



The Wing Beat

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Mission Statement

To educate the Bucks County region about our natural world with an emphasis on conservation, including birds, other wildlife and their habitats.

A SPECIAL PLACE IN NATURE

Do you have a special place in nature, where you can relax, decompress, and escape from the world? For many that place is Honey Hollow, hundreds of people each year come to hike the trails, watch the birds, sit by the stream, and enjoy this special place. With the trails open from dawn to dusk every day, it is easy to stop by for a quick walk, a quiet picnic or just to take a few minutes to sit and enjoy the peace of nature.

It is common for people who visit often to have a favorite spot that is special to them and that they always visit; even our educators have favorite places to visit:

Marissa, "I love the bridge along the Pond Trail. It is the perfect place to watch the changes in the seasons." *(pictured at right)*

Diane, "The White Trail, especially the second crossing where there is a bench. You can hear the water trickling over the rocks, it is shady and very peaceful."

While there are many wonderful and peaceful spots on the property, and I encourage you all to come and find your special place, they are not all easily accessible for everyone.

For the past several years, BCAS has been working with Peaceful Living to bring adults with special needs into nature. This work sparked the idea of creating a special place in nature for these visitors. So with the support of Foundations Community Partnership, BCAS is creating a Healing and Sensory Garden! The garden will be located close to the center and parking lot, making it easily accessible for everyone. The garden, designed by Nancy Minich of NAM Planning and Design, will include native trees and shrubs, raised beds with herbs and other sensory plants, a blueberry hedge to protect the sensory swing, as well as quiet seating areas for peaceful reflection.

This spring and summer, Nancy, along with adults from Peaceful Living and BCAS volunteers, will begin to build the garden. So be sure to stop by and see the progress when you come to visit your favorite spot!

If you would like to learn more, join us for the Annual Members Meeting on Tuesday, May 9th. Nancy will be talking about the garden, its design and the important of nature and horticultural therapy for people with special needs. Then this fall, keep a look out a grand opening for the garden!



Stacy Carr-Poole
Executive Director

Special Highlights in this Issue:

Vernal Pools | STEM Grant Update | Membership Appeal | Aquaponics | Raptor Run 5K | Birding Trip Event

VERNAL POOLS & THE ANIMALS THAT NEED THEM

Vernal pools are seasonal, depressional wetlands that occur throughout the northeast. They are covered by shallow water for periods of time from winter to spring but typically are dry for most of the summer. Since they are so shallow and seasonal fish cannot inhabit them, they are perfect habitat for frogs and other amphibians because there are no fish to eat the eggs and tadpoles. One way to identify a vernal pool is by the species that make use of the temporary wetland. These species, the "obligate" vernal pool species, are called this because they must use a vernal pool for various parts of their life cycle.

Species that make use of vernal pools include the wood frog (*pictured to the right*) (obligate), mole salamander (obligate) and spring peeper (facultative), typically the first amphibians to emerge from their winter slumber. Wood frogs survive the winter with nearly 70% of their body water turned to ice. As the ice crystals form they produce a substance that acts as anti-freeze allowing them to stay alive. They are usually the first frog to announce the coming of spring with a voice that sounds like a cross between a quacking duck and a squeaky door! If you don't hear them, you probably will hear the spring peeper, next in line to herald the arrival of spring. These tiny frogs have a big voice with dozens of them making an ear-splitting chorus during spring evenings.



There are three species of mole salamanders typically found in Pennsylvania: spotted salamanders, marbled salamanders and Jefferson salamanders. A fourth species, the blue-spotted salamander is found in only a few places in PA. The mole salamanders spend the majority of the year feeding in subterranean tunnels in the woodlands that surround seasonal pools. Their diet consists of snails, worms, insect larvae, spiders, isopods, crickets, and other small animals they encounter. This underground lifestyle makes them difficult to find during most of the year. But once a year, they emerge to the surface and migrate to seasonal pools where males and females find each other, court, breed, and lay eggs.

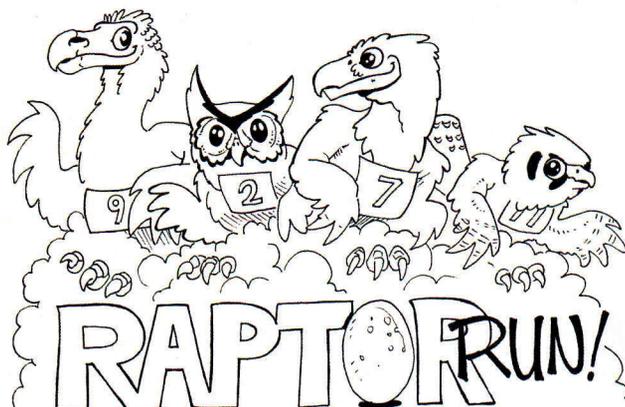
In PA, there is a Vernal Pool Registry which is a project sponsored by the PA Natural History Program (PNHP), a partnership between the Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, the PA Game Commission and the PA Fish and Boat Commission. If you'd like to identify and register a vernal pool, here's a link to get you started: http://www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us/VernalPool_Register.aspx

The last Saturday in April (April 29) is Save the Frogs day, the world's largest day of amphibian education and conservation action. Since amphibians are under threat world-wide this effort to educate and conserve is taking on increasing importance. Learn about this work here: www.savethefrogs.com/index.html

Want to learn more about frogs and other amphibians? Then join us on April 29th at 7pm for our Annual Frog Walk and Night Hike!



Diane L. Smith
Director of Education



OUR FIRST 5K RACE!

Enjoy a run through the fields, forests and stream sides of the Honey Hollow Environmental Education Center at the Raptor Run: Cross Country 5K and 1M Family Fun Run! BCAS is excited to start a new tradition that encourages people to get outside, enjoy fresh air and fun physical activity, while supporting habitat conservation and education. Join us on Wednesday, June 7th!

Check the website for more information and to register, www.BCAS.org.

AQUAPONICS

Everyone needs food, but when we look into the future there is an uncertainty about where all of our food will come from. With this in mind, we need to explore new and different ways of approaching agriculture. One form of agriculture that is becoming more and more popular for its sustainability is Aquaponics, which is a combination of aquaculture (farming fish) and hydroponics (growing plants without soil). Aquaponics takes the problems of these two growing methods and turns them into solutions.

The science of Aquaponics is pretty simple if you remember that all living things need to eat, or take in energy, and also need to release waste. In Aquaponics there are many living things, including fish, bacteria and plants. Then you just follow the Nitrogen Cycle!

- * Fish eat fish food and produce ammonia as waste
- * Some Bacteria eat ammonia and produce nitrites as waste
- * Other Bacteria eat nitrites and produce nitrates as waste
- * Plant use nitrates to grow!

To learn more about this great sustainable agriculture option, join us at Delaware Valley University on Friday, April 28th at 6:30 for our Nurture Your Inner Naturalist Speaker Series! Aquaponics expert, Mike Barcus, will explore how aquaponics is being used today and how it can benefit our future.

The Nitrogen Cycle



Stacy Carr-Poole
Executive Director

BIRDING TRIP TO WASTE MANAGEMENT

Spring is coming.....I promise you it is just around the corner. With the certainty of Spring also comes the 2017 bird migration. It is such a wonderful time of year to see the thousands of birds that either are heading up north or coming right here to Bucks County to brighten up the landscape and raise their new families.

We are so fortunate again this year to have Waste Management offer access to their facilities to our members. Previous trips to this amazing habitat have resulted in single day sightings of over 50 species with notable appearances by Yellow, Palm, and Black and White Warblers, a Northern Parula and Blue Grosbeak. The trips are truly magical for any birder either beginning or advanced.

This year, our trip is planned for Saturday April 8. We are offering this particular trip free to current members only and we will be limiting the size of the group. Please join if you can.! Register by emailing Diane at dianesmith@bcas.org.



Bob Hennessy
Membership Chairman

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS!

Our Earth Day Festival (April 22nd, 11AM-4PM) is fast approaching and with that, our need for volunteers grows!!

If you're interested in helping to make this great festival run smoothly, please contact Pat Antrobus, Volunteer Coordinator, at pantrobus@BCAS.org



Spring Events

MARCH

24: NURTURE YOUR INNER NATURALIST –DINO DIGGING: 6:30PM - Were you interested in dinosaurs as a kid? Adults love them too, even to this day! Join us at DelVal University to learn about them from Paleontologist, Jason Poole.

29/30: SPRING PRE-SCHOOL EXPLORERS: Wednesday Classes are 3:30PM-5:00PM. Thursday classes are 1:00PM-2:30PM. Visit www.BCAS.org for more information and to register.



APRIL

8: MEMBERS ONLY FIELD TRIP TO GROWS: 8AM - During this trip to GROWS landfill in Tullytown, We will be keeping a special eye out for Migratory Birds! Register by calling 215-297-5880 or by emailing Diane at dianesmith@bcas.org

10-14: SCHOOL HOLIDAY CAMP: 9AM-3PM - There's a whole week of green, growing, fun for your child's spring break! Sign up for a day, or all of them! Visit www.BCAS.org to register.

21: NURTURE YOUR INNER NATURALIST—AQUAPONICS: 6:30PM- Join us at DelVal University to learn what fish, poop, food, and you have to do with each other!

22: EARTH DAY FESTIVAL: 11AM-4PM - Go green with BCAS during our annual Earth Day celebration! Plant trees, build an Eeyore House, explore the creek, check out our vendors, take a seedling tree home, and more!

27: NATURE LOVER'S BOOK CLUB: 6:15PM- Join us as we discuss "The Invention of Nature," by Andrea Wulf.

29: FROG WALK: 7PM- Learn all about what croaks and trills in the pond at BCAS! After a brief indoor presentation, we will be heading outside to search for these jumpy creatures! Pre-Register online as space is limited!



MAY

6: FIELD TRIP TO GROWS: 8AM - This field trip to GROWS landfill in Tullytown is open to anyone and we'll be keeping an eye out for the various waterfowl species that call GROWS home.

19: NURTURE YOUR INNER NATURALIST—COMPOSTING: 6:30PM -Join us at DelVal University to find out how throwing some of your kitchen scraps outside is a *good* thing!

20: FALCONRY DEMO: 2PM - Raptors are fascinating animals. Learn about the art of Falconry and meet some of the birds during this demonstration by Baywings Falconry! Register online.

25: NATURE LOVER'S BOOK CLUB: 6:30PM - Come to the Doylestown Book Shop for a night of discussing some of the top nature books!



UPCOMING EVENTS

June 7: RAPTOR RUN 5K AND FAMILY FUN RUN: 6:30PM - (see pg. 3 for event description)

June 19-23, June 26-30, July 31-Aug. 4, and Aug. 14-18: SUMMER ECO-CAMP: 9AM-3PM—Register for any of our Science and Nature Camps online at www.BCAS.org

Sept. 30-Oct.1: BARN TOUR AND ART SHOW: 10AM-4PM

STEM IN THE WATERSHED

The importance of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education has increased over the past several years. As more and more jobs require STEM skills, and fewer students are receiving the high-quality STEM education that they need, it often falls to non-formal education to provide the hands-on, inquiry based learning that is required in STEM areas. As a provider of high-quality science education, it was a natural fit for BCAS to expand our STEM programming to include students from low-income areas of our region.



STEM in the Watershed was created to provide a program with more depth than any of BCAS's past programs. The STEM in the Watershed program provides an in-depth four part program for all third and fourth graders at two schools in Bristol, Snyder-Girotti and Mill Creek Elementary Schools.

We are piloting this exciting program this spring thanks to funding from The VWR Foundation. We will be serving approximately 660 students in 22 classrooms. Each student will participate in three lessons in their classroom, as well as a field trip experience to Honey Hollow. Through this program they will explore the science and natural history of watersheds, from the water cycle to basis topography to ecosystem studies. We are so excited about this wonderful program! Be sure to check out our Facebook page for updates on this and other BCAS programs.

MEMBERSHIP APPEAL

As I sit here writing this, a March snowstorm is raging outside my kitchen window. Everything is covered in a blanket of white and even the birds have taken a break; avoiding my feeders until the storm subsides. The crocuses and the daffodils that shot up during the recent 70 degree weather seem a bit confused.

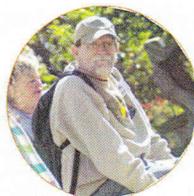
We all know that this is the last gasp of Winter. The promise of Spring echoes through Bucks County and within a few weeks, the migrating birds will be returning to our beautiful countryside which will be clothed in the rich colors of renewal. And so it is with Bucks County Audubon Society.

Spring signals the start of our annual Spring Membership Drive. We have come through the Winter successfully energized by attendance at our Fall and Winter events. The laughter of children attending our new school holiday camps and preschool explorers has brightened our dreary days and the National Audubon Photo Exhibit has decorated our Visitor Center. Our new book club has discussed two wonderful books and planning for all our wonderful Spring and Summer events is well underway. Now it is time for you to help with our renewal.

Last year's Spring Membership Drive was a major success. We saw a strong response to our efforts to gain new members and keep those that had joined previously. This year we need an even stronger response if we are to gain the numbers we need to keep Bucks County Audubon Society moving ahead.

In 1969, BCAS boasted a membership near 5,000. We had just been designated a National Historic Landmark, and were well on our way to achieving our potential as a premier ecological education and research facility. While much has changed since our inception, the vision of our organization and the dedication of our staff and Board of Directors has remained constant. I am still amazed by the number of adults who come as chaperones with the visiting elementary school classes we teach who tell me they were here as a child and remember the wonderful surprises they discovered in our ponds, fields and forests (*pictured at right*).

This is your chance to help move us forward. Please renew your membership as soon as possible and even better, renew and help us gain a new member or two! Help us make this Spring Membership drive bigger and better than last year. We are counting on you.



Bob Hennessy
Membership Chairman



Bucks County Audubon Society
At Honey Hollow

Environment for the Future

Bucks County Audubon Society
2877 Creamery Rd.
New Hope, PA 18938



"Springtime is the land awakening. The March winds are the morning yawn." – Lewis Grizzard

We're Social!

Interact with BCAS!

Summer Camp Sign-Ups!

Does your child love all things nature? Register early for our Eco-Camps! We're offering 4 great weeks of science, learning, and fun for your child! Visit our website for details and to register.

Nature Lover's Book Club

Join our environmental and nature themed book club! We meets at the Doylestown Book Shop every 4th Thursday at 6:15pm. Check out the blog site, www.natureloversbookclub.blogspot.com to view the next book on the list, discussion questions, and helpful links!

Monthly Art Display—Featuring YOU!

Want to display and sell your nature-inspired work here at BCAS? Email Marissa, at mfarra@bcas.org today!



(215) 297-5880



www.BCAS.org

