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Arboretum Annual Report 2017-2018

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CONNECTICUT COLLEGE ARBORETUM

December 10, 2018

Dear Arboretum Friends,

For the past thirty years, you have heard from Director Glenn Dreyer at this time of year with his annual report on the Connecticut College Arboretum. As you hopefully know by now, Glenn retired in June. Glenn began working for the Arboretum in 1982 while still a graduate student in the botany department. The next year, he became assistant director under William A. Niering and in 1988, he was appointed to the position of director. During his time as director, Glenn was also an adjunct professor of botany and the executive director of the Goodwin-Niering Center for the Environment. Over the years he established the Connecticut Notable Trees Project; authored numerous publications and presentations on urban forestry, Connecticut flora, invasive plant management, and ecological landscaping; and led an uncountable number of guided walks through the Arboretum. To recognize Glenn's many years of commitment and hard work, the bog located just beyond the Arboretum pond was dedicated at his retirement party as the "Glenn Dreyer Bog".

With Glenn's retirement, I was appointed as interim director. It is an honor to have been entrusted with guiding the Arboretum during this time of transition. I am fortunate to work with a multi-talented staff: Mary Villa curator and information manager; Leigh Knuttel horticulturalist; Bryan Goulet senior grounds person; Kraig Clark grounds person; and Christine Donovan department assistant. The director's position is currently posted and we are spreading the word widely—maybe you know someone who may be interested in applying? In the new year, interviews will begin with a plan to select a new director by summer.

It is my pleasure to send you a brief recap of the year's highlights:

Last summer, the Arboretum started a new internship program for a more enriching summer work experience in which students provide needed labor, and are also exposed to the inner workings of a public garden. Anticipated outcomes of the internships are that students gain an understanding of the Arboretum's mission, history and major functions, as well as the important educational, scientific and cultural role public gardens have worldwide. Themes covered in the internship are: collection maintenance and curation; public education and outreach; managing land for conservation and biodiversity; greenhouse management; supporting teaching and research; recreation and urban forestry. Training was provided by Arboretum staff over the course of the summer to five students. In addition, we took a road trip to the New York Botanical Garden to participate in their Green Industry Intern Field Day.

Our native azalea collection has been granted national accreditation by the Plant Collections Network, a program of the American Public Gardens Association. The core of the collection was established as the Nancy Moss Fine Azalea Garden in 1978. Developing the application involved



Connecticut College dance students use the Arboretum's outdoor theater to stage publicity photographs for their Senior Capstone Performances. *Photo by Cecilia Bole '18.*



Director Glenn Dreyer leads a tour of the Native Plant Collection for the summer interns, pictured left to right: Isabelle Smith '19, Ericka Lagrange '20, Natasha Strugatz '20, Aidan Clark Long '19 and Midhun Gelder '19.



Georgina Hann '18 created an exhibition "100 Herbarium Specimens for 100 Years of Botany at Connecticut College" to launch the botany department's centennial celebration (1918-2018). *Photo by Kate Wargo.*



The Annual Friends Celebration: Azalea Garden Walk and Reception was planned to coincide with peak bloom time. Pinxterbloom azalea (*Rhododendron periclymenoides*) was one of eight azalea species blooming in late May.



Arboretum trail map features include the blazed trail network, streams, wetlands, old stone walls, 10-foot contour lines, parking locations and place names overlaid on detailed aerial imagery.



Kraig Clark works with Eamon Horrigan '19 to clean out the bird houses along the edge of the Arboretum pond in early spring.

an extensive process of verifying the nearly 200 individual plants in our collection, compiling data for a benchmarking study of holdings at 13 other public gardens with significant native azalea collections, and a day-long site visit by an outside expert. This accreditation is the standard of excellence in plant collections management, acknowledging the Arboretum's commitment to the conservation and care of native azaleas curated at the highest professional level.

Arboretum staff, with the assistance of Beverly Chomiak senior lecturer in geology and environmental studies, developed ArcGIS interactive maps for the Caroline Black Garden and natural area trails. The Arboretum trail system had previously been an assemblage of inconsistent markings in the landscape with no comprehensive mapping. These online map applications join the Native Plant Collection and the Campus Landscape online maps, allowing the public to access the Arboretum's extensive collections with information about each plant. These interactive maps can now easily be found at:
www.conncoll.edu/the-arboretum/visiting-the-arboretum/maps/.

In early spring Arboretum Bulletin number 43, *Birds of the Connecticut College Arboretum: Eighty Years of Change* by Robert Askins, was printed and distributed. This bulletin is focused on the long-term research of bird communities in the Arboretum. The first sections summarize the detailed studies which began shortly after the establishment of the Bolleswood Natural Area in 1952 along with information about the waterfowl populations on the Thames River around Mamacoke Island. Historic images, charts of change over time and contemporary photographs of birds by Bob MacDonnell illustrate the text. A checklist of all species of birds recorded in the Arboretum and the likelihood of finding each during the different seasons make this an invaluable guide. The new bulletin was added to Digital Commons:
<http://digitalcommons.conncoll.edu/arbulletins/>.

In a new partnership, the Connecticut Audubon Society started using the Arboretum for their Science in Nature programs. After classroom lessons, local public school children visit the Arboretum and explore several different habitats to conduct hands-on, inquiry-based activities that relate to earth and life sciences, ecology, conservation and citizenship. Teacher/naturalists from the Roger Tory Peterson Estuary Center have also led guided walks for the public of the Native Plant Collection and Mamacoke Island. Next spring, we will continue the partnership with several birding programs culminating in the Annual Friends Celebration on May 23, 2019. A full schedule of spring public programs will be distributed in January with more details.

The Arboretum is an ever changing place from season to season and year to year. It is hard to fully document the life of the Arboretum in words on pages. I encourage you to go for a walk during the holiday season and reflect on how you connect to the Arboretum. Your continued membership helps support the mission of the Arboretum to prepare people for a lifetime of learning about and interacting with the natural world. Enclosed is an envelope for contributions or you may go to the Arboretum's home page and find a link to an online membership form.

Warm wishes,

Maggie Redfern