

Quogue Wildlife Refuge

Southampton Township Wildfowl Association

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PRESS RELEASE

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The Quogue Wildlife Refuge is a 300 acre non-profit nature preserve that was founded in 1934.

The Fairy Dell Boardwalk is a catwalk through beautiful tidal wetlands of the Quogue Wildlife Refuge. It traverses through the historic Fairy Dell Tract along the headwaters of Quantuck Creek and is in need of reconstruction due to dilapidation, and decaying wood. It has been closed to the public for 5 years.

“Over the decades, summer ecology camp kids, guided groups and independent visitors and birders have enjoyed exploring on the Fairy Dell Boardwalk. It is a wonderful teaching spot, a beautiful area to observe wildlife, and it encompasses a very different habitat from the main sanctuary property. Everyone will be thrilled to have it back open for use! We are so grateful to the Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation, as this grant will not only allow us to rebuild this much missed boardwalk, but will also include educational signage about the local history of the area along the walk.” said Marisa Nelson, Assistant Director of the Quogue Wildlife Refuge.

This boardwalk complex was first built over the winter of 1983-84, after the Refuge became the beneficiary of the first ‘Return A Gift to Wildlife’ grant, which is a fund established by NYS from donations by NYS income tax payers on their tax forms. The 1,500 foot long boardwalk overlooks Quantuck Creek at three terminal platforms.

The Fairy Dell is the local name for the headwaters of Quantuck Creek, visible from the Boardwalk platforms. Historically it has been considered a romantic part of the Quogue/Quiogue area.

Prior to the saltwater intrusion that occurred in the early 1900s which forced the Quogue Ice Company to move north of the railroad tracks in 1913 to the current Old Ice Pond at the Refuge, the creek was draped with freshwater trees. This was a known site where couples came to paddle canoes in the Fairy Dell, and as oral history was passed on, it was told to be a special place for getting engaged.

For those folks who enjoy history, the Refuge has plenty of it. Prior to becoming a wildlife preserve, the Quogue Ice Company harvested ice on Old Ice Pond, after relocating from their original site on Quantuck Creek. On the Refuge grounds is the Ice Harvesting Museum that has authentic, century-old tools, and a mural depicting ice harvesting on site over 100 years ago. (Currently this building is being repaired due to a fire and will reopen soon).

The Quogue Wildlife Refuge has over seven miles of nature trails in which visitors can explore a variety of habitats including Pine Barrens, bogs, wetlands, a field, a tidal estuary, and the ecologically rare Dwarf Pines. There is also an Outdoor Wildlife Complex which houses native wildlife that have been injured and would not be able to survive in the wild, including a bald eagle, owls, falcons, hawks, foxes and other native New York animals. Inside of the Charles Banks Belt Nature Center, huge picture windows offer spectacular views of Old Ice Pond, as well as a great spot to bird watch, or enjoy wildlife exhibits, live animals, a history display, nature library, and gift shop. The Quogue Wildlife Refuge has been offering educational programs at the Refuge since the 1960s. Throughout the year, programs are available for adults, families, and children; and our Summer Ecology Program just completed its 48th successful year.

The Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation, established in 1987, primarily supports the study of New York State history. Robert David Lion Gardiner was, until his death in August 2004, the 16th Lord of the Manor of Gardiner's Island, NY. The Gardiner family and their descendants have owned Gardiner's Island since 1639, obtained as part of a royal grant from King Charles I of England. The Foundation is inspired by Robert David Lion Gardiner's personal passion for New York history. For more information, please visit www.rdlgfoundation.org.

Quogue Wildlife Refuge is a 305-acre expanse of protected land, with more than seven miles of hiking trails that include a variety of habitats, such as the Pine Barrens, bogs, wetlands, a field, and a tidal estuary. Its mission is to serve as a responsible land steward of the Refuge property and its natural resources, while promoting, implementing and supporting environmental education.

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