

A word from Wildwood

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



Explore Wildwood Park's treasured wetlands for our 25th Annual Wetlands Festival! Join us **Saturday, April 26 from 10:00 am–4:00 pm** for free, fun and educational activities with special musical guests and food trucks - Williams Catering and Crema Coffee Truck. Enjoy wildlife exhibits and learn from a wide variety of local and regional environmental organizations. Participate in guided walks throughout the day led by experienced volunteers. Interact with live animals from Forgotten Friend Reptile Sanctuary and make crafts to take home. There is something for everyone to enjoy! Check out the Wetlands Festival tab on our website for the full schedule of events!

Exhibit Hall Survey Highlights

Wildwood recently completed a survey to get vital visitor input on future Exhibit Hall and Nature Center renovations. The survey outlined a series of questions which enabled park users to share thoughts and ideas for the Nature Center. These survey results will help gain a better understanding of visitor interest, use and enjoyment of the existing exhibits. The results also help gauge capital campaign efforts by defining and clarifying what the largest needs are for interpretive exhibition.

We were thrilled to receive 345 completed surveys. The vast majority of respondents had previously visited the Nature Center and most hailed from Dauphin County and surrounding counties. The survey also indicated respondents were repeat visitors and only 5% had visited the Center one time. The most popular activities were visiting the exhibits and going to the bird viewing area. Surveys indicated most visitors would like to learn more about plant and animal species they might see in the Park, where to find them and more about the water and wetlands of Wildwood.

Our Design Committee comprised of Friends of Wildwood Board Members and Park Staff are excited to take this feedback into consideration moving forward. Thank you to all who contributed.

Wild About Dogs

Don't forget to bring your furry friends and join the Friends of Wildwood at their dog-friendly event on Saturday, May 10 from 10:00 am–2:00 pm. There will be human food, homemade pet treats, vendors, demonstrations, dog photo ops, raffle baskets, information on pet-centered vendors in the area and much more! This program is free to attend; please make sure to have all dogs leashed for the duration of the event.



Volunteer Software Help Sessions

In 2023, Dauphin County Parks & Recreation started using a new volunteer system called Galaxy Digital. In an effort to get all volunteer information updated in our system, we are asking all active volunteers to come to a volunteer software help session (if you have not already). This session shouldn't take more than 30 mins. The goal is to accomplish the following tasks:

- Upload your photo into the system
- Review your address and other personal information including adding an emergency contact
- Sign all waivers needed to volunteer
- If you have your clearances, but you don't know what to do with them – bring them with you.
- If you don't have your clearances and need our assistance in getting them, we can walk you through those steps.

Make sure you have a username and login information when you walk out the door!

We are currently available on the following dates:

Wednesday, Feb. 26 – 4:00 pm – 8:00 pm Fort Hunter Tavern: Common Room

Thursday, Feb. 27 – 9:30 am – 1:30 pm Wildwood Park: Olewine Nature Center Classroom

To sign up: please contact Savanna Berry at slenker@dauphincounty.gov. We also plan to have a learning session on the software sometime later this spring so that everyone is comfortable with the new software and app.

Attention Spring Cleaners

The Nature Center is actively collecting (clean) plastic bottle caps of any color, shape and size and wine corks for upcoming workshops. All donations can be dropped off at the Front Desk.

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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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Evan Wilson, Part-time Environmental Educator

A Word from the President

What do you know about the Friends of Wildwood Board? The Board for the Friends of Wildwood is currently made up of 19 people dedicated to the mission of *Promoting the preservation, awareness, support and sensitive enhancement of Wildwood Park as a passive recreational area, an interactive environmental and educational center, and a refuge for wildlife.*

Of the 19 Board members, 17 are volunteers from the community. The remaining two are full-time employees of the Dauphin County Parks and Recreation Department - the Department Director and Park Manager. It may also be of interest to know that the expertise and backgrounds exhibited by the volunteer Board members include the skills and knowledge of banking, administration, architecture, biology, teaching, museum curation, park management and health care.

To achieve our mission, the Friends Board actively develops and manages various programs and workshops that are in addition to the efforts of Wildwood's full and part-time staff, and works toward raising funds for special projects and initiatives. An important part of the funds raised by the Friends comes from our members, which is supplemented with additional funds from investments and donations.

The Board maintains an ongoing search for new members and we keep a list of individuals expressing interest in serving. You can easily let us know of your possible interest by emailing wwstaff@dauphincounty.gov.

Lastly, I cannot let an opportunity pass to invite our readers who may not yet be members of the Friends of Wildwood to please consider joining at a level affordable to you. Joining the Friends is easily accomplished online or by visiting the Olewine Nature Center and filling out a brief membership form. There's room in our family for you!

Thank you and 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.

Photo Contest Results

The 2024 Friends of Wildwood Photo Contest displayed 112 photographs this year. Photographers in 3 categories, Youth, Beginner, and Experienced, showcased their best shots of the flora and fauna of our Dauphin County Parks. On January 12, the winning photographs were announced and photographers accepted their prizes.

A very big thank you to all of the entrants and congratulations to the winners!

Experienced

- 1st: George Shearer, "Reflections of Summer"
- 2nd: Chris Heisey, "Morning Stroll"
- 3rd: Sherri Hendricks, "Maybe Just One More"

Beginner

- 1st: Lewis Weaver Jr, "Sleeping Beauty"
- 2nd: Dominick Barnes, "Dragonfly Blye"
- 3rd: Jennifer Bloomer, "Three Scarabs"

Youth

- 1st: Jaxon Banks, "Snappy Turtle"
- 2nd: Elizabeth Salkin, "A Serpent"
- 3rd: Benjamin Smithers, "Feathers in Focus"

People's Choice

- Experienced—"Maybe Just One More" by Sherri Hendricks
- Beginner—"Construction Worker" by Patricia Marshall
- Youth—"Homeward Bound" by Elizabeth Salkin



Photo: 2024 Winners present at the Reception

Winning photos, including People's Choice selections, will be on display in the Nature Center over the next few months. Please stop by the Center to view these beautiful photographs. We thank our dedicated judges Denny Bingaman, Andrew Gehman and Ellen M. Siddons for their time and expertise.

2024 First Place Winners



Experienced: George Shearer
Reflections of Summer



Beginner: Lewis Weaver Jr.
Sleeping Beauty



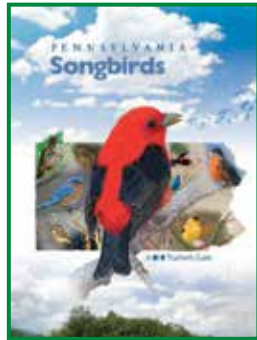
Youth: Jaxon Banks
Snappy Turtle

Wildwood Rentals

Did you know Wildwood Park offers a variety of rental spaces open to the public? These areas include the indoor Classroom with kitchenette perfect for small birthday parties, memorial gatherings, meetings and events; the small Kunkel Pavilion and West Lawn located adjacent to the Nature Center suitable for small weddings and gatherings; the North Pavilion for groups of no more than 32; and the Olewine Pavilion for groups of no more than 64. Rental requests are made entirely online for all Dauphin County Facilities. Reservations can be made by visiting <https://www.facilitron.com/dcpr17110>. Please spread the word!

Educator Workshop: PA Songbirds Revised

Join Naturalists at Wildwood Park on Tuesday, March 11 from 9:00 am–3:00 pm for a Pennsylvania Songbird Workshop featuring the newly revised *Pennsylvania Songbirds K-8 Guide*. During this hands-on workshop we will explore bird biology, adaptations, and migration; discover how birds influence design and engineering; and examine issues that affect both birds and people. This guide was developed in partnership between PA DCNR - Bureau of State Parks and Audubon Mid-Atlantic. This workshop is for any educator interested in birds and teaching through place-based education. Morning refreshments and snack provided. ACT 48 hours are available for PA Certified Teachers. The cost is \$35 per participant. Register online.



Gary Frampton

It is with great sadness we announce the passing of one of our Maintenance Staff, Gary Frampton. Gary was a valued member of the Dauphin County Parks and Recreation team. His contributions and presence will be deeply missed. He had a positive impact on staff, parks and the many visitors that enjoy the parks. Thoughts are with his family and loved ones during this difficult time.

Pelt Donation

Wildwood recently received a very generous donation of numerous mammal pelts from John Fogarty. Not only will the pelts be utilized during educational offerings at the Park, they will also aid in the creation of an Urban Wildlife Kit designated solely for Harrisburg City School District to utilize in their classrooms. Thank you John for sharing this resource with us.

Art In The Wild

The 2025 Art In the Wild Exhibit Opens Sunday, April 6 visit the naturally inspired trailside creations along Wildwood Park's wandering trails and wetlands from 1:00 pm–3:00 pm on the 6th to **Meet the Artists**. Using mostly natural materials, artists have constructed large and small installations. This year's theme is "Pathways." A map-brochure about the exhibit will be available at the kiosks or inside the Nature Center.

Species Spotlight: House Finch?

House Finches can be seen during most of the winter months at the feeders behind the Nature Center. They are widespread in brushy, wooded suburban areas, often spotted in a small flock. The showy red coloration on the male sticks out against the bleak winter backdrop, much like a male Northern Cardinal.

So what is happening in this photo, captured by volunteer Jill Buhrman who counts the birds for Project FeederWatch most Thursday afternoons November through April?

Occasionally, individual males have yellow/orange feathers instead of red due to diet, not pigment abnormality. This would appear

to be one such instance. The main cause for this color transformation is carotenoid rich foods in the bird's diet. The greater the intake of carotenoid rich foods, the redder the male's feathers will be. So what



foods are they eating commonly? According to Cornell Lab of Ornithology, wild foods include wild mustard seeds, knotweed, thistle, mulberry, poison oak, flower parts and many other species. They also snack on a variety of orchard fruits including: cherries, apricots, peaches, pears, plums, strawberries, blackberries and figs. From these two lists, the mustard seeds, flower petals and mulberries have the greatest carotenoid intake potential.

It may be exciting for us to see this color variation, however, this yellow/orange color is not looked upon favorably by females who most commonly seek out the reddest of males to mate with. Biologists believe the female associates the bright red plumage of a male with his ability to do his part with the feeding and nesting responsibilities. Well, we appreciate you sir, even if you can't get a girlfriend!

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.

Cat In The Hat Learning Series

Wednesdays, March 5, 12 & 19

10:00 am–10:45 am

\$5 per child, chaperones free

Stories, rhymes, and a craft/activity will introduce science through the eyes of the Cat In The Hat for ages 3-5. Each participant will go home with the book that was read that session thanks to Altrusa of South Central PA. Register online.

Volunteer Work Days

Saturdays, March 8 & April 12

10:00 am–1:00 pm

Free

Kick off the spring season with litter clean up in March. Tools and work gloves will be provided in April for a chance to focus on other park projects. Register online.

Intro to Woodburning

Sunday, March 9

10:00 am–12:00 pm & 1:00 pm–3:00 pm

\$35 per participant

Each participant will receive an 8 inch diameter tree cookie of their choice to woodburn using a wide variety of nature stencils. Woodburning supplies and instruction will be provided. Leave with a one-of-a-kind piece of art for your home. Register online.



Bird Walk: Waterfowl and Early Spring Migrants

Wednesday, March 19

8:00 am–10:00 am

Free

Meet Rick and Peggy Price in the South Parking Lot at the entrance to the Towpath Trail for this early migration bird walk. Register online.

Introduction to Birding

Saturday, March 22

10:00 am–12:00 pm

Free

Join Rick and Peggy Price for an introductory course on birdwatching. Learn the basics with an indoor PowerPoint presentation followed by a short walk outdoors on the Delta Boardwalk to practice using binoculars and identifying bird calls. This program is geared for participants 16 years or older. Register online.

March Hike

Sunday, March 23

1:30 pm–3:00 pm

Free

Join a Naturalist for a hike on some of Wildwood's less traveled trails. Look for the first signs of spring like skunk cabbage, garter snakes, and more. Please dress for the weather and wear sturdy close toed shoes. Hike will be around 3 miles. Register online.

Kids Discover: Woodpeckers (Ages 5-10)

Thursday, March 27

1:00 pm–2:30 pm

\$5 per child, chaperones are free

Do woodpeckers get headaches? Learn all about woodpeckers and their adaptations. Discover what they eat, where they live and make a woodpecker craft. A walk will follow where we will search for signs of woodpeckers in the Park. Register online.

Spring Walk at Detweiler Park

Sunday, March 30

1:30 pm–3:00 pm

\$2 per participant

Join a Naturalist at Detweiler Park for a leisurely afternoon walk. Look and listen for signs of early spring while exploring the trails. Wear comfortable walking shoes. Register online.

Kids Discover: Salamanders (Ages 8-12)

Saturday, April 5

1:30 pm–3:30 pm

\$5 per child, chaperones are free

Learn all about secretive salamanders and what makes them unique. Go for a short hike to search for them and see if you can catch one- they are slimy and fast. You may get wet and muddy, so dress accordingly. Register online.

3D Wooden Wall Art

Thursday, April 10

6:00 pm–8:00 pm

\$40 per participant

Join The Wandering Woodcraft to create your own 3D piece of wooden wall art. Paint each layer of maple wood your desired colors, glue together and ta-da—you have a masterpiece! At registration, participants will get to choose between two designs: a great blue heron (approx. 13”h x 9”w x 1.125” thick) or a welcome sign (approx. 13”w x 11.5”h x 1” thick)! Register online by Tuesday, April 8.



Kids Discover: Songbirds (Ages 4-6)

Saturday, April 12

1:30 pm–3:00 pm

\$5 per child, chaperones are free

It's beginning to look a lot like...Springtime! We love Spring in PA and so do the birds. Some are returning to the state after spending the winter away, and some have stayed here through the cold months and you may have seen them around town. Join a Naturalist to learn about bird adaptations, take a hike and do a bird-related craft. Register online.

April Hike

Wednesday, April 16

5:30 pm–7:00 pm

Free

Join a Naturalist for a hike on some of Wildwood's less traveled trails. Look for spring blooms on this evening walk. Please dress for the weather and wear sturdy close toed shoes. Hike will be around 3 miles. Register online.

Kids Discover: Rabbits and Hares (Ages 5-10)

Friday, April 18

10:00 am–12:00 pm

\$5 per child, chaperones are free

Did you know Pennsylvania is home to rabbits and hares? Join a Naturalist to explore the world of rabbits and hares, examine their differences and similarities! Register online.

Bird Walk: Peak Migration

Wednesday, April 30

7:30 am–9:30 am

Free

Meet Rick and Peggy Price at the Nature Center Parking Lot to search for spring migrants. Register online.

Shiitake Mushroom Log Workshop

Thursday, May 1

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

\$25 per participant

Join Brian Scott of Deep Hollow Forest Farms for an evening workshop. Brian will provide background on mushroom logs and the process of their creation. Participants will then use an oak log to create their own take-home shiitake mushroom log. This program is for participants 18 years or older. Register online.

Wild Recipes: Spring Foraging in Your Backyard

Tuesday, May 13

6:00 pm–7:30 pm

\$10 per participant

Curious about edible plants and how to utilize them to create yummy spring recipes? Join Naturalists at Wildwood Park to learn how to cook a light lunch using a few spring ephemerals. Register online.

Girl Scouts Outdoor Art

Saturday, May 31

10:00 am–2:00 pm

\$12 per scout, chaperones are free

The sights and sounds of nature inspire music, engineering and art! In this Outdoor Art Girl Scout program, scouts are invited to meet and work with an artist, take a hike to explore designs in nature and then, create their own art as they fulfill requirements for their appropriate badge. Scouts will also examine and discuss *Art In The Wild* installations crafted by artists and organizations along our trails and contribute to a new all-scout, upcycled bottle-cap mural to be displayed at Wildwood Park. Register scouts online.

Volunteer & Member News

Volunteer Spotlight: Priya Koya

When Priya moved to the area, she quickly took to walking in the Park. For over a decade or more she's been walking the trails. She talked about how fun it is to look for frogs, snakes and birds particularly along the Towpath Trail. The fresh air and exercise are a welcome change from the office. Priya works as a software consultant and spends her day in an environment much different from that of Wildwood. She began volunteering in the summer of 2023 on weekends at the Front Desk.

In addition to volunteering at the Front Desk, Priya also volunteers at education stations at Wetlands Festival and she actively helps at Fort Hunter Events including Proudly PA, BrewFest and Trick or Treat Trek. Interactions with the kids keep her coming back. Watching the joy on their faces as they participate in scavenger hunts with hands-on learning stations is the highlight for her.

Priya recalled the generosity of a stranger one of her first times volunteering at the Front Desk. A woman, after overhearing the conversation with a mother and daughter in the bathroom, decided to take it upon herself to leave Priya with \$20 to give to them so that the daughter could purchase something at the Nature Shop. She was blown away by that level of kindness and decided then and there that this is a place she wanted to invest her time.



Her favorite task as a Front Desk volunteer is feeding the birds in the morning. She also expressed a love for the people she's met which has greatly diversified her friend group, a liking for greeting folks from all different walks of life and seeing the kids coming in with a smile on their face noticing things we often overlook.

There are no prerequisites for volunteering with Dauphin County Parks and Recreation. Anyone can volunteer and there is a wide range of opportunities available even if you don't know a lot about flora and fauna, the staff are always willing and able to help. A few other highlights include: meeting a young groundhog from Acorn Acres Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, watching the monarchs transition from caterpillars to butterflies, making bows around the holidays for wreath workshops and completing the day to day tasks. Priya, your enthusiasm and smile are infectious. We're glad you found a home as a Dauphin County Parks and Rec volunteer.

Redbud Tree Sale

Sunday, April 13 from 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Spring is a great time to improve your backyard landscape and the Friends of Wildwood have just the thing for you! Stop by the Nature Center from 1:00pm – 3:00pm and pick up an Eastern Redbud Tree seedling to take home and plant. Donations are encouraged. All proceeds benefit the Friends of Wildwood (check/cash only please). Supplies are limited.



Did you know volunteer Jane Earle leads a flower walk at Wildwood Park once a month in the spring and summer? This year she is offering them on a wide variety of weekdays and weekends. New for 2025, participants in attendance for any flower walk will be entered into a raffle with the chance to win a wildflower-themed gift basket from the Nature Shop courtesy of the Friends of Wildwood. The spring flower walk dates are as follows: **please pay special attention to meeting locations as they are not always the same.

Flower Walks

Flower Walk: Earliest Bloomers
Saturday, March 22
1:30 pm – 3:00 pm *Free*
Seek out Skunk Cabbage along Fox Run Trail. Meet at the North Lot Parking area. We may see other cold tolerant plants and anything left over from winter.

Flower Walk: Spring Arrivals

Sunday, April 13
1:30 pm – 3:00 pm *Free*
Search for the infamous spring ephemerals along the Towpath Trail. Meet at the South Lot Parking area. Learn interesting facts and how to identify these common species.

Flower Walk: Jack in the Pulpits and Other Spring Flowers

Friday, May 16
10:00 am – 11:30 am *Free*
Look for Jack in the Pulpits along the North Boardwalk. Learn interesting facts about the Jack in the Pulpit and why it could also be known as "Jill in the Pulpit." Meet in front of the Nature Center.

2024 Volunteer Summary

5,100+ volunteer hours were achieved at Wildwood Park in 2024 from over 40 individual volunteers and 10 groups of volunteers (not including Volunteer Work Day). That's AMAZING! Let's make 2025 our best year yet! Thank you to each and every one for your dedication and commitment to the Park.

Backpacking 101 with Keystone Trails Association

Join Keystone Trails Association on Saturday, March 29 from 9:00 am–2:00 pm for a seminar on backpacking basics. This training is geared towards avid day hikers who are interested in learning about backpacking from a group of experienced backpackers. Topics will include differences between day hiking and backpacking, clothing, footwear, gear (packs, sleeping bags, stoves, lights, stuff sacks, poles, tents), food preparation, campsite selection, potential dangers (ticks, waterborne diseases, bears, snakes), Leave No Trace and unique considerations for women with available resources (online and print). A light continental breakfast will be provided. Participants are encouraged to bring their own lunch to consume during the designated lunch break. Dress for indoor and outdoor activities. The cost is \$25 per participant. Register online.

This course will be led by three experienced backpackers and trip leaders, Jim Foster, Marian Orlousky and Gail Brossman. Jim has backpacked the entire Appalachian Trail, as well as the John Muir Trail, The Long Trail, the Quehanna Trail and others. Marian is Director of Science and Stewardship for Appalachian Trail Conservancy and an experienced backpacker. Gail is also an experienced backpacker who has completed several trails. Following the seminar, KTA will offer an optional overnight backpacking event at a time and place to be announced.



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.

The Friends of Wildwood is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization listed with the PA Bureau of Charitable Organizations, and incorporated within the Commonwealth of PA. It is an advocate for Wildwood Park through preservation, education and financial support.

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



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!



Friends of Wildwood
100 Wildwood Way
Harrisburg, PA 17110
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explorewildwoodpark.org

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Mark your calendars for
these upcoming events!

Intro to Birding
Sat. March 22
10:00am—12:00pm

Wetlands Festival
Sat. April 26
10:00am—4:00pm

Wild About Dogs
Event
Sat. May 10
10:00am—2:00pm



30% Recycled post-consumer fiber