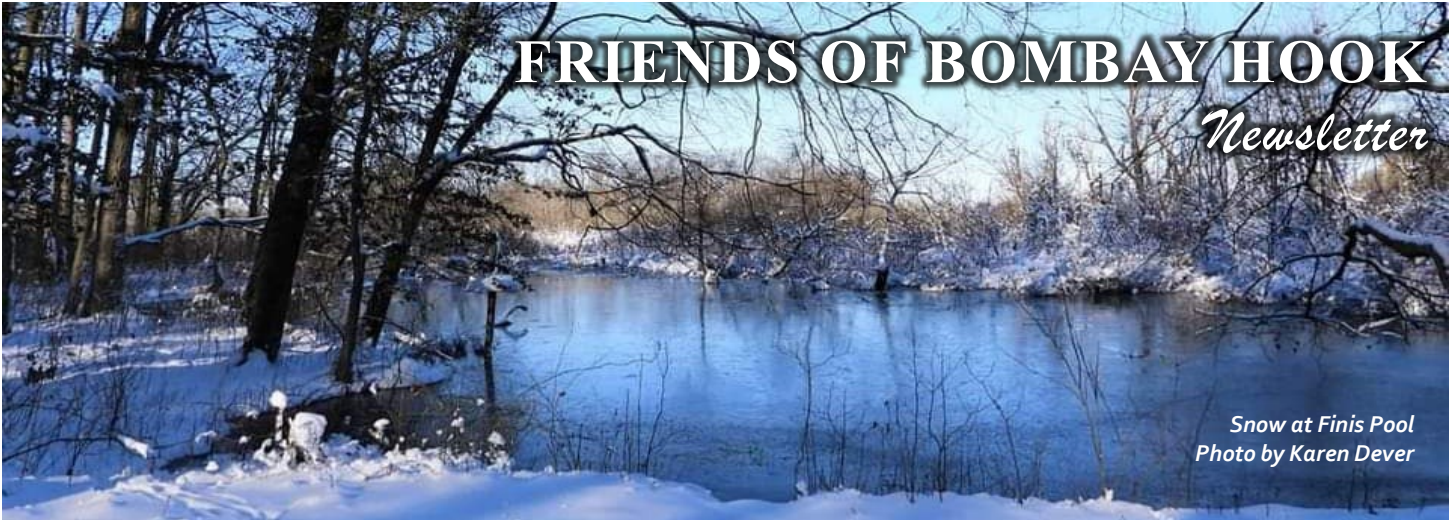


# FRIENDS OF BOMBAY HOOK

Newsletter



Snow at Finis Pool  
Photo by Karen Dever



Vol. 32, No. 3  
January 2023

### Our Mission Statement:

The Friends of Bombay Hook is a not-for-profit corporation working in conjunction with Bombay Hook NWR and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS). It supports and enhances educational and recreational programs at Bombay Hook, provides volunteer services and financial assistance and serves as a link between the Refuge and the public.

We are looking for a Website Developer for our Friends of Bombay Hook (FOBH) website. See [Page 3](#) for details.

Our readers are encouraged to share comments, provide articles for publication and/or suggestions regarding the Refuge as well as notifying us of address changes.

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The new Visitor Center in progress  
Photo by T. Lewis

Hi Friends! On behalf of FOBH, I would like to thank all our members and supporters for a great year.

Though the "shopping season" is once again behind us, is it too early to start shopping for the next season? Ha Ha! Never! Come see us...we have good stuff. ☺

As most of you know, we are eagerly awaiting the completion of the new Visitor Center! We anticipate Spring 2023 in a new store with much more to offer and a pleasant shopping experience.

Most of you may not know the new store will be located apart from the Visitor Service desk. This means that instead of one volunteer handling both duties, we will need one store volunteer and another volunteer for Visitor Services simultaneously. Would you like to be a part of the new Visitor Center? We need many volunteers. Can you help, or do you know someone that can? Please drop me an email at: [fobh@comcast.net](mailto:fobh@comcast.net).

Thank you!

Karen Dever, Store Manager

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## **Erosion Control Project**



Have you seen that big pile of logs? You're not alone!

No, they're not logging the Refuge. They have been arriving in truckloads and are part of an erosion control project.

All the details are not yet available, but all 600-plus Delaware logs have arrived. They will be arranged in the low tide mud flats across from the Sheariness Pool at a future point.



The high tides often back up in the bay when the coastal storms and hurricanes pass by. These extra high tides and storm winds can build up the waves that flood and erode the Sheariness Dike. Once in position, the logs will serve as an obstacle to diminishing the salt marsh's erosive wave action. This structure should function like a breakwater that protects a shoreline. No completion date has been set yet. As project details become available, we will pass them along. *(Photos by BL)*

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## **A New Forest Trail**



A new forest trail for Bombay Hook NWR will open this spring. The trailhead is just outside the new Visitor Center and will wind through the Sheariness Pool shoreline forest. The trail highlights older growth stands of mixed hardwoods in Bombay Hook NWR. The forest trail also cuts through the colonial Whitehall Plantation along Duck Creek. Remnants of an old Osage orange fence line are still present.

Oscar Reed, our Refuge Manager, got the ball rolling on the idea of a forest trail in 2019. He suggested starting the trail work as an Eagle Scout Project to a young scout. Fast forward to 2023, with the direct efforts of two Eagle Scout projects, many volunteers, and the support of the Friends of Bombay Hook. Oscar's vision of a forest trail is about to open.



For Refuge visitors, the 2.5-mile trail offers benches, picnic tables, and a 28' trail bridge. The trailhead information sign will provide everything you need to get started down the trail. Several trees along the route have numerical markers corresponding to a brochure that will identify and provide additional information about the trees. The tree identification trail features many native Delaware tree species.

This new trail will offer exciting opportunities for birders, photographers, and outdoor enthusiasts to enjoy new parts of the Refuge right from the Visitor Center parking lot. Stay tuned for the official opening. *(Photos by BL)*

## **Golden Rod Gall Fly** (*Eurosta solidagnis*)



Have you seen the galls on the brown meadow plant stems as you drive along the Refuge Auto Tour in the winter months? They are often caused by the Golden Rod Gall Fly.

Here are some fun facts about this little fly:

- ◆ The Golden Rod plants are essential to the fly's life cycle.
- ◆ Female Golden Rod flies lay eggs on the Golden Rod stems in the spring.
- ◆ Tiny larvae will hatch and eat into the plant stem.
- ◆ The mouth juices of larvae are similar to the plant's growth hormones and stimulate growth.



- ◆ Soon a round gall forms around the tiny larvae.
- ◆ The new gall doesn't stop the Golden Rod from blooming.
- ◆ The little larvae grow inside the gall all summer into fall and winter.
- ◆ The following spring, it leaves the gall and hatches into an adult fly.
- ◆ The adult flies don't fly very well and stay close to the Golden Rod plants.



- ◆ Woodpeckers and chickadees like to feed on gall larvae.

- ◆ Parasitic wasps also prey on gall larvae.
- ◆ Where galls are plentiful, ice fishermen will use the larvae as bait.

Keep a lookout this winter for Golden Rod Galls along the Auto Tour! (Photos by BL)

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## **NEEDED: WEBSITE DEVELOPER**

The **Friends of Bombay Hook (FOBH)** is looking for an individual to manage our existing website. FOBH has a functional website with some pages designed to change the display based on the size of the users' display.

The work on our website can be performed at home. It is necessary to contact other Friends Volunteers and, when possible, Fish and Wildlife personnel to gather information to add to the website. An archive of previous pages should be maintained as a reference.

A person interested in working with our website should qualify in either one or more of the following categories:

- ✓ Experience using HTML and CSS to create and maintain a website and its pages.
- ✓ Demonstrated website development using a website builder program.
- ✓ Experience with computer programming (Eg. C+, C++, Python, Java) and a desire to use that experience to learn to code a website.

If you are a part of one of these groups, don't hesitate to contact the Friends of Bombay Hook at [\*\*fobh@comcast.net\*\*](mailto:fobh@comcast.net).

## ***Mistletoe in Focus***



During spring and summer, when the trees are in full foliage, the Refuge mistletoe is a minor player in the forest canopy. However, in the winter months, it stands out as impressive green clusters in the leafless branches. Typically, it grows like a green nest in higher branches, but on rare occasions, you can see it close to the ground. The twiggy



nests consist of multiple, green-leafed twigs that sprout out of the branch bark of the host tree. This slow-growing broadleaf evergreen parasitic plant prefers hardwood tree species. They are more common in a humid, low-ground country with mild winters.

Mistletoe is the name for a group of plants in the order ***Santalales***. They are hemiparasitic, meaning they pull water and nutrients from their host plants while being photosynthetic. In the winter, you can see the green clusters scattered around the Refuge, particularly around Finis Pool.

Here are some interesting facts about mistletoe plants:

- ◆ They are found around the world.
- ◆ The native eastern North American species is *Phoradendron leucarpum*.
- ◆ Our Bombay Hook mistletoe can have clusters of up to 10 white berries.
- ◆ The word mistletoe comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *Mistel-tan*. *Mistel* means "dung," and *tan* means "twig." They believed mistletoe grew where the birds perched in the trees and left their poo. They were partly correct in that birds eat the mistletoe berries, and the viable seeds pass through and are left in droppings. However, the sticky mistletoe seeds can also blow around and germinate without birds.
- ◆ Those of African descent in the Caribbean call mistletoe the "God Bush."
- ◆ The ancient Greeks used it to decorate for weddings.
- ◆ The Roman and Norse cultures protected their doorways with mistletoe.
- ◆ In the United States, it's often hung as a Christmas holiday decoration.



This winter, when you are on the Refuge Auto Tour, take a look at the cluster of mistletoe overhead for a moment. (Photos by BL & KD)

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**Did you know that you could donate to Friends of Bombay Hook simply by shopping through Amazon?? If you shop on *Amazon Smile*, Friends will receive 0.5% of eligible purchases made.**

**To shop on *Amazon Smile*, simply go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) from the web browser on your computer or mobile device; sign on if you have an existing Amazon account; and choose *Friends of Bombay Hook* from a list of charitable organizations. It's a great way to shop while donating for a good cause.**

## **Medicine Lake NWR in Montana** **By Rod Murray**



There's a certain segment of society out there that when they hear the word "Montana," they don't think of Big Sky Country, Glacier National Park, bears, wolves, or ridiculously cold winters. No. They automatically recall the Frank Zappa song about moving to Montana soon to be a dental floss tycoon. That's right. Just him and the pygmy pony over by the dental floss bush. Wait. What? (Wikipedia has an [amusing story](#) about the song).

I don't know if Frank ever played a gig in Montana, and I seriously doubt that he ever did a birding trip at Medicine Lake NWR, but if he did, he would have enjoyed the gorgeous countryside and the great diversity of birds. This past September, I drove to North Dakota to once again bird as much of the state as I could and wound up in extreme northeastern Montana ([Sheridan County](#)) for much of one day. So, I had to bird Medicine Lake NWR.

The entrance to the huge refuge is south of the town of Medicine Lake off Montana Route 16. A fourteen-mile-long wildlife drive leads you through the mix of wetlands and short-grass prairie in the glaciated plains, which hold several species of waterfowl and sparrows. Other much sought-after birds include Gray Partridges and Sharp-tailed Grouses.

That morning in mid-September, I saw no other people except two county workers who were busy zapping some sort of invasive weed near the dirt/gravel road. Looking at [eBird](#), I see that only a handful of birders have since visited the refuge. This is indeed a lonely spot. All the "nearby" Montana towns have all the basic amenities; mom-and-pop motels, restaurants, and gas stations, but if you want a decent-sized town in which to spend the night, I can recommend the oil boomtown of Williston across the border in North Dakota. (It even has a Walmart. Woo-hoo!)

Spring through early fall is the best time to bird here since winter temperatures in this part of Montana can reach -30°F for weeks at a time. I stupidly asked one of the county weed zappers how folks manage to survive the winters here. He replied, "You get used to it. Now, go home and don't come back!" Just kidding; he was actually quite friendly and curious about my Delaware license plate. He said he collects them and needs one from the First State. I hightailed it outta there.

Two other notable birding spots in the general area include the town of Westby, MT, which is regarded as a great migrant trap for warblers, although I didn't have much luck there. Another great spot I would enthusiastically recommend is the Souris River Road, situated north of the border and east of Estevan, Saskatchewan. Of course, there are many other worthwhile minor birding spots scattered all over the general area in Canada and the two states, but Medicine Lake NWR is the one birding spot you cannot skip if you ever get to this part of the USA.

The state bird of the Treasure State (Montana) and the Peace Garden State (North Dakota) is the Western Meadowlark. The provincial bird of Saskatchewan is the Sharp-tailed Grouse.

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## HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT FRIENDS???

### Donate or Become a Member!

For over 30 years, the **FRIENDS OF BOMBAY HOOK (FOBH)** have been working with Bombay Hook NWR in supporting the message of conservation! Without memberships, donations, and proceeds from the Blue Heron Gift Shoppe, we surely would not exist today. Throughout the years, we have been able to aid the Refuge by supporting environmental education programs, fund transportation for field trips to Bombay Hook for school children, purchase audio/visual equipment, secure grants, paid for internships, purchased new chairs for the auditorium and for outside programs to name a few. Because of our supporters, we continue with our mission!

#### **TO DONATE OR BECOME A MEMBER:**

Please fill out the form below and mail your check to **FRIENDS OF BOMBAY HOOK, 2591 Whitehall Neck Road, Smyrna, DE 19977.**

Or go to [www.friendsofbombayhook.org](http://www.friendsofbombayhook.org) and follow the prompts to either donate or obtain membership. And you can always stop by the Visitor Center during gift shop hours to do it in person! We would love to see you! The Blue Heron Gift Shoppe is operated by volunteers and is only open when the volunteers are present. If you are uncertain of days and hours, please call ahead.

**MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS** include voting privileges at the FOBH Annual Meeting; 10% discount on merchandise sold at Blue Heron Gift Shoppe; and eligibility to join the Dover Federal Credit Union.

**ALL** donations are tax deductible.

**FRIENDS OF BOMBAY HOOK, INC.** is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation founded to promote conservation, environmental education, and a better understanding of and appreciation for Bombay Hook NWR.

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### **MEMBERSHIP / DONATION APPLICATION**

Submit completed application at the Visitor Center  
(payment by cash, check or credit card) or Mail (with check) to:

*Friends of Bombay Hook  
2591 Whitehall Neck Road  
Smyrna, DE 19977*

Membership     Donation

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail

Newsletter Preference:

Print     E-mail (require E-mail address)

#### **Method of Payment**

- Cash (payment at Visitor Center only)  
 Check (payment by mail or at Visitor Center)  
 Credit/ Debit Card (payment at Visitor Center only)

#### **Membership Plan (Check One)**                      **Amount**

- Student (under 18)                      \$5.00  
 Individual                                      \$15.00  
 Family    \$20.00  
 Sponsor\*\*                                        \$25.00  
 Sustaining                                        \$50.00  
 Corporate\*                                      \$100.00  
 Lifetime\*\*                                        \$200.00

\*Corporate sponsorship includes link to FOBH website; no voting privileges or store discount.

\*\*Sponsor and Lifetime memberships include family.

#### **Donation (Check One)**                      **Amount**

- Miscellaneous                                \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Allee House                                      \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Capital Improvement Campaign        \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Memorial for:                                    \$ \_\_\_\_\_