

Caring for Mother Sea

Nearly every day Abby dog and I go walking near Gile Pond, and also along the edge of the wetlands along Highway 114. Years ago someone had the foresight to name and preserve these precious lands. As we walk we look for things special plants and creatures and we watch the change in seasons they unfold. We've watched the Marsh Marigolds shyly peak out from their swampy home, and cannot wait for the Pussy Willows to rise to meet the sun.

Abby and I are always saddened when we find ~~are~~ dead turtles. They grow so slowly and move so slowly that they are an easy target for a hurried driver. We also are worried about the ducks, birds and even the small salamanders that inhabit this special preserved place.

One morning we were surprised by six young coyotes joyfully running and playing right in the middle of the road - as young children would do. We waived our arms to slow the traffic, then turned around and walked the other way just to be sure that we didn't become involved in their games,

It was and is not only the creatures that are a concern. We are also dismayed by the number of beverage cans as well as other trash and plastic bags that are unceremoniously thrown out of vehicles' windows. Every one of these happenings makes me think of Rachel Carson, and also makes me ask "why? Why are you using this place for your trash? The Transfer Station is only about two miles south of here - right on this road!" We are so lucky to have a wetland like this. To quote Rachel, "...the balance of nature is built-in a series of relationships between things and their environment. She knew that chemicals (and aluminum cans, and glass bottles, even plastic bags and vehicles) have their place. But she asked and I would like to ask people to slow down and look carefully at what they were and are doing.

If you see a turtle in the middle of the road in front of you, slow down for just a few minutes and help that turtle get across safely to where

in the direction it was traveling. 2
the turtle wants to be. If by chance is a snapping turtle, carefully move it with a shovel or stick. By all means, do not try picking it up!

By affecting these tiniest creature (such as red salamanders or turtles, or even small birds) they were (and are) influencing the whole web of life including humans. (Relate sad story of destroyed duck family.)

Rachel Carson gave a voice to nature, (as well as to lakes and ponds and wetlands around here) and an awareness of peoples' connection and responsibility to our fragile, but miraculous planet that we call home.

So, what do wet lands, turtles, and birds and even humans have to do with the seas? Rachel wondered but she also stopped and observed and understood that all life on Earth comes from the sea - ^{mother} Everything here on this planet ^{even us} started and evolved from the one celled creatures that were here over a billion years ago when the earth began. And, with care and thought, they are still transforming and becoming other creatures.

Rachel was a wonderful observer of the world around her - nature. But, as she reflected on what she saw, she could see that some of nature's voices had disappeared, or diminished. To quote author Stephanie Sisson, "So Rachel did what she did best: She watched closely, listened carefully, and learned as much as she could about what was happening."

She researched the various sources that were available to her, and she began to find answers.

Some of the answers she discovered were the insecticides used to kill the insects that destroyed farmers' crops, and gardens. And, as one variety ^{became} was no longer potent enough to sub ^{due} the destructive creatures, new ones were invented! People thought they were being safe - but..... It was Rachel that discovered that the chemicals not only killed the invasive species, but also killed other animals and even affected humans. **(Show pls. 22 & 23 & explain the connections)**

(I am old enough to remember the decimation of rice paddies in Viet Nam.)

She wrote books about her discoveries, and eventually people began to take notice of what she was doing.

After some time, and an open-minded President and Congress. Eventually Rachel was invited to Washington, DC to defend her book Silent Spring.

In time, legislation was passed and laws were put in place to limit use of deadly chemicals and citizens everywhere began to speak out. Thanks to Rachel and her ground breaking discoveries and her refusal to give in or give up, some progress is being made. Thanks to Rachel, we have Earth Day to celebrate our Planet and that progress that is being made.

I was inspired and wanted to learn more. What I really wanted to do was to visit the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge located near Kittery, Maine. There are over 9,000 ~~miles~~ ^{acres} of reserved lands and refuge areas!

It was extremely lucky for me that I worked with a person who was familiar with this National Refuge.

near the chauncy

Early one Thursday morning, my friend and I headed off together to the Refuge. It is a beautiful natural area preserved in its natural state. We arrived in mid morning and were almost overwhelmed by the natural wonder of it all. There were carefully groomed trails, but nothing artificial or out of place. Everything felt like it belonged there. We walked down to the beach - luckily it was low tide and we noticed the sand trails of crabs and whelks and ~~crabs~~ ^{ostracids}. There was a gathering of raucous sounds of seagulls marching along the water's edge looking for breakfast in the sea weed.

After walking along the beach, we hiked up the trail. It took a while, but we began to use all of our senses as Rachel had admonished us to do - to see things in a new way

The first sense you would use would be your eyes -

Sight. - It took a while to take everything in - the early plants reaching their leaves toward the early spring sun.

And there was so much more -

Touch - using careful touching to closely observe the shells and sea weed and smooth sand - In the woods, the delicate partridge berries unfolding their leaves and reaching for the sun, coming alive after a long winter.

Smell - the smell of the sea water is incomparable to anything else. The salt air, the seaweed at the edge of our Mother Sea.

Hearing - the sound of the gulls and the sound of the surf further out - but even at low tide - there it was.

Feeling the emotions and to know that these places need to be preserved and need to exist for future generations.

There was so much to take in - we took one of the easy trails and tried to comprehend and remember as much as possible - and in the back of our brains - made a vow to return again.

Here was a place of peace - touching the Sea we all evolved from. We vowed silently to do whatever possible to keep this sacred place and to preserve our mother the Sea where all of this beauty came from and to protect it and pass it forward to future generations.