



A word from Wildwood

The goal of Friends of Wildwood is to preserve and support Wildwood Park and the Benjamin Olewine III Nature Center.

Night at the Nature Center

Take an after-hours walk through the Olewine Nature Center on Saturday, October 19 and watch the Exhibit Hall critters come to life! Kids will meet these fun talking animals and visit other stations including a campfire to make s'mores, sip apple cider, a craft, and a not so scary Halloween story. Everyone is encouraged to dress as their favorite animal or in a Halloween costume. Don't forget your trick or treat bag!

Register for one of the following timeslots: 5:30pm–6:30pm; 6pm–7pm; or 6:30pm–7:30pm. The program is free thanks to our sponsor Aetna, but please pre-register at explorewildwoodpark.org/events/ as each timeslot is limited to 25 participants.



Aetna Better Health' Kids
A CHIP Health Plan



PENNSYLVANIA Greenways&Trails SUMMIT

The 2025 Pennsylvania Greenways and Trails Summit will be held in Harrisburg, PA co-hosted by Dauphin County Parks and Recreation and Visit Hershey & Harrisburg September 21–23, 2025. Save the dates as more information will be forthcoming.

Tell Us Your Ideas!

We are looking for your input! This Fall a survey will be sent out to our members, visitors and the general public asking for feedback about the Nature Center. Please take a few minutes to complete the online survey or complete it in person at the Nature Center. Your feedback will help provide a clearer picture of future improvements to the Nature Center and the Exhibit Hall after 25 years of service.



Help celebrate Wildwood Park with a nature-themed day as the Nature Center celebrates its 25th anniversary! Learn about butterflies, birds and more. Participate in pumpkin painting, children's crafts, live musical entertainment and guided walks. Children will enjoy a storywalk along the Delta Boardwalk. There's something for the whole family!

Children's Music with Bruce Fite 10:30am –11:30am & Strings on Wings acoustic old-time Appalachian music from 12pm –1:30pm

Food Vendors: B&L Dogz and BFD's Snack Wagon
Guided Walks:

- Bird Walk with Appalachian Audubon Society 8am –10am
- Native Plant Walk with Master Gardener Kevin Kelly 11am –12pm
- Tree Walk with Volunteer Cara Martinez-Williams 1pm –2pm

Wildwood Partners: Appalachian Audubon Society, Capital Area Greenbelt Association, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Dauphin County Library System, Doc Fritchey Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Penn State Extension Master Gardeners and Bird Banding with Sandy Lockerman.

Thank you to Lancaster County Solid Waste Management Authority for sponsoring this event.

In light of the 25th anniversary, we have some fun things to giveaway, including an updated trifold pocket guide identifying common plants and animals seen in Wildwood Park, a bird journal for children, an insect net, worksheets and more. And what kind of celebration would it be if there wasn't cake!? Cupcakes will be available inside the Nature Center while supplies last.

So there you have it, about 25 reasons why you should come...one for every year the Nature Center has been open!

A word from Wildwood

is published quarterly by

Friends of Wildwood

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Wildwood Park and the Benjamin Olewine III Nature Center are part of the Dauphin County Parks and Recreation Department. The Benjamin Olewine III Nature Center is open Tuesday through Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and is closed Mondays and holidays. Wildwood Park's trails are open from dawn until dusk. Programs can be viewed at explorewildwoodpark.org/events and questions directed to wwstaff@dauphincounty.gov

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Andrew Oravic, Intern

A Word from the President

Greetings,

Ready or not, here comes Fall. In spite of a really hot summer, Wildwood saw over 6,000 visitors in June and July. These numbers are finally approaching our pre-pandemic visitation and are an encouraging sign that folks are feeling more comfortable getting out and doing and seeing fun and exciting things, Wildwood specialties.

And speaking of exciting things, the 2024 Art In The Wild exhibition will continue until the end of September. This year's show, a unique display of regional outdoor art, was as popular as ever. Being an outdoor show, there is no way we can get an accurate count of visitors who come to view the environmental art installations, but we do know that over 1,500 Art In The Wild walking brochures have been distributed since the April opening. If you missed this year's show and/or would just like to revisit some of the terrific installations, please visit the website to view the video prepared by local film students from Capital Area School of the Arts. Planning for Art In The Wild 2025 has begun and more information, along with next year's application will be available soon on the online. We are always looking for artists who can envision and create imaginative outdoor sculpture using mostly natural materials to contribute to this popular event.

As Art In The Wild 2024 will be shutting down at the end of September, this year's Celebrate Wildwood Festival will be in full swing on Saturday, September 21 from 10:00am to 2:00pm. Please join us for the animals, food, music and crafts at this annual Wildwood tradition. It's also a terrific opportunity to meet the dedicated Wildwood staff, Friends of Wildwood Board of Directors and volunteers. *More information on page 1.* If you would like to sign up as our newest volunteer, just visit the Friends tent.

There is so much to enjoy at Wildwood as we look forward to a busy schedule of lectures, workshops and other annual activities like the Photo Contest. If you're not already a member of the Friends of Wildwood, these are all perfect opportunities to join our family. Being a Friend of Wildwood is a great way to support your Park throughout the year and we would welcome and additions to our group.

See you at Wildwood,

Jim

Used Books/Puzzles Wanted

The Friends are still collecting used or new books and puzzles to sell in their on-going Used Book Sale in the downstairs portion of the Nature Center. Field guides, children's books and other nature-related books are appropriate. Donations can be dropped off at the Nature Center Front Desk.

Friends of Wildwood Off the Beaten Path Bus Trip Park III Highlighting the Susquehanna River

On Saturday, June 22, the Friends of Wildwood hosted their third “Off the Beaten Path” bus trip, braving the summer heat with 21 enthusiastic passengers. Our adventure took us along the Susquehanna River through York and Lancaster counties with three engaging stops.

Our first destination was the Zimmerman Center for Heritage, the hub of the Susquehanna National Heritage Area. Here we embarked on an unforgettable boat ride aboard the Chief Uncas, a vessel built in 1912. The ride was a highlight, offering insights into the boat’s history, the landscape and the enduring legacy of the Susquehanna River, as well as a much appreciated breeze! Following the boat ride, we enjoyed an informative presentation on the history of the Susquehannock people, enriching our understanding of the region’s cultural heritage.

Next, we arrived in Columbia, a charming town where participants had the freedom to explore at their own pace. The town’s shops and eateries provided a delightful interlude before our final stop.

We concluded our journey at the Horn Farm Center for Agricultural Education. Here we took a brief but insightful walk around the farm, learning about its sustainable restoration efforts. Highlights included permaculture methods, which create self-sufficient agricultural ecosystems, and the Miyawaki forest method used to plant a tree buffer area. The group enjoyed tasting foraged mulberries and had the opportunity to purchase native plants to take home.

Overall, it was a day filled with learning, exploration and enjoyment, showcasing the natural and cultural treasures of our region.



Photo: The group next to the Chief Uncas

Species Spotlight: Monarchs

Monarch butterflies are easily the most researched insect in the world. Scientists and members of the public have been tracking and observing their patterns for decades. Monarchs are the only species of tropical butterfly that lives part of its life far from the tropics and migrates to specific southern destinations like Mexico, California and Florida. In mid to late August, the offspring of the generation that migrated last fall have made their journey back north to lay eggs. Monarchs in our area eat exclusively 3 types of milkweed plants: common milkweed seen along most roadsides and highways, swamp milkweed found in wetter soils and butterfly weed or butterfly milkweed, a showy orange bloom often spotted in fields. A female monarch can lay up to 400 eggs in her lifetime. The eggs are laid individually on the underside of one of the before mentioned milkweed leaves and will hatch within 3-5 days. In early September, the generation



*Photo on Swamp Milkweed:
Sherri Hendricks*

of non-migratory monarchs is hatching and growing up. Eric Carle was right in coining the phrase “hungry, hungry caterpillar.” These caterpillars will shed their skin 5 times and reach a size of 2 inches, roughly 50x bigger than when they hatched from the egg. In this stage, all they really do is eat and poop. Butterfly poop gets a fancy name called “frass.” The next phase in a monarchs lifecycle is the formation of the chrysalis, also known as the pupa stage. It will remain in this stage for 10-14 more days until the chrysalis becomes translucent and clear. Chrysalises are not silk. Butterflies molt into a chrysalis, which is a hard exoskeleton covering that protects the developing butterfly beneath. It is the offspring of the non-migratory monarchs which will head for southern areas such as Mexico in late September, early October. Wildwood proudly partners with Monarch Watch of University of Kansas to tag migratory monarchs and Project Monarch Health of the University of Georgia, who works to observe a parasite among populations. The International Union for Conservation of Science listed monarchs as *endangered* in December of 2021 because populations have dropped between 20% and 90% over the last several decades. However, that listing has now been changed to *vulnerable*. The status change on the IUCN’s Red List is due to a shift in the data used to evaluate the species, not due to a change in the current population. While concerns remain about the sustainability of monarch migration, conservation efforts will persist. If you’d like to observe the life cycle of a monarch, consider planting milkweed in your backyard and witness the magic for yourself! You can also stop by the Nature Center to observe our monarch display in the Exhibit Hall, available until early October.

Summer Day Camps Recap

This year's Summer Day Camps were a success! We welcomed 128 campers throughout the summer, ages 4-14. Each camp included games, crafts, books, and lots of park exploration. Campers had the opportunity to investigate the organisms living in Paxton Creek, learn bird calls, use binoculars, practice using their five senses, and more. Highlights included Little Sprout's pollinator game, Nature Explorer's hike on the Towpath, Junior Naturalist's trip to Detweiler Park, and Outdoor Week's kayaking trip on the Susquehanna River. Registration for 2025 day camps will go live Thursday, January 2.

Andrew Oravic Intern

As the summer comes to a close, we say farewell to Andrew Oravic, our summer intern. This fall, Andrew is completing his final semester at North Carolina State University,

majoring in Zoology with minors in Horticulture, Applied Ecology and Business Administration. His primary duty this summer was assisting with our summer day camps described above. Andrew's favorite memory

from the summer was getting in a river grass battle on our annual kayaking trip during Outdoor Week. His other highlights included working with our 9-11-year-olds during Junior Naturalist Camp and spotting the animals that call Wildwood home, like muskrats and orioles. Andrew also spent time conducting some research in the Park. Andrew—Thank you for helping make summer camps a success and we wish you the best in your future endeavors!



Photo: Andrew at Junior Naturalist

Run Wild for Wildwood Recap

On Saturday, August 24, we hosted our annual Run Wild for Wildwood 5K/10K at the Park. The race filled up in record time with 250 participants, ages 7-79. The cool morning and week leading up to the race made for perfect racing weather. Next year's race will be held on August 23, 2025. Registration will open in early March. We hope to see you there!



Flickr Page

Did you know Wildwood Park has a Flickr Page? If you're looking for inspiration or you're simply interested in finding out more about the wildlife that call Wildwood Park home, check out this page. It is FULL of amazing photographs taken by local photographers and park users. You'll be stunned at the quality of images you'll see. The page is available at <https://www.flickr.com/groups/wildwoodlake/>

Recent Research Projects

Wildwood was fortunate to have two small research projects going on this summer. The first was done by volunteer Jay Barker. He spent a few days at Wildwood observing the invasive plant Purple Loosestrife. Jay was able to confirm the presence of *Galerucella* beetles released in the 1990s to eat the Loosestrife and keep the invasive plant from taking over.



Photo: Jay Barker

The second was done by Wildwood's summer intern, Andrew. He took a closer look at bat populations and activity in the Park.

Andrew's Bat Research

Did you know that Wildwood Park has bats? Wildwood features four different bat boxes in various locations around the Park. Pennsylvania is home to nine species of insectivorous bats, several of which are either endangered or threatened. Six after hours bat surveys were conducted from 7pm to 10pm. Astonishingly, there were over 300 bat sightings in the Park!

Just over the marsh at the Middle Lot, a whopping 158 bat sightings including the probable tricolored bat, little brown bat and big brown bat. The Morning Glory was another hot spot where 74 bats were seen zipping through the air (note these were sightings, not necessarily different individual bats). While they may get a bad rep, bats are incredibly important to our environment. Bats play a large role in suppressing insects through predation. According to the US Forest Service, one little brown bat can eat approximately 4,500 insects every night! Andrew will continue working on compiling this information for a college research project this fall.



Upcoming Events

Online Registration!

Program registration is online at explorewildwoodpark.org/events/
It's easy! Click on the "Events" page, scroll through the list of programs, click to register.

Volunteer Work Days

Saturday, Sept. 14, Oct. 12 & Nov. 9
10:00 am – 1:00 pm

Free

Take this opportunity to work outside and help Wildwood's continued park and habitat enhancement projects. Register online.

Upcycled Crafts (Ages 5 and up)

Saturday, September 14
1:00 pm and 2:30 pm

\$5 per child, chaperones are free

Everything but the creativity will be supplied to make a unique creation using recycled and repurposed materials that would normally have been discarded as trash. Register online.

Flower Walks

Sunday, September 15
1:30 pm – 3:00 pm

Free

Register online.

Campfire S'mores and Stories

Friday, September 27
7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

\$2 per participant

Experience the magic of Wildwood Park at night. Make s'mores and listen to stories while cozied up around a campfire. Meet in the grass outside the Nature Center. This program is geared towards children and their families. Please make sure to register each family member individually online.

Sustainable Floristry: A Different Approach

Sunday, September 29
1:00 pm – 3:30 pm

\$45 per participant

Join Dolores, the owner of D McGee Design Studio and discover the secret to creating lovely containers and floral designs from foraged materials. Dolores has structured this workshop to provide participants an updated summary of the floral industry's sustainable movement and how that movement is unfolding locally. Register online.



Kids Discover: Camouflage (Ages 5-10)

Sunday, September 29
1:30 pm – 3:00 pm

\$5 per child, chaperones are free

Join a Naturalist to discover the shapes, sizes and colors of camouflage and explore Wildwood's wetland, gardens and forest in search of hidden species. Look to nature for inspiration to create your own camouflaged critter! Register online.

Bird Walks with Rick and Peggy Price

Thursday, October 3
7:30 am – 9:30 am

Free

Meet in front of the Nature Center for this walk. Register online.

Thursday, November 14
8:00 am – 10:00 am

Free

Meet at the Middle Parking Lot for this walk. Register online.

Kids Discover: Leaves (Ages 4-6)

Saturday, October 12
1:30 pm – 3:00 pm

\$5 per child, chaperone are free

Join a Naturalist for leaf exploration and become a leaf detective to track down the parent tree. Use the incredible variety of leaves at Wildwood to design leaf art to take home! Register online.

Boy Scouts Wolves: Paws on the Path

Sunday, October 20
1:00 pm – 3:30 pm

\$8 per scout, chaperones are free

In this adventure Wolf Boy Scouts will find out what equipment and skills are essential to take along on a hike and examine the role of "Leave No Trace". Discover how to identify birds and other wildlife, then take a hike to explore the wildlife, wetlands and forests of Wildwood Park. Register online.

Kids Discover: Arachnids (Ages 5-10)

Saturday, October 26

10:00 am – 11:30 am

\$5 per child, chaperones are free

Creatures that have 8 legs are members of the class arachnid which includes: scorpions, ticks, tarantulas and mites. Join a Naturalist to learn about their unique defenses, their variety of sizes and shapes and their range. Register online.

Tree Identification Walk with Cara Martinez-Williams

Sunday, October 27

1:30 pm – 2:30 pm

Free

Meet in front of the Nature Center. Register online.

Persimmon Walk

Tuesday, November 5

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Free

Take a walk with a Naturalist along the Towpath Trail to view and taste these curious fall fruits known as persimmons. Meet at the South Lot trailhead. Register online.

The Cat in the Hat Learning Series (Ages 3-5)

Thursdays, Nov. 7, 14 & 21

10:00 am – 10:45 am

\$5 per child, chaperones are free

Stories, rhymes, and a craft/activity will introduce science through the eyes of the Cat In The Hat. Classes are offered during 3 consecutive Thursdays. Register for one, or them all online.

Wooden Bouquets to Brighten your Day

Saturday, November 9

10:00 am – 11:30 am

\$30 per participant

Join The Merry Woodsman, a local artist and woodworker for a workshop to create a wooden "bouquet." Each participant will create their own arrangement, combining wooden pieces both milled and foraged. Use the many native tree varieties to assemble your own unique piece of art. A glass vase will be provided, nestled in a wooden base. Register online.



National Take a Hike Day

Sunday, November 17

Free

Fort Hunter Conservancy with KTA – 9:00 am – 11:30 am

Wildwood Park – 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Detweiler Park – 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Grab your hiking boots, family and friends – it's National Take a Hike Day! Get outdoors for some fresh air, scenery and exercise. Take a hike with a Naturalist or at your own pace on various terrain exploring the trails and wildlife at a local Dauphin County Park. All ages are welcome. Register online.

Wild Recipes: Fall Foraging in Your Backyard

Tuesday, November 19

6:00 pm – 7:30 pm

\$15 per participant

Join Naturalists at Wildwood Park to learn how to cook with a variety of fall fruits and nuts. Samples of each edible treat will be provided. Register online.

Kids Discover: Turkey Talk (Ages 2-5)

Tuesday, November 26

10:00 am – 11:30 am

\$5 per child, chaperones are free

Learn all about Wild Turkeys and what makes these colorful birds unique. Program will include crafts and a story. Register online.

Natural Ornaments

Sunday, December 8 & 15

10:00 am, 11:30 am, 1:00 pm & 2:30 pm

\$8 per participant

Children and adults are invited to make holiday ornaments using pinecones, milkweed pods and other natural materials. Everything but creativity will be supplied to make works of art to decorate for the holidays. Pre-registration required. Timeslots are limited to 15 participants. Register online.

Volunteer Spotlight: Tom Hilbish

Tom and his family have been coming to Wildwood Park since 1999. Their earliest memories involve taking their dog for walks on the trails. They really enjoyed seeing the plants and animals and fellow visitors that they encountered. Tom's favorite Wildwood Memory includes bringing his 6-year-old granddaughter, Katy, to her favorite place that she fondly referred to as "The Forest".

Tom's degree is in Biology, and he's always supported conservation and the protection of the environment. Tom also enjoys many outdoor hobbies including fly fishing.

Tom worked in sales and management in the food industry for many years. When it came time to retire, he was able to get a part-time job managing a computer lab at a local middle school. It was during this season of life that he found himself as a chaperone on a 6th grade field trip to Wildwood. He was impressed with the Nature Center and the staff of environmental educators. It was on this field trip that he decided to become a volunteer.



Tom volunteers at the Front Desk Wednesday afternoons. He reflected on how much he likes working at the Front Desk and interacting with Park visitors. He appreciates seeing the excitement of children as they enter the Nature Center and go into the Exhibit Hall. You never know what the kids will tell, especially as they share their enthusiasm over what animals they encounter. It's also fun to talk to the nature photographers and bird enthusiasts. They have a wealth of information to share and he's always learning new information about the birds and animals that visit the wetland throughout the year.

Tom also serves on the Friends of Wildwood Board. He is active on their Natural Resource Committee, the Development Committee and Tom is the Chair of the Membership Committee— a big job which requires a lot of meticulous processing of membership requests, etc. Additionally, Tom helps at numerous education stations during Maple Sugar Festival at Fort Hunter, and Wildwood's Wetlands Festival and Celebrate Wildwood.

He keeps coming back because he loves volunteering and having the privilege of serving on the board, which he's done now for the past 6 years.

In closing, Tom shared that Wildwood/Dauphin County is a great place to volunteer because the staff is friendly and knowledgeable and there are plenty of programs to get involved with.

Project FeederWatch Success

Wildwood was recently recognized by Cornell's Lab of Ornithology as an above average participant in ProjectFeederWatch. In the 2023-2024 season, the Nature Center submitted 29 checklists (US averages 13), spent 28+ hours counting birds (US average is 20+) and counted over 1,578 birds representing 34 different species. It feels good to be a top contributor! How cool is that? If you'd like to participate and add to our efforts, contact Savanna at slenker@dauphincounty.gov. We'll begin counting the birds this November and continue through April of 2025. Another way to get involved is by participating in our monthly Nature Center Birds and Coffee events hosted by Appalachian Audubon Society. These events will occur on the second Saturday of each month starting in November and run through April from 10:00am–11:00am at the Bird Viewing Area inside the Nature Center. Pre-registration is not required; simply stop by, count some birds, sip delicious bird-friendly coffee and contribute to a larger community science project. Here's to another season of keeping up the good work!

Wildwood Restoration Update

Below is a listing of Wildwood Lake Restoration efforts. Stay up to date at explorewildwoodpark.org, click on About, News & Updates.



- 2010 – Modification of the Morning Glory outlet
- 2015 – Feasibility Study of Wildwood Lake
- 2017 – Wildwood Lake Partnership established
- 2019 – Awarded Wildwood Lake Restoration Design Grant
- 2021 – Applied for US Congressional funding (not awarded)
- 2022 – Public Meeting on Wildwood Restoration (100+ attendees)
- 2023 – Wildwood Lake Restoration Design Completed
- 2023 – Awarded DEP Growing Greener grant for Phase 1A – Paxton Creek Stream Stabilization
- 2023-2025 – Permitting with Army Corps of Engineers and PA DEP
- 2025-2026 – Construction for Phase 1A – Paxton Creek Stream Stabilization

Birdhouse Workshop

Please join the Friends of Wildwood on Saturday, **October 5 from 10am–12pm or 1-3pm** for a fun morning or afternoon of birdhouse construction and design. Bring your friends and your creativity along to construct a bluebird box, paint a natural birdhouse gourd and design your own wooden songbird ornament. You will surely have fun while here and leave with multiple items to enhance bird viewing in your backyard. Cost is \$45 per non-members \$40 per members. Use discount code Birdie2024. All proceeds benefit the Friends of Wildwood. Register online.



We Need You!

Frogs, Snakes and Butterflies, Oh My! It's that time again. Hopefully you have been snapping those pictures for the 2024-25 Friends of Wildwood Photo Contest. Pick up a brochure at the Nature Center and submit your best photographs during the month of November, beginning on November 1st (all entries must be in by **November 24**). The photos have to have been taken at any one of the 5 Dauphin County Parks (Wildwood, Fort Hunter, Detweiler, Lykens Glen or Wiconisco Creek Park). All submitted photographs will hang in the Nature Center from December 10th through January 25th for visitors to enjoy.



Show your support for Wildwood Park by sporting some Wildwood-themed apparel! Order at your convenience from our online store at <https://bit.ly/3LwL1uk>

Orders will take 2 weeks to process and will be available for pick-up at the Nature Center after email confirmation or shipped to you for additional costs. All sales are final and all proceeds directly benefit the projects and programs sponsored by the Friends of Wildwood.



Interested in receiving weekly emails on programming in all Dauphin County Parks? Scan this QR code with your smartphone and click on the yellow “E-Newsletter Sign-Up” Button.

Ways to Give

All are tax deductible



Online

Visit explorewildwoodpark.org/donate-now



Cash or Check



Sponsor a Program



Become a Member

Or give the gift of membership



Make a Bequest



Endowments



Memorial Bricks

Remember a friend, or loved one



Volunteer Your Time

Membership Benefits

Your membership supports the ongoing programs and conservation efforts of Wildwood Park and the Benjamin Olewine III Nature Center.

Your Membership provides the following:

- Reciprocal membership with more than 100 nature centers throughout the country that participate in the Association of Nature Center Administrators
- Subscription to *A Word From Wildwood* quarterly newsletter
- 10% discount off all Nature Shop purchases

Knowing you:

- Support outdoor educational and recreational opportunities reaching over 100,000 people annually
- Have a direct impact on local and migratory wildlife, wild plants and the diverse people living in our community
- Preserve Wildwood Park, now and for future generations

Sign up to receive the newsletter electronically

A Word from Wildwood can be sent electronically to Friends of Wildwood members.

Email wwstaff@dauphincounty.gov

Help save paper and money! GO GREEN!



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Mark your calendars for
these upcoming events!

Celebrate
Wildwood
Sat. September 21
10:00am—2:00pm

Birdhouse
Workshop
Sat. October 5
10:00am—3:00pm

Holiday Wreath
Workshops
Sat. Nov. 30, Sun.
Dec. 1 & Tues. Dec. 3
9:00am—3:30pm