

The Impact of The Pandemic On Our Natural Community

Protected areas, like Quincy Bog Natural Area, help ensure the long-term health of natural communities. They assist in maintaining our life-support systems, like water, food, biodiversity, pollination, and carbon storage. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, conservationists are learning just how much human, animal, and ecosystem health are intricately linked. For QBNA, our usual methods to enhance our mission, like summer programs/talks/walks, were cancelled due to the pandemic. Epidemiologist Blake Thomson stated,

“The worldwide response to the COVID-19 pandemic may be the first truly global natural experiment of the modern, big data era. Natural experiments are defined by a shift in exposure that was caused by forces outside the researchers’ control, but which may be used to infer the causal impact of these changes.”

Conservation groups heard reports from homeowners who saw wildlife in their backyards they didn’t know existed. The wildlife had always been there; it is the homeowners who were always at work and didn’t see them. People observed nature and, in many cases, took part in more outdoor activities. Globally, people reported a variety of animal sightings like huge flocks of flamingos in the large city of Mumbai, India, and clear water in the canals of Venice, due to sediment not being stirred up by canal boats.

At QBNA we saw more people walking the trail. The bog had a growing audience. Visitors shared flora and fauna sightings on Facebook and Instagram. Some of them marveled at the diversity seen at the bog. Others simply enjoyed walking our newly rebuilt trail, which we managed to finish before the pandemic. Although QBNA had to forego group activities such as our summer programming and nature walks, the increase in usage/traffic and the responses to FB, etc. indicated that we were meeting our mission in other ways. We want people to explore, observe and share the sights, sounds and smells of nature. We want them to care.