



Athol Bird & Nature Club
Millers River Environmental Center
100 Main Street
Athol, MA 01331-2222

August 2009

Greetings,

Your membership in the ABNC runs from September 1 through August 31, and it's that time of year again. If you didn't renew last year, we miss you and want you back. Your support is vitally important to our mission—opening eyes to the beauty of our natural world, providing opportunities to enjoy and learn about it, spreading the word about protecting it. In addition, your support helps us maintain the Millers River Environmental Center, its marvelous collections, and the meeting space it provides for numerous community groups.

Membership also gives you access to dozens of our free and/or low-cost events and activities; mailings, newsletters, and e-mail updates; and discounts on birdseed at Athol Agway and everything at North Quabbin Woods. Consider sending a gift membership for someone else, too—it's a gift that lasts a whole year. And remember to check out the website (www.millersriver.net) for program updates and for an overview of what we do and information on what we will be doing.

Since 1999 the operation of the Millers River Environmental Center has been a labor of love for many of us, not the least of whom is our executive director, Sue Cloutier. Sue is stepping down to travel with her husband Ron in search of butterflies. We wish them well in their travels, but Sue's dedication to the Center and grant-writing skills will be sorely missed. It will take a lot of effort to reorganize the Center, but the Board is working with others to develop grants for educational programs that will help us keep our programs and the facility going. *Together* we will carry on our rich ABNC tradition.

Now more than ever the club needs your financial support and renewed membership, ABNC has been holding the line on dues increases for many years to allow all who want to participate as full members to do so. It is with great reluctance that your Board of Directors has decided **to increase our annual dues, effective September 1, 2009**. Please see the new membership form for complete details.

We also ask you to consider a larger contribution. Donations beyond basic membership are actually essential because they help pay the costs of operating of the Millers River Environmental Center (including heating oil and electricity) and assist us in providing additions to our natural history collection and displays.

We really need you. Your timely response will help us plan for the season ahead.

Thank you,

David H. Small
President, ABNC