



# TRAILSIDE NEWSLETTER

Fall 2008

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## PRESIDENTS' LETTER

The leaves on the trees at Watchung Reservation have all fallen giving way to the clear, crisp skies of November. We hope you have been able to enjoy some of the offerings at Trailside during this magnificent time of year.

What a busy, productive fall it has been. With donations and support from TMA and Parker Gardens, a beautiful new stream and waterfall enhances the bird watching area and is sure to please the birds and wildlife at Trailside.

The TMA hosted an event for the general public on Columbus Day on snakes and reptiles. This event was so well received that Trailside had to add a second show! Bill Boesenberg of Snakes-n-Scales-n-Turtles Tails introduced the audience to a python, turtles, and an alligator. As a result of this event, more than 55 new families/members joined TMA.

TMA held its annual meeting at the reptile show and installed two new officers to the TMA Board. Many thanks to TMA Board members Paul McNamara, who will serve as Treasurer, and Mary Sudiak, who will serve as Secretary. The Board is also pleased to welcome new Board member John Burr, who is the owner of the Wild Birds Unlimited store in Scotch Plains and has been a generous supporter and advocate for Trailside for many years.

We look forward to seeing you at Trailside events and programs in the coming months and welcome your ideas and suggestions for TMA.

Enjoy this beautiful season and the upcoming holidays!

*Anne Dyjak & Margaret Heisey*

## Director's Corner

### TMA Helps to Fund Water Feature in Trailside's Backyard Habitat

Funded by the Trailside Museum Association and the Fanwood-Scotch Plains Service League, Parker Homescape of Scotch Plains has installed a new water feature into Trailside's Backyard Habitat. The Trailside staff and a crew of volunteers assisted Parker Homescape employees with moving dirt and rocks, and laying the liner for a 15-foot stream and waterfall. The project was completed in one day and it looks wonderfully inviting and very serene.

Trailside visitors can now view the new water feature from the floor-to-ceiling windows in our bird-exhibit room. We are proud to report that the site now acts as an outdoor educational exhibit, teaching visitors what is needed to attract local wildlife to their yards. The Trailside Backyard Habitat has also been certified with the National Wildlife Federation as an official Backyard Habitat. All species of wildlife need the basics of food, water, cover, and places to raise their young. Trailside has provided these essential elements for a healthy and sustainable wildlife habitat. The running water attracts many species of birds, mammals, and amphibians and the native shrubs and plants provide food and shelter. A few surprise visitors to the stream have included a family of turkeys, a sharp shinned hawk, an American pipit, purple finches, and a raccoon.

Restoring habitats where commercial and residential developments have degraded natural ecosystems is very important. Trailside has made a commitment to wildlife conservation and the environment. Our plan is to complete the native plantings in spring 2009 and have Parker Homescape assist us with conducting educational workshops on ponds and other water features for members of the public.

Trailside has entered into a partnership with Parker Homescape with an opportunity for you to invest in nature and give back to wildlife and Trailside all at the same time. If you are interested in attracting wildlife to your yard and adding aesthetic value to your property, let Parker Homescape design and install a water feature for you. They will in turn make a generous donation to the Trailside Nature Center. You can contact Parker Homescape of Scotch Plains at 908-490-0449 or visit their web site at [www.parkerhomescape.com](http://www.parkerhomescape.com).

*Patricia Bertsch, Director of Trailside*

