Hope you can enjoy.



Hopefully, we will again be able to have social gatherings by the time of our annual "Hike for Frogs" on Tuesday, May 26, 2020.

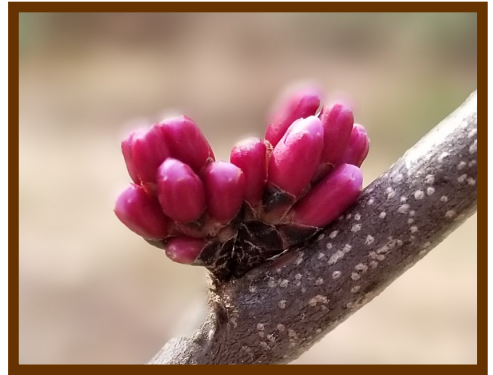
If you have any exciting NATURE news you would like to share, please let Lynn know. She will forward that information to the GEHWA members and friends.

Call or text Lynn @ 856-649-2792 if you have any questions.

Signs of Spring

by Lynn Maun

The signs of spring are early this year and can be found all around us. During this time when students are educated by remote learning at home, and we practice social distancing by adhering to Gov. Murphy's "Stay-at-Home" order, remember that there are wonderful springtime discoveries to be found right in our own backyards. Set aside time each day to see what springtime surprises you can find. Each spring I look forward to nature's signs of renewal and as I take daily walks around my yard I seek to discover what natural wonder will be revealed. Whether it is the full buds ready to burst open on the branch



of a redbud tree or insects emerging from their secret winter hiding places, these daily walks help to center me during this time of uncertainty.

Recently, one of those unique nature experiences happened unexpectedly in my kitchen on March 18th. Last fall, while doing some home maintenance, Michael, the mate on the Duke of Fluke discovered a cocoon adhered to the side of his home. He removed it and brought it to me, thinking I might know what it was. I told him I thought it was a moth cocoon and based on the size, one of the larger moth species. Probably one of the giant silk moths. He had carefully cut through the outer silk spun cocoon so that the inner pupa was exposed. I removed the inner pupa and realized as it wiggled around in my palm, that it was still alive. I carefully placed it back in the cocoon and when I got home I taped the cocoon back together.



Choosing not to place the cocoon outside since it had been cut open, I placed it upright in a tiny teacup and left it on a shelf in my kitchen. **...continued on page 3**

...continued from page 2 Months passed and the cocoon rested snugly in the tiny teacup until one day last week I noticed that the cocoon was no longer resting upright in the teacup, but was instead lying next to it on the shelf. I thought this was rather strange, but then I picked it up and placed it back in the teacup. As I pondered how the cocoon ended up on the shelf I realized that the cocoon was not as heavy as it had been. I then examined the cocoon and discovered a hole in one end and realized that the moth had emerged. As I began to wonder where the moth had gone, I just happened to glance behind the shelf where the cocoon had spent the winter. It was there that I discovered a beautiful



Antheraea polyphemus moth. The pupa now transformed, was hanging on the wall.

After doing some research, I discovered that



Polyphemus moths usually emerge in late May or early June. I also learned that it was a female based on its antennae. The male's antennae are very bushy, the females much less so. After I debated with myself about releasing her outside, I figured she had little chance of finding a mate in the middle of March. The nighttime temperature and rainy conditions also factored into my decision. So instead, I placed her into a net enclosure where she had room to move and fly around. I didn't have to worry about feeding her since *Polyphemus* moths have vestigial mouth parts and do not eat once they have reached their adult stage. **...continued on page 4**



...continued from page 3 And their lifespan as adults is about a week. Within a day of emerging from its cocoon, the female will emit a pheromone to attract a male to fertilize her eggs. Imagine my surprise, when, after a couple of days, the moth began to attach eggs to the top of her enclosure. This prompted further research where I discovered that if a female Polyphemus moths fails to mate she will begin to expel the unfertilized eggs from her body. She produced dozens of eggs, some attached to the netting at the top of her enclosure, but many more stuck together in clusters that had fallen to the bottom of the enclosure.



On March 26, after living for just over one week, the moth lay still on the bottom of the enclosure. Her once enlarged abdomen, filled with enough nourishment to sustain her for a week and having also given her the nutrients necessary to produce dozens of eggs, had now shrunk to half its original size. It has been a wonderful experience having this beautiful moth share my living space for the past week. I will forever treasure this golden opportunity that was handed to me in the form of a silk encased pupa last fall. Take time, especially right now, to step back from our normally hectic routines and instead observe nature up close. It is a perfect way to spend some time this spring.

I wouldn't encourage anyone to remove moth cocoons or butterfly chrysalises from their habitats and bring them inside, but since the moth's cocoon had been damaged it provided a really amazing opportunity to learn about this very interesting insect.



Calendar of GEHWA and GEHRC Meetings

2020

All meetings held at the Warren Fox Nature Center in Estell Manor (except where noted) will begin at 6:30 PM.

Tuesday, March 24, 2020 - GEHWA ANNUAL Member Meeting & Program
Cancelled

Wednesday, April 15, 2020 - Great Egg Harbor NS & R River Council
Meeting *Cancelled*



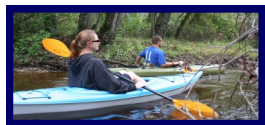
Tuesday, May 26, 2020 - GEHWA Member Meeting—Annual Frog
Walk (Details will be provided closer to the event) *Hopeful*

Wednesday, June 17, 2020 - Great Egg Harbor NS & R River Council
Meeting



Tuesday, July 28, 2020 - GEHWA Member & Friends Picnic and
Campfire (Location and details will be provided closer to the event)

Wednesday, August 19, 2020 - Great Egg Harbor NS & R River Council
Meeting



Saturday, September 26, 2020 - GEHWA— Canoe/Kayak event
on the Great Egg Harbor River

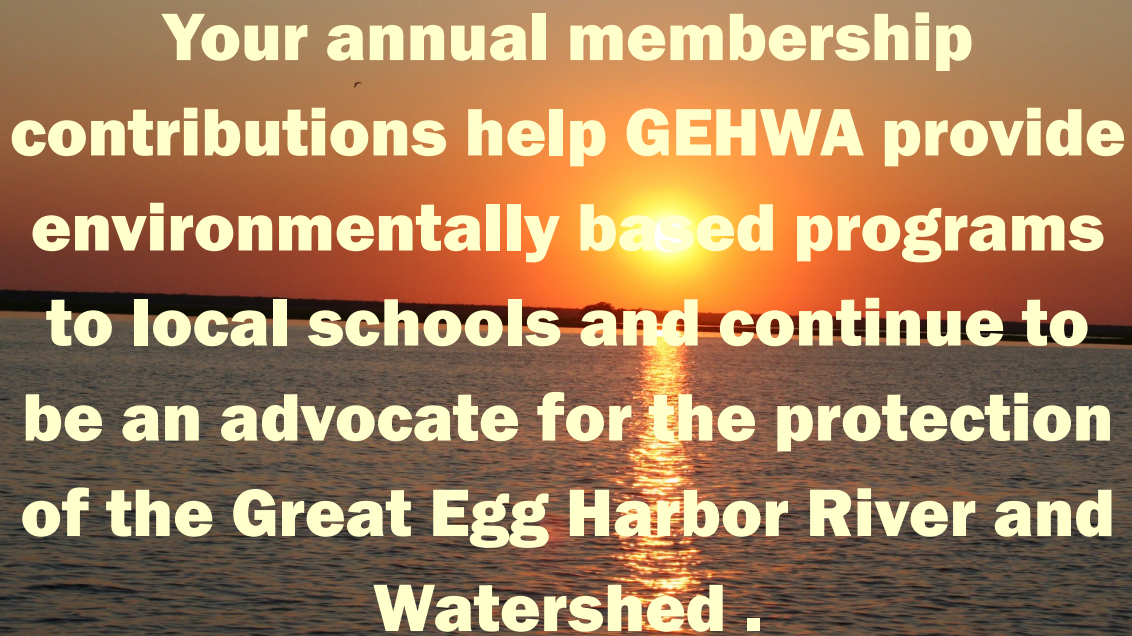
Wednesday, October 21, 2020 - Great Egg Harbor NS & R River Council
Meeting

Tuesday, November 24, 2020 - GEHWA Member Meeting— Program to be
announced.

Thursday, December 10, 2020 - Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association
Annual Trustee Meeting (6:00 PM Harley Dawn Diner, Hammonton)

Wednesday, December 16, 2020 - Great Egg Harbor NS & R River Council
Meeting

Please plan on attending these events.



Your annual membership contributions help GEHWA provide environmentally based programs to local schools and continue to be an advocate for the protection of the Great Egg Harbor River and Watershed .

GEHWA Membership Information

Your membership supports our mission and ensures our survival as a non-profit advocate, as we work to protect and preserve the Great Egg Harbor River and Watershed throughout the year. Your support is needed now more than ever. Without you, we could not exist. Thank you for your support!

Name/Organization: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State and Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Yes, I would like to receive notices by Email.

Annual Membership: Individual: \$10; Family: \$15; Supporting: \$35; Patron: \$50; Corporate: \$100

Please mail this form along with your check to: Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association,
Membership P.O. Box 109, Newtonville, NJ 08346

The Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association's Environmental Programs are FREE

We offer our environmentally focused programs **free** of charge to augment existing school curriculum. A school's environmental programs are often



St. Vincent DePaul student puppet show

threatened when faced with annual budget cuts. If you are a parent, and/or an educator, and feel our programs would enhance the environmental education that your child/student is receiving, please contact the appropriate individual in your school and request that they take advantage of the Great Egg



Student holding a Dragonfly Nymph

Harbor Watershed Association's **free** programs. If you would like additional information please contact Lynn Maun, Education Outreach Coordinator at 856-649-2792 or lynnkmaun@comcast.net



Students from Alder Avenue School searching for macroinvertebrates

REMEMBER our environmentally focused programs are FREE!

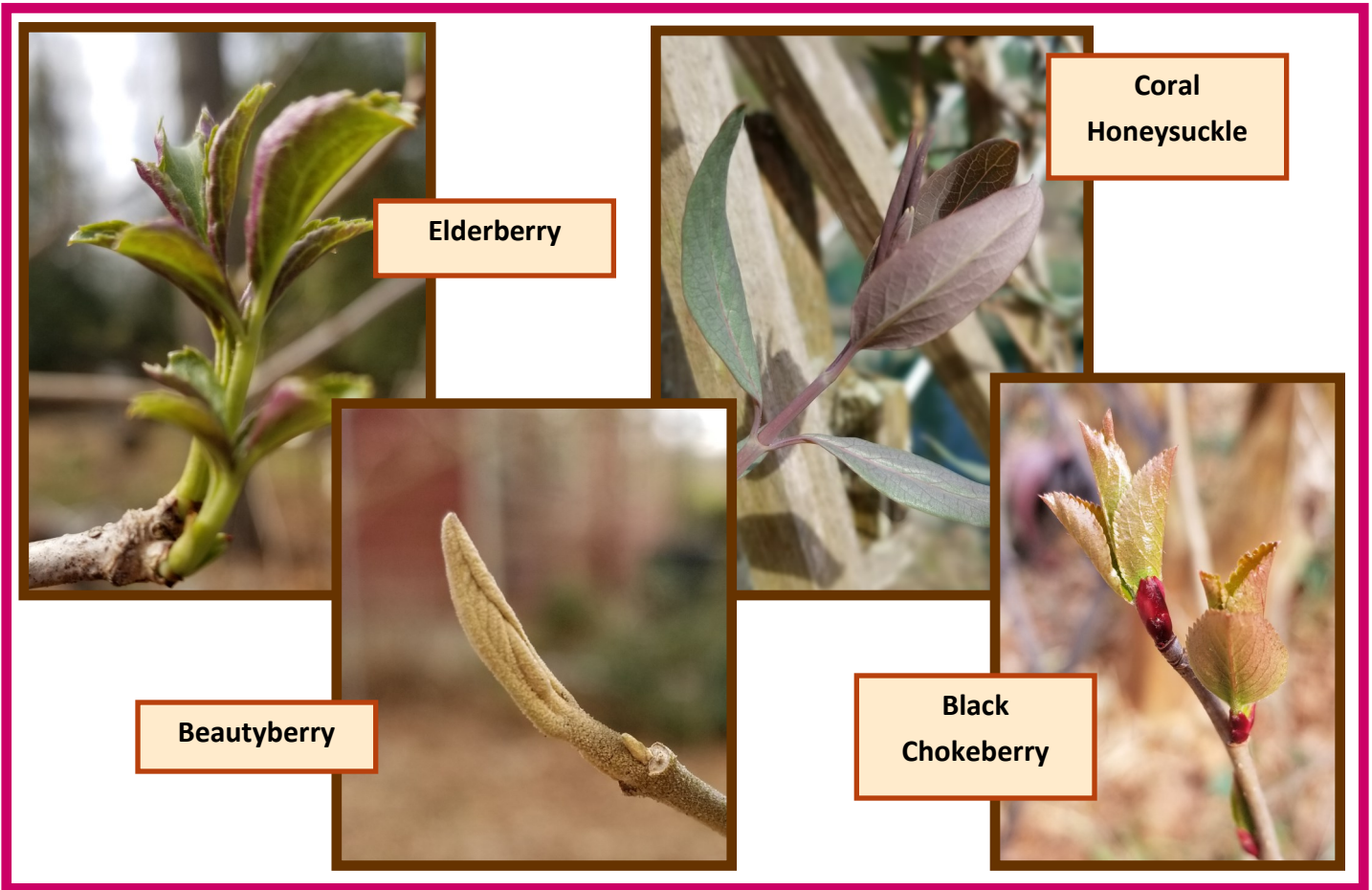
Contact Information

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Paul Kenney (215) 597-5823; Paul_Kenney@nps.gov
NJ DEP Watershed Management Office
(609) 777-0580

Atlantic County Department of Planning
(609) 645-5898
US Army Corps of Engineers (215) 656-6725
NJ DEP Regulatory Office for Atlantic County
(609) 292-8292
NJ DEP Enforcement Officer (732) 255-0787
Pinelands Commission
(609) 894-7300
NJ DEP Hotline 1-877 WARN DEP

To report an environmental incident impacting NJ, call the Toll-Free 24—Hour Hotline
1-877WARNDEP, 1-877-927-6337

If you should see debris or shoaling while traversing on New Jersey waters please call:
1-877- WARNDEP (1-877-927-6337)



Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association
PO Box 109
Newtonville, NJ 08346-0109

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