

Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council
13555 Beaver Dam Road
Cockeysville, MD 21030



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Snapshots



Honey Harvest 2011

Photos by Jim Curtis and Staff



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TRAILBLAZER

Nov 2011 - Jan 2012



Supporting Oregon Ridge Park
and Nature Center for 29 years

OREGON RIDGE NATURE CENTER COUNCIL SPEAKER SERIES 2011-2012

November 21, 2011
*Wildlife Rehabilitation:
The Good, The Bad, and the Future*
Kathleen Woods, Phoenix Wildlife Center

January 16, 2012
*New and Unique Trees and Shrubs
of Interest to Birds – and Gardeners!*
Jason Veil of Diversifolia, LLC

March 19, 2012
*Build It, Grow It, Eat It:
Building Salad Tables and Boxes*
Karen Cohn

April 16, 2012
Biodiversity of Maryland's Drainage Ditches
Alan W. Leslie, University of Maryland
College Park

May 21, 2012
A Naturalist Visits New Zealand
Robert W. Stanhope, Chief Naturalist
of Baltimore County (retired)

[All presentations begin at 7:30 PM. There are no speakers in December, February, June - August. Please contact Sue Leslie, Program Chairperson, if you would like to give a talk, or if you have a suggestion for an interesting speaker.]



WILDLIFE REHABILITATION: THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE FUTURE By Kathleen Woods

Monday, November 21, 2011

Wildlife rehabilitation has grown from a "kitchen table" operation to a full-fledged, scientific career. However, wildlife faces many challenges in the coming years. Increased awareness of these challenges is vital if we hope to successfully meld the increasing population of people with the decreasing habitat for animals. Every person who attends this talk is a potential referral source for help to injured and orphaned wildlife, and to the successful operation of the Phoenix Wildlife Center and other similar rehabilitation organizations.

Kathleen Woods is a Master Rehabilitator who holds state and federal permits to handle animals ranging from bats to eagles. She became captivated by wildlife after working on a whooping crane program for Patuxent Wildlife. She tenaciously pursued her new interest and finally began her own rehabilitation center. Over the past 21 years her small operation has grown and she is now the Director of the well-known Phoenix Wildlife Center.



HOLIDAY PARTY ON A NEW NIGHT FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16

This year our *Decorate the Nature Center Party* will take place on a Friday evening, December 16. Those who traditionally join us each year should note this change from past years. We hope this will mean more families will attend to help us decorate the Nature Center and celebrate the holidays at the same time. There will be plenty of greens, pinecones, teasel, and other natural materials to make ornaments to decorate our trees and to take home for your own holiday decorations. Festivities are free. All we ask is that you bring your favorite holiday treat to share.

Merrymaking begins at 7:30 PM. Join us for a nostalgic evening of singing carols, stringing popcorn and cranberries, and feasting on cookies and other delectables.

BOW MAKING WITH KIRK DREIER

The Bow Making Course begins on January 5, 2012, and continues five consecutive Thursday evenings through February 2 (snow date on Feb. 3). Kirk Dreier of Marshy Point Nature Center will teach the course at Oregon Ridge from 6 to 9 PM. Kirk is an expert in this native skill and hunts regularly using a handcrafted longbow. During this five-week course, Kirk will teach the fundamentals of bow construction to a small group of 10 adults, age 18+.

The \$40 (\$30 for members) fee is due in advance and covers the basic materials. Participants will also need to bring the following: Stanley surform #21-296 or #21-295, a pencil, and a Stanley wood scraper. Optional tools include: a drawknife, a spoke shave, and rasps.



NEW, UNIQUE TREES AND SHRUBS FOR BIRDS – AND GARDENERS!

By Jason Veil

Monday, January 16, 7:30 PM

Ornamental landscape plants have long played an important role in attracting wildlife, particularly birds. In recent years, native trees and shrubs have experienced a renaissance in popularity as more gardeners appreciate their role in maintaining diversity as a vital component of a sustainable landscape. Jason Veil's *Speaker Series* presentation will highlight some of the more unique woody plant introductions of the last several years and discuss their benefits in creating a garden that is attractive to birds and gardeners. A plant sale will follow.



Since graduating from Penn State with degrees in Urban Forestry and Horticulture in 2001, Jason has worked as a sales representative in the local wholesale nursery industry. He has always been interested in the diversity of plants available for use in modern landscapes and has enjoyed working to promote their appreciation and wider use. Most recently he formed Diversifolia LLC, a firm specializing in connecting landscapers and designers with nurseries that produce new, unique, or otherwise underutilized woody plants.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Trail Guide Training – For those who enjoy nature, hiking, and kids. February 7, 8, 9, 10, from 10 AM to 1 PM. \$25/person.

Maple Sugar Days – Tap trees and learn about making syrup. February 18, 19, 25, 26, between 10 AM and 4 PM. FREE.

Annual Pancake Breakfast – Celebrate the end of sugar days over breakfast at the Oregon Ridge Lodge on March 3 and 4, between 8 AM and noon. Tickets at door. Fee TBA.



HONEY HARVEST 2011



The weekend was dreary, but 2100 visitors showed up anyway. Thanks to the hearty group of volunteers who worked hard to please the crowd, bellies were filled with hotdogs and cider, faces were adorned, honey flowed, and spirits were high. As the photos show, volunteers did it all — pressed apple cider, showcased raptors, demonstrated blacksmithing and wool spinning, reenacted Civil War battles, sold gifts and honey wares, played folk music, put on puppet shows, led tours, and more. Even crafts and an educational book fair were added to the fun this year.

A special thank you goes to Honey Harvest coordinator Erin McCleary and Volunteer Chairperson Pat Krasowski (see bottom photo). And thanks to all of you who joined in the fun and supported this annual event. Please mark your 2012 calendar for next year's Honey Harvest Festival — October 6 and 7.

THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS!

Friends of ORNC:

Gary Anderson
Mike Burns
Noot/Anne Canoles
Jim/Jocelyn Curtis
Seth Dawson
Jackie Devine
Joey Devine
Bill Diegel
Katya Gavin
Mary Genovese
Susan Genovese
Theresa Genovese
Mark Gingerich
Martha Harris
Lisa Hopkins
Bobby Isaacs
Jack/Ann Kerns
Pat Krasowski
Darlene Leddon
Sue Leslie
Erin McCleary
Ginna Naylor
Kevin O'Neill
Jim Potter
Dave Powers
Joe Salvaggio
Paul Waldman
Bella Wanis
Joe Warfield
Danny White
Emily Witt
Gene/Linda Williamson
Ilona Wittenburg
Eliza Yachimowicz

Parking Volunteers:

Dulaney High Key Club Members

Eujo An	Sumanth Neermulla
William Chen	Chan Park
Justin Chung	Biz Schaffler
Samad Fakhar	Cynthia Shi
Yalin Feng	Daniel Shin
Ruthvik Gali	Delia Shin
Angela George	Sai Vedati
Sricharan Gudamavelli	Emily Xie
Swati Guin	Harry Zhang
Michele Ko	Steven Zhang
Sanjay Kumar	

Demonstrators and Vendors:

Allison Adams, Honey Princess 2011
Richard Anderson (87th PA Corps.)
Janet/Jerry Beaumont (Beaumont Pottery)
Brian Brauer (4th N.C. Co.)
Karen/George Brauer (Peter Goff Museum)
Clearspring Bluegrass Band
Nancy Green (Free Range Lamb Products)
Huselton Honey Products
Walter Massey (Phoenix Wildlife Ctr.)
Ted McNett (Blacksmith)
Robert Nagle (Blacksmith)
McDaniel Apiaries
Grace Patterson (Petting Zoo)
Katherine Patterson (Spinner)
Snyders Apiary
Pat/Jim Roberts (Bees by the Bay)
Barbara Stratton (Baltimore Soaps and More)
Carole Veihmeyer (Usborne Books)
Kathy Woods/Hugh Simmons
(Phoenix Wildlife Ctr.)



OUR AQUATIC GEM

by Jim Curtis, ORNCC President

The Brook trout, *Salvelinus fontinalis*, is the only trout native to Maryland. These trout are known to inhabit clear, cold streams from the Southern Appalachians to the Hudson Bay. Fortunately, Oregon Ridge Park has a population of these beautiful trout residing in Baisman Run, along the western and southern boundary of the park.



The Brook trout can be identified by its cream colored spots on a dark background, whereas most trout have dark colored spots on a light background. These markings help camouflage the trout from predators such as herons or fishermen. The spots along the back appear worm-like with little color, but the spots along the sides are round and colored red with a bluish halo. The fins have white leading edges, a black streak, and a red body. During spawning the males will develop an orange belly. From a side view these fish are particularly beautiful. The mature trout in the park are typically only 4-8 inches long, mainly due to the small size of the stream.

These trout are not picky feeders and will eat any insect, minnow, frog or crayfish that they can catch, but they largely feed on aquatic insects. Mayflies, caddisflies, and stoneflies are among their favorite foods. They are sight feeders and rely on clear water to catch their prey.

Brook trout usually spawn in October and November. In the fall the female trout will make a gravel nest and deposit her eggs. Then the male will fertilize the eggs, and the female will cover them with gravel. The eggs incubate over the winter and hatch in early spring. During the incubation period it is critical that the eggs are not covered or suffocated with silt.

Unfortunately, Brook trout are becoming less abundant all over their range and particularly in Baltimore County. Urbanization, deforestation, poor farming and forestry practices, removal of streamside vegetation, and non-native fish are all putting stress on these beautiful fish. The Brook

trout requires clear, silt free, well-oxygenated, cold water to survive. As such, Brook trout are considered a biological indicator species because they require a pristine habitat. Streamside vegetation is critical since few of these fish will survive in waters that routinely exceed 68 degrees. Even fewer will survive silt laden, polluted runoff. Urban runoff from impervious surfaces is partially harmful to Brook trout. Further, the more pollution tolerant (non-native) Brown trout will often out-compete the Brook trout for food and habitat.

So, with all these challenges, the Brook trout can use all of the help and protection that we can provide. Fortunately, most of the watershed of Baisman Run is within the Park, and hopefully, the good water quality can be maintained. Lastly, I believe that everyone should appreciate how fortunate we are to have these little gems at Oregon Ridge Park, considering our proximity to the Baltimore Metropolitan area.

SCOUTS GIVE RAPTORS NEW MEWS

Take a walk to the back of the building to see how two scouts earned their Eagle awards by improving the housing for our Red-tailed Hawk and Eastern Screech Owl.

This year we obtained an Eastern Screech Owl who had lost an eye when he was hit by a car. One-eyed Willy, as we call him, could not be released into the wild and we were happy to have him at the Nature Center. But we did not have proper accommodations when he arrived. Willy could still fly and get around quite well, but his old home did not allow him to exercise as he should. Thankfully, Alex Rushanan stepped up to the task of constructing him a new mew, allowing Willy to enjoy the woods and have room to stretch his wings and fly.

While you are back there, you will also notice the new paving tiles and door on our Red-tailed Hawk mew. This mew was cleaned up and repaired by scout Mike Dorbit and fellow scouts. We would like to thank both of these young men for improving the quality of life for these birds.



MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS NOW FOR THESE FALL EVENTS

There are still openings in some programs. Please check out the Fall Calendar by visiting our website: <http://www.oregonridge.org/>. There are children's clubs, special fun days, courses, weekend hikes, and holiday events. Try to attend some of these activities during the holidays:

MOONLIGHT MASQUERADE November 19 or 20 (from 4 to 6 PM) \$3 (\$2 members)

The moon phases affect animals differently. Meet some night hunters, search for their nocturnal signs, then decorate a mask to mimic your favorite animal of the night. Age 8+

FORT GARRISON FEAST November 20 (from 12 AM TO 4 PM) \$10 per person

Visit Fort Garrison to learn how the Rangers sustained themselves in this remote 1690s frontier outpost. Listen to their stories and learn what they cooked and ate. Age 12+

TURKEY TROT TREASURE HUNT November 27 (from 1 to 2 PM or 3 to 4 PM) \$3 (\$2 members)

Brave the elements to find clues that lead you to a treasure chest filled with surprises. Age 5+

HOLIDAY WREATH MAKING December 3 and 4 (from 2 to 4 PM) \$10 (\$8 members)

Make a fresh evergreen wreath to welcome the holidays while your children watch holiday movies. Bring clippers and gloves.

GINGERBREAD HOUSES FOR YOU AND THE BIRDS December 10 and 11 (from 2 to 4 PM) \$5 (\$4 members)

Create a gingerbread masterpiece to take home and another with seeds and fruits for the birds at Oregon Ridge. Age 8+

NATURAL ORNAMENTS December 17 and 18 (from 2 to 4 PM) \$3 (\$2 members)

Decorate for the holidays the natural way. Make ornaments to take home and a few to share with the birds. We supply the material and you supply the creativity. Age 5+

MUSICAL NATURE CENTERS

Baltimore County is once again playing a version of musical chairs with its Naturalists within the various nature center facilities. Oregon Ridge is losing Shannon Davis, Naturalist Courtney Peed's right hand woman, to the new Robert E. Lee Park facility where Shannon will be the County's first Park Ranger II. Shannon performed so well here at Oregon Ridge, initiating innovative programs, exhibits, and of course the new Playground, that she was the logical choice to run this new facility. We congratulate Shannon and wish her great success, but we will miss her.

Fortunately we can be comforted by the fact that her replacement is someone very familiar to us at Oregon Ridge. Winny Tan began her naturalist career at ORNC as a summer camp leader, earning her college degree along the way, and became a part-time naturalist here before moving on to eventually become the right hand woman to Kirk Dreier at Marshy Point Nature Center. Her replacement at Marshy Point has yet to be selected.

Please drop in to meet Winny and watch for her innovative additions to the programming at Oregon Ridge.



TRAILBLAZER STAFF

Editor/Design/Layout: Mary Jane Shanks
Managing Editor: Joe Salvaggio

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

Writers: John Canoles, Jim Curtis, Courtney Peed, Mary Jane Shanks.
Photographers: Bill Diegel, Jim Curtis, ORNC Staff

OREGON RIDGE NATURE CENTER
13555 Beaver Dam Road, Cockeysville, MD 21030
410-887-1816; Fax: 410-785-1020 or 410-887-1816
info@oregonridge.org; www.oregonridge.org

Articles for the Feb/March issue are due December 16.

PICTURE A FOREST

By John Canoles

Fall's paintbrush has touched down on our forests, transforming the green hillsides into a mixed pattern of golds, maroons, yellows and reds. Each species has its own character as they exchange their summer shades of green for a more colorful autumn adornment. Throughout the forest, activity is bustling as residents prepare for winter by stockpiling seeds and nuts, creating shelters and putting on fat stores to help stave off the winter cold.

Picture a forest in your mind and what do you see? Trees, of course, and probably not one particular tree, but a mass of trees covering a large landscape. However, a forest is more than just trees. A forest is shrubs and vines and grass and wildflowers. It is rocks and soil, fallen branches and dead standing timber. A fully functioning forest is a balance of production and consumption, of living and dying. A forest is dynamic and diverse with many varied habitats occurring within its limits. High dry ridges dominated by mixed oaks and beech yield to tulip poplars, maples and sycamore along low valleys and stream banks. Black locust and sassafras colonize breaks in the forest canopy, and pine and hemlock stands fill out specialized niches within the forest. Each set of canopy maintains its own suite of understory and shrubs and vines. Lowbush blueberry and maple leaved viburnum sparingly colonize the drier ridges under the mixed oak canopy, while spicebush and arrowwood create dense stands in the shadows of the poplars and maples in moister valleys. Along the boundary of the varying habitat types, the communities intermingle to create even more diversity of habitat.

Alive and healthy or decayed and dying, the trees of the forest provide the framework and dimension that increase habitat opportunities. Within the forest and the varied communities, there is also a layering of habitat types and usage. Some species of wildlife utilize the forest floor, others live low

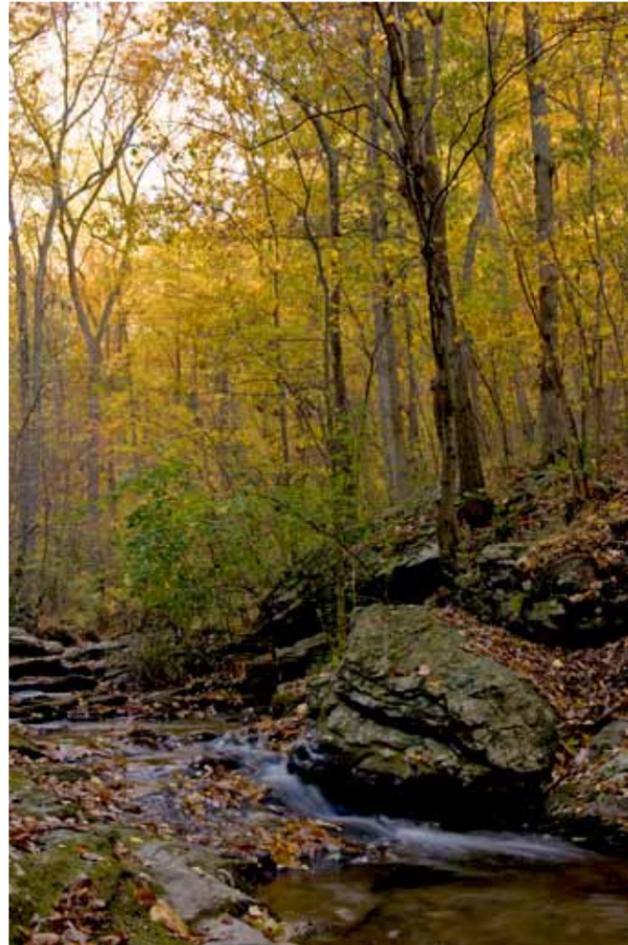


Photo by Bill Diegel

among the shrubs, and still others venture high into the canopy of the forest. This vertical segregation and stratification can be easily seen in bird communities, with ground specialists like ovenbirds and wood thrush living well below canopy species such as scarlet tanagers and parula warblers. In between these extremes, red-eyed vireos, flycatchers and chickadees feed and nest in the understory.

Species segregation also occurs laterally as you move from the outer edges of a stand into the deep, dark, shadowy habitats of its interior. Along the edges, a wide variety of species feed and nest, including catbirds, cardinals, titmice and towhees. Drawn to these highly active portions of the stand, raccoons, opossums and red fox also primarily inhabit the outer edges of the forest. Specialists such as hooded warblers, American redstarts, and Acadian flycatchers use the deeper interior habitats. These interior specialists prosper away from the predation that is more common along the forest edge.

Even the dead standing timber provides a variety of habitat. One dead tree is not the same as the next. Black locust with its hard wood provides a strong skeleton for knotholes, but provides little foraging opportunity for woodpeckers. Poplars and maple with softer wood are colonized by insects, which in turn provide the woodpeckers a food source. Pines and those softer wooded trees allow cavity dwellers, including chickadees, an opportunity to construct nest sites that they could not create in harder dead wood. Of course large dead trees, called wolf trees, provide great nesting sites for larger avian predators such as owls and hawks, and even denning sites for raccoons and opossums.

At the bottom of the forest, even the soil varies. The forest soil is as complex as the vegetative community that grows out of it — from the deep, humus-rich soil built up over hundreds of years and host to myriad of insects, salamanders, and wildflowers, to the dry, shallow stony soils that are all but inhospitable to life.

A living forest is a vast and complex community comprised of countless components. Recently I have had

ORNC OFFERS UNIQUE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

If you are retired or have some free hours outside of your busy workweek, Oregon Ridge has a number of volunteer opportunities that can fill your time and be fulfilling as well.

Trail Guides are essential to the successful execution of field trips for area school children. The staff teaches you all you need to know and it's a great opportunity to get some exercise while learning and helping others.

The Ridge Runner program offers teens a chance to get up close and personal with native critters, communicate with the public, and assume responsibilities and leadership skills that can be a nice addition to a future resume.

The Nature Center is dependent on the help and skills that the volunteer members of the Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council provide. They raise funds, lead programs, plan and man special events, staff the library, publicize events, create and fund exhibits, provide college scholarships, publish the newsletter, and so much more.

There are gardens to tend, trails to blaze and maintain, bluebird boxes to monitor, habitats to enhance, and the list goes on. So if you are looking for something different that makes a difference, give us a call. We need you, and maybe you need us.

some conversations with land owners about the pros and cons of forest management. The forest ecosystem defies management and intervention, always seeking to move itself forward by colonizing and re-colonizing areas that have been cut or disturbed. Unfortunately the development of a fully functioning forest takes decades or centuries, perhaps even more, to realize. The idea of managing a forest is really the alteration of the forest community to meet some goal. In most cases this goal is to produce income by logging, removing older trees to allow the younger trees to release and grow more quickly, thus creating another log source in shorter time. In some cases management is performed in the name of habitat creation. However, this is simply an altering of the community to favor one set of species over another. Whichever case you choose, you can't alter the natural community of the forest and increase the habitat for all its inhabitants. In each case, management leads to an imbalance in the community and some aspect of the community will be negatively impacted. For those that choose to manage, they choose to believe that their goal for the forest is what is best for the forest.

Before fall slips away into winter, head out to the forest and enjoy the diversity and complexity of the community. Look closely at the trees and shrubs, vines and wildflowers that comprise the forest, and note where they are different and where they are the same. Note the species of insects and birds and mammals that you see. Notice all the diversity that surrounds you, because *that* is the true heart of the forest.

JOIN OREGON RIDGE NATURE CENTER COUNCIL

MEMBERS RECEIVE:

- Bi-Monthly Newsletter
- Priority Mailing of Seasonal Calendar
- First Option for Camp Registration
- Discounts on most programs + 10% off \$30+ Gift Shop purchases
- Members Only Events



LOW, YEARLY DUES

- Individual \$15
- Family \$20
- Seniors/Students \$12
- Lifetime \$150

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410 887-1815 <http://www.oregonridge.org/>