



BULLETIN

FALL 2024



MAKE YOUR TOWN
A BIRD TOWN!

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A pair of Eastern Phoebes chose to build their nest right above the doorway entering our education building at Beechwood. While their location choice wasn't optimal for us, we valued their right to the space and closed it off to human passage while the eggs were incubated, hatched, and the young fledged the nest. For nearly three weeks, the Phoebes literally were the "boss" of this space. We're excited not only to have witnessed the birds' success, but also to have our breezeway door back.

Cover and inset photos of Eastern Phoebes courtesy of Dan Mendenhall



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THIS AUDUBON VIEW

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Over the past few months, I've been spending a lot of time in municipal meetings throughout the region, sharing information about Bird Town Pennsylvania. We get into the details of Bird Town elsewhere in this issue of The Bulletin, but in short, Bird Town is a program that encourages, supports, and recognizes municipalities for their efforts to make their community a better place for both birds and people. And while it should come as no surprise to many ASWP members, birds are extremely popular!

Most municipal meetings, out of necessity, tend to be rather dry and occasionally contentious affairs. Garbage collection contracts, potholes, and stormwater management—although critically important topics—are not always the most fun and exciting things to talk about! But at these meetings, I have been heartened by how much people want to discuss, learn about, and celebrate the birds in their community.

I shouldn't be surprised, though. According to a 2022 U.S. Fish and Wildlife survey, about 40% of the US population spent some time birdwatching. In the mid-Atlantic states of Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey, it was more than 50% of people. Further, the study shows that birds appeal to every demographic including age, gender, education, race, and socio-economic status.

With so much trying to divide us lately, it's great that we can find common ground with birds. Bird Town is a great way to unite and celebrate all that birds bring to our communities. Want to make your community a Bird Town? Read on to learn about our goal to transform every municipality in our region into a Bird Town Pennsylvania.

—Jim

OUR RESERVES, NATIVE PLANT NURSERY, AND NATURE STORES

BEECHWOOD FARMS NATURE RESERVE

614 Dorseyville Road in Fox Chapel, Pittsburgh, PA 15238
Audubon Nature Store & Native Plant Nursery / Dogs not permitted on trails

BUFFALO CREEK NATURE PARK

154 Monroe Road, Sarver, PA 16055
Audubon Nature Store / Dogs on leash are welcome

SUCCOP NATURE PARK

185 W. Airport Road in Penn Township, Butler, PA 16002
Audubon Nature Store / Dogs on leash are welcome

TODD NATURE RESERVE

367 Kepple Road, Sarver, PA 16055
No restrooms or other facilities / Dogs not permitted on trails

Accessibility Information: For accessibility needs or questions about any of our sites, please contact Brian Shema at (412) 963-6100 or at bshema@aswp.org. For accessibility needs or questions about any of our programs, please contact Chris Kubiak at (412) 963-6100 or ckubiak@aswp.org. All other questions regarding accessibility or inclusion can be directed to Jim Bonner at (412) 963-6100 or jbonner@aswp.org.



Dark-eyed Junco

YOU CAN MAKE EVERY TOWN A BIRD TOWN

WHAT MAKES A TOWN A BIRD TOWN PENNSYLVANIA? IT STARTS WITH YOU.

Bird Town Pennsylvania, now in its 13th year, is a state-wide, grassroots, municipal-level conservation program that's worked with over 50 municipalities across the commonwealth. ASWP is excited to lead the expansion of Bird Town into western Pennsylvania.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Bird Towns begin with bird lovers—people, like you, who support wildlife through bird-friendly practices. We need you to get in touch with your municipal leaders—commissioners, town council, recreation board, or environmental advisory council—to let them know that you want your community to become a Bird Town.

To start the process, interested municipal officials contact us, learn more about the program, pass a resolution to become a Bird Town, identify committee members, and complete an application.

ASWP is not only actively assisting municipalities to become Bird Towns—we think every municipality in our region should become an official Bird Town! We're doing it in partnership with Bird Town Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Audubon Council, WeConservePA, and Bird City Network. Prior to our partnership, the majority of Bird Towns were in the eastern part of the state.

Since launching Bird Town here, ASWP has already helped the borough of Avalon, Bellevue, Dormont, Fox Chapel, Millvale, and Swissvale to join the program.

The goal is to promote community-based conservation actions that create a healthier, more sustainable environment for birds, wildlife and people.

THE BENEFITS OF BECOMING A BIRD TOWN

There's so much more than just an attractive Bird Town sign included in the designation. Contact your municipal leaders to let them know that when your community becomes a Bird Town, it's making a commitment to increase the awareness of—and support for—birds as indicators of environmental health.

Bird Town also cultivates community involvement that creates a feel-good sense of camaraderie among your local friends and neighbors.

In Bird Towns, residents, schools, businesses, and municipalities can initiate their own projects that result in an increased connection to nature—and stewardship going forward—based on bird-related activities.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BIRD TOWN

2011

The Bird Town program begins. Upper Moreland Township becomes Pennsylvania's first Bird Town.

2014

Over 20 Bird Towns designed in the state.

2018

Nearly 30 Bird Towns active in seven counties.

2021

Bird Town creates a long-term sustainability plan, institutes board structure and bylaws. A recertification and evaluation process is established to provide consistency and accountability across the program.

2024

Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania partners with Bird Town to increase Bird Town participation the western side of the state.

Past community Bird Town initiatives have included pop-up gardens, citizen science programs, native plant sales, invasive plant education, and bird walks. Bird Towns are also home to grassroots innovation, involvement, and sharing across communities.

This leads to larger and larger amounts of valuable bird habitat that come together like pieces of a puzzle. Over time, these spaces connect and continue to expand the available resources for our native wildlife.

HOW CAN MY COMMUNITY BECOME A BIRD TOWN?

Are you sold on the benefits of becoming Bird Town? Then it's time to reach out to your local leaders—and direct them to contact us at birdtown@aswp.org or via the information available at aswp.org—we've put it right at the top of our webpage so it's easy to find!

BIRD-FRIENDLY PRACTICES:

Choose native plants that support birds!

Help to reduce bird window strikes by adding bird anti-collision tape to windows.

Restore bird habitat by pulling invasive species of plants.

Reduce pesticide use.

PS: If you want to make an immediate impact right in your own backyard, you can join ASWP's Certified Backyard Habitat program that helps you to attract birds, butterflies, and beneficial insects. Your habitat will support the community's wider Bird Town goals, too. It's a win-win situation.



TRAVEL WITH US!

20+ years of exceptional travel experiences focusing on birds, their habitats, and local culture

Trips for every experience level

View upcoming trips and photos at aswp.org

Join our travel email list at travel@aswp.org

Painted Bunting

STAY TUNED...

For information on offsite bird seed sales! We want to be sure you have easy access to seed that supports the birds this fall and winter. Follow us on Facebook or visit our website for updates.



FALL

PROGRAM SCHEDULE



Chipping Sparrow

REGISTER FOR PROGRAMS AT ASWP.ORG OR CALL (412) 963-6100

Programs take place at **Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve (BFNR)**, **Succop Nature Park (SNP)**, **Todd Nature Reserve (TNR)**, **Buffalo Creek Nature Park (BCNP)**, or **online via Zoom**. Select programs take place at **Renziehausen (Renzie) Park**, Eden Park Boulevard off of Walnut Street, McKeesport, PA 15132; and **Freeport Community Park**, 115 Community Park Road, Freeport, PA 16229.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Picnic in the Park

Thursday, September 12, 6:30–8:30pm / SNP

Pack a picnic dinner and join us for a free summer concert featuring the Hawthorne Project. There are tables and seating under the pavilion or bring a blanket and spread out on the lawn to enjoy the beautiful natural setting and great local music!

Wings, Water, and Wildlife

Saturday, September 14, 10am–2pm / BCNP

Clean water is key to the survival of people and wildlife—and Buffalo Creek is one of the most biologically diverse watersheds in the state. In conjunction with the Buffalo Creek Watershed Coalition, we're celebrating its abundance and impact on birds, animals, and fish. Join us for hands-on nature crafts, fish printing (Cyotaku)* and games, the Flying Solo Marketplace, and nature-themed book sale. Learn about the important work that's being done in the watershed, explore a mobile environmental display, H2O! on the Go!, and discover more about the Butler-Freeport Community Trail. *The first 100 visitors will receive a free native tree, courtesy of the Keystone 10M Trees Partnership.* Free. *We will do fish printing on paper; you are invited to bring your own all cotton t-shirt if you would like to make a print on that.

Falconry: History and Flight Demonstration

Sunday, September 22, 11am or 2pm / SNP

Master Falconer Dawn DeCrease will share the history of the falconry, its equipment, and take us outside to see a live training demonstration with a bird of prey (weather permitting). Children under 12 years of age must be accompanied by an adult. This is an inside/outside program; please dress appropriately. Please choose which session you are interested in when you register. Free.

Hawk Mountain Mini Eco-Tour

September 20–22 / Hawk Mountain

Hawk Mountain is famous for its migrating raptors. During this mini eco-tour, you'll enjoy an afternoon of birding on Friday and a full day on Saturday to see the many birds flying overhead to their migration destinations. Price includes transportation, all meals, hotel accommodations, and admission fees. \$375 per member; \$450 per nonmember.

Fall Tree and Shrub Sale

October 1–31 / BFNR

Fall is a great time for planting! During the month of October, an extra 15% discount will be offered on all native trees and shrubs—that's a total of 25% off for members and 15% off for non-members.

Creatures of the Night Family-Friendly Halloween Program

*Fridays & Saturdays, October 11 & 12, 18 & 19, 25 & 26 / BFNR
6:30, 7, or 7:30pm Start Time*

Delight in our annual autumn experience as fireflies guide you on Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve's trails to encounter larger-than-life costumed nocturnal creatures. Hear stories from a Great Horned Owl, observe the acrobatics of the Flying Squirrel, go batty with Little Brown Bat, and meet a real-live creature of the night! Come in costume for twice the fun. This event takes place outdoors, even if it's raining. Registration required. \$10 per member; \$15 per nonmember; under 2 is free.

Yoga in the Park - Fall Series

*Sundays, October 13, 20, 27 & November 3, 10, 17, 24
Sessions run from 4–5 pm / BCNP*

Start your week off with some yoga! Give yourself the space to breathe and stretch so you're ready for the work week. We have partnered with Sol Power Yoga, Sarver to lead these sessions in our beautiful classroom where you are surrounded by nature and overlooking Little Buffalo Creek. \$6 per member; \$10 per nonmember.

Nature Game Night

Thursday, November 7, 6–9pm / BFNR

Join us for a fun night of nature-themed board and card games. From building healthy ecosystems in Ecologies to attracting the best birds to your Wingspan preserve, this is bound to be a great night for board game enthusiasts and nature lovers alike. All experience levels are welcome, but the games are best suited for ages 10+. We will have games available, but you are welcome to bring your favorite nature-themed board game. Registration required. \$6 per member; \$10 per nonmember.

Members' Sale and Holiday Shopping Kickoff at Audubon Nature Stores

Saturday, November 9, 9am–5pm / BFNR, BCNP, SNP

ASWP members, this day is for you! Get a head start on your holiday shopping and find the perfect gifts for all the nature lovers on your list—and maybe an item for yourself, too! During the sale, ASWP members receive 20% off* merchandise in any of our three Nature Stores, located at Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve, Succop Nature Park, and Buffalo Creek Nature Park. PS: Don't miss our special store programming at each location! *20% discount excludes optics, birdseed, and select artwork.

Cross-Pollination: Certified Backyard Habitat Show and Tell

Thursday, November 14, 6–8pm / BFNR

Brag about your Certified Backyard Habitat and all the ways that your native plants are making your property the prettiest in the neighborhood! Showcase your garden during an evening of camaraderie, skill-sharing, and show-and-tell. ASWP's Certified Backyard Habitat program has over 1,100 participants and has created over 1,500 acres of Certified Habitat! Light refreshments will be provided. Registration is required so that we may plan accordingly. Free.

Eco-Market: Holiday Edition!

Saturday, November 23, 10am–4pm / BFNR

Join us for an Eco-market featuring nature-themed items from vendors whose work is made from recycled and sustainable materials. There will be an eco-friendly DIY wrapping paper station, too! Please visit aswp.org for more details on vendors and activities.

Christmas Bird Counts

Saturday, December 14 / Buffalo Creek Valley

(includes TNR & BCNP)

Sunday, December 15 / Mon Valley

Saturday, December 28 / Pittsburgh (includes BFNR)

Sunday, December 29 / South Butler (includes SNP)

Join one of our free ASWP Christmas Bird Counts! For a list of local count leaders, please visit aswp.org. For a full list of counts across the region, visit audubon.org.

Kids' Christmas Bird Counts

Saturday, December 14, 10am–12pm / BCNP

Saturday, December 28, 10am–12pm / BFNR

Sunday, December 29, 10am–12pm / SNP

Kids and parents are invited to participate in a family-friendly version of the Christmas Bird Count. Our naturalist will guide you during this event which is appropriate for school-age and up. Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult. Advance registration is required. Free.

BIRDING + NATURE HIKES

Birds & More Naturalist Led Morning Walks

Advance registration requested for these walks.

BFNR: Every Sunday and Wednesday at 9am

BCNP: Every Tuesday at 9am

SNP: Every Thursday 9am

TNR: Every Friday at 9am (ends last Friday of October)

Freeport Community Park: First Friday of the month at 9am; meet at Laube Hall parking lot (final walk of season on November 1)

Renzie Park: First Friday of the month at 9am

Fall Migratory Bird Hikes

Saturday, August 31, 9–11am / BFNR

Saturday, September 7, 9–11am / SNP

Sunday, September 8, 9–11am / BCNP

There's a chill in the air—fall is coming and the birds know it! During this naturalist-led hike, we'll be looking for birds that are ready to make their way south for the winter. \$6 per member; \$10 per nonmember. Registration required.

Harrison Hills Bird Walk

Saturday, October 5, 8am–12pm / Harrison Hills Park

Join us at Harrison Hills Park, one of the region's most popular places to bird. We will meet in the parking lot at the Environmental Learning Center and bird some of the surrounding trails. Email Chris Kubiak at ckubiak@aswp.org for more details. \$6 per member; \$10 per nonmember. Registration required.

AUDUBON AT NIGHT

Full Moon Hikes

Monday, September 16, 8–10pm / BCNP

Friday, November 15, 6–8 pm / SNP

Enjoy a night under a full moon. Join us for a walk around our parks and trails during the full moon. What might we hear? What can we see? Learn why hiking at night, or under a full moon, can be fun, and some tips for enjoying your time outside. Please dress for the weather, wear sturdy shoes, and bring a water bottle. We will end the hike around a fire and have some hot cider to enjoy. This program will be held weather permitting. It will be cancelled in the event of heavy rain or total cloud cover. \$6 per member; \$10 per nonmember.

Owl Prowls

Friday, November 15, 7–9pm / BFNR

Saturdays, October 26 & November 16, 7–9pm / BCNP

Learn about our local owls, then search for them on the trails. This event is appropriate for all ages. We will meet participants in the parking lot of both sites. Registration required. \$6 per member; \$10 per nonmember.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

Fledglings: Ages 3–5

September 10, October 8, November 12, December 10 / SNP

September 11, October 9, November 13, December 11 / BCNP

September 12, October 10, November 14, December 12 / BFNR

All programs run 10–11:15am

Give your 3–5 year old a head start on a lifetime of loving the outdoors. Fledglings programs incorporate stories, a walk, and activities to introduce new and fun nature themes to young participants. A parent or caregiver must be present. Adult caregiver, please register using the “Free Adult” ticket. Advance registration is required. \$4 member; \$6 nonmember. Themes—September: Meadow Meander; October: Chattering Chipmunks; November: Leaf Man; December: Holiday for the Birds.

HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES

Make and Take: Nature Journals

Saturday October 12, 10–11:30am / SNP

Saturday, October 12, 1–2:30pm / BCNP

Saturday, October 19, 10–11:30am / BFNR

Bind high-quality paper to heirloom quality leather covers to create a unique journal in which you can record your observations. You'll decorate the journal and add a clasp to secure it shut. Registration is required one week in advance. \$25 per member; \$35 per non-member.

Seed Collecting

Saturday, October 12, 10am–12pm / BFNR

Saturday, October 12, 2–4pm / SNP

Learn to harvest native seed while you help ASWP's native plant nursery to replenish its stocks—and you'll be able to add to your own plant collection. Participants will gain hands-on experience collecting, cleaning, and sowing a variety of native plant seed. *Free, thanks to the Fox Chapel Garden Club.*

Pumpkin Carving

Saturday, October 29, 1–5pm / BCNP

Saturday, October 30, 1–5pm / SNP

Carve a pumpkin! Join us anytime between 1–5pm. Let's have some fun carving—from the traditional face to more intricate patterns, pumpkin carving is such a great part of the fall season and often used for decoration as Halloween approaches. We will have pumpkins, some patterns, and a few tools on hand. All you need to bring is your imagination. \$6 per member; \$10 per non-member. Each paid \$6 or \$10 registration is entitled to one pumpkin. If friends or family members want to help decorate a paid registrant's pumpkin, please select a free, “No Pumpkin” ticket. If you'd like to make more than one pumpkin, purchase additional paid registrations.

Winter Seed Sowing Workshop

Saturday, November 2, 10am–12pm / BFNR

Did you know that fall and winter are the best times to plant native perennial seed for spring germination? Join us for a basic lesson on collecting, cleaning, and sowing some of the Pittsburgh area's classic native landscape plants. Participants will sow eight different high-wildlife value native species to take home. Registration is required. *Free, thanks to the Fox Chapel Garden Club.*

Fall Wreath Decoration

Saturday, November 9, 2–4pm / SNP

Have you decorated for the fall yet? Using corn tassel for our base and with a walk to gather some other natural materials to embellish our wreaths, you will leave with your own one-of-a-kind fall decoration. As we are being creative, we will have some drinks and treats on-hand too. \$15 per member; \$25 per nonmember.

Winter Wreaths

Sunday, December 8, 2–4pm / BCNP

Make a new wreath for the winter season! We'll provide all the supplies needed for you to create a simple evergreen wreath to adorn your home. Work with a variety of evergreens on a round wire frame and then head outside for a walk to collect natural materials for additional decoration. We'll teach you how to tie the bow too! While you are working, enjoy some drinks and treats. \$15 per member; \$25 per nonmember.

Winter Firecraft

Saturday, December 14, 1–2:30pm / BFNR

Saturday, December 21, 1–2:30pm / SNP

Saturday, December 21, 4–5:30pm / BCNP

Cold weather can make it difficult to get a fire going; however frozen conditions make for very dry tinder! In this program, learn how to find natural fire making materials in winter. You'll even make ferrocerium rod fire kits to take home. The kit includes a pouch, charcloth, a ferro rod, and a striker. If the sun is out, we can use lenses to ignite our fires! S'mores will follow the educational portion. Limit is 12 people, and registration is required one week in advance. \$25 per member; \$35 per nonmember.

Decorate a Mini Tree

Saturday, December 7, 10am–12pm / BFNR & SNP

Saturday, December 14, 2–4pm / BCNP

Get into the holiday spirit by decorating a mini tree using natural materials. Registration is required one week prior to the workshop. \$40 per member; \$50 per nonmember.

Yule Log Hike and Craft

Saturday, December 7, 10am–12pm / BCNP

Saturday, December 14, 10am–12pm / BFNR & SNP

Hike into the woods to gather natural materials to decorate a birch Yule log. The drill candle holes and level your log so that it will stay in proper position when you use it to decorate for the holidays. Registration required one week in advance. \$15 per members, \$25 per non-member.

OUTDOORS 101

Fall Fungi Foray

Saturday, September 7, 10am–12pm / TNR
Saturday, September 7, 2–4pm / SNP
Saturday, September 14, 10am–12pm / BFNR

Curious about that mushroom growing in the woods? Ever wonder what exactly a Turkey Tail mushroom is? Join us on one of our beginner fungi forays as we scour the trails across our natural areas looking for all sorts of fungi. We will talk about how to identify certain species, the life history of fungi, and what these amazing organisms do to help maintain a healthy ecosystem. Registration required. \$6 per member; \$10 per nonmember.

Forest and Field

Saturday, September 28, 10–11:30am / BFNR
Saturday, September 28, 2–3:30pm / SNP

Take a journey through the life cycle of a western Pennsylvania meadow ecosystem. Find tips on converting large or small spaces into a thriving habitat for our local wildlife. *Free, thanks to the Fox Chapel Garden Club.*

Birds and Blooms by Bike

Saturday, October 12 / BCNP
Family Ride: 10am–12pm, Adult Ride: 1–3pm

Join us as we roll down the Butler-Freeport Trail to explore nature in the fall. We will observe what leaves are changing, what flowers are blooming, and what birds are migrating south. The pace of the ride will be leisurely, with some stops to discuss what we are seeing. The ride will be on hardened trails (crushed stone to dirt to asphalt) and mostly flat. Helmets recommended for all; required for children under 12. Family Ride: 6 miles; Adult Ride: 12 miles. Free, thanks to funding from the PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources. Space is limited; registration is required.

Autumn Changes

Saturday, October 19, 10–11:30am / Renzie Park Senior Center

As the days get shorter, plants and animals are preparing for winter. We will discuss why trees show brilliant fall colors as they prepare dormancy, compared to why birds leave their showy spring plumage behind for duller forms. Free, thanks to an assistance agreement for the Environmental Protection Agency Region III Environmental Education Fund.

Land Use History of Moraine State Park: North Country Club Road Hike

Saturday, November 9, 9am–12pm / Moraine State Park

Moraine State Park was created in the 1960s and it still bears the evidence of previous occupation. On this hike we will explore house foundations, cemeteries, old roads, and even a still-flowing springhouse. Once on site, we will use two parking areas along the same road. Please bring along outdoor footwear, snacks, and a water bottle. We will meet at the junction of North Country Club Road and Muddy Creek Drive (zip code 16001.) Please contact Ryan Stauffer at rstauffer@aswp.org if you have any questions. \$10 per member; \$15 per nonmember.

Basics of Winter Survival

Saturday, November 16, 10am–12pm / SNP

Winter presents the most challenging season when it comes to wilderness survival. In this family friendly session, we will learn practical and fun outdoor skills that can be practiced at home. This outdoor program will cover the basic needs of shelter, water, fire, and signals for rescue. Please dress for the weather and bring along sturdy footwear. Registration required. \$6 per member; \$10 per nonmember.

Winter Tree Identification

Saturday, November 16, 10am–12pm / BCNP
Saturday, November 16, 2–4pm / SNP
Saturday, November 23, 10am–12pm / BFNR

Did you know that you can identify a tree species just by looking at a twig? Leaves are not the only characteristic that defines a tree species. Bark, twigs, buds, shape, and even smell can be used to identify a tree during the winter months. Join us as we take a closer look at the diverse species of trees present along our trails. We will discuss the wildlife benefit and historical use of the various species encountered. Advance registration required. Free.

PLANNING YOUR HOLIDAY PARTY?

Our reserves are a beautiful backdrop to your holiday party, wedding, birthday party, graduation party, or family gathering. Call (412) 963-6100 or visit aswp.org to learn more about the spaces we have available.



Common
Grackle

Christmas Bird Count Warm Up with Coffee and Bagels

Saturday, November 30, 10am–12pm / BFNR & SNP
Saturday, November 30, 10am–12pm / McKeesport Regional History & Heritage Center
Saturday, December 7, 2–4pm / BCNP

Beginners welcome! Enjoy coffee, bagels, and a bird hike as you learn how to count birds for science. Learn or review the birds most likely to be seen for Audubon's annual Christmas Bird Counts. This program includes a classroom session and a short birding walk, conditions permitting. Appropriate for adults and interested youth. Free.

ONLINE PROGRAMS

Registration and free Zoom account required to view the programs.

Mushrooms 101

Wednesday, September 11, 7pm / Online

What's so fun about fungi? Join us online for a program where we will discuss exactly what fungi are—from their life history to physical features. We'll talk about some of the common species you may encounter in southwestern Pennsylvania during the fall. Free.

Lunch and Learn & Native Plants: Lasagna Gardening

Wednesday, September 18, 12–1pm / Online

Lasagna gardening, also known as sheet mulching, is a fantastic way to prepare a new garden bed for more native plants. Whether you want to convert a section of grass lawn or start from scratch on a garden bed gone awry, lasagna gardening can help you achieve your goals. Join us for a virtual lunch-and-learn event where we will talk about how you can start using lasagna gardening to create your next garden bed for spring. Free.

Carolina Parakeet: Ecology, Extinction, and Resurrection?

Thursday, September 25, 7pm / Online

The Carolina Parakeet was eastern North America's only endemic parrot species and was even found in Western Pennsylvania. Learn more about this species' unique ecology, what drove it to extinction, and the controversy surrounding bringing them back through cloning. Free.

Pennsylvania's Ice Age Past

Tuesday, October 15, 7pm / Online

Just a geologic instant ago, portions of Pennsylvania were covered in massive glaciers. There are still many signs of this violent age written into our landscape. In this program, you will learn how to identify weathering patterns and rock types that are indicative of glacial activity. Free.

The Corvids: Blue Jays, Crows, and Ravens

Tuesday, October 29, 7pm / Online

Corvids display remarkable intelligence and are among the most intelligent birds on Earth. Members of the family have demonstrated self-awareness in mirror tests, possess tool-making ability, and passing information through generations. These are skills which, until recently, were thought to be possessed only by humans. This program will follow some of our local Corvids' remarkable skills and what makes them some of the most unique species in the bird world. Free.

What Gall!

Wednesday, November 6, 7pm / Online

Just what is that spotty, lumpy, bumpy or otherwise weird growth on leaves, twigs or stems? Plant galls are often seen, but what causes them can remain a mystery. Are they good? Bad? Useful? Let's take a look at these fascinating little bits of plant real estate. Free.

Lunch and Learn & Native Plants: Winter Sowing Native Plant Seeds

Wednesday, November 13, 12–1pm / Online

Plants native to southwestern Pennsylvania have many adaptations that help them to survive harsh winters. Seeds fall to the ground, get covered by leaf litter, and generally go dormant. However, the cold temperatures and moist conditions later in winter break this dormancy just before the seeds germinate in spring. Join us to learn how you can simulate this natural phenomenon with seeds in your own backyard. Free.

Winter Plants and Berries for Birds

Saturday, November 16, 10–11:30am / Online

When winter sets in, birds depend on plant resources to provide critical nutrients as insects become scarce. We will discuss how to help sustain birds during the harsh winter months using bird-friendly native woody plants. We'll also talk about ways to prepare your landscape at the end of the season to support resident birds through the winter. Participants will learn proper pruning and planting techniques to successfully establish trees and shrubs in a home landscape. Free, thanks to the Fox Chapel Garden Club.

Natural Meadows of Pennsylvania

Wednesday, November 20, 7pm / Online

In Pennsylvania, we have three types of naturally occurring meadow ecosystems. These distinct meadows developed due to unique geologic conditions. This program will cover natural history of these ecosystems and how they operate today. Free.

Bats of Western Pennsylvania

Tuesday, December 3, 7pm / Online

Bats are one of western Pennsylvania's most interesting flying mammals, but in the past decade, many have been suffering steep declines from disease. This program focuses on the different bat species found here, the bats' ecologies and life histories, as well as updates on White-nose Syndrome. We will also discuss ways to help bats by creating bat boxes and bat-friendly habitats in your own backyard. Free.

Owl Ecology in Winter

Tuesday, December 17, 7pm / Online

Did you a local owl starts breeding in January? How do they hunt and survive the cold, dark, winter months? This program will look at several of our local owl species and their ecology. We'll also talk about the irruptive Snowy Owl. Free.

SCOUT PROGRAMS

Cub and Girl Scout Badge Day

Saturday, October 5, 10am–12pm / BFNR

October 12, 10am–12pm / BCNP

Saturday, October 19, 2–4pm / SNP

Choose your nature-related badge or activity! This program, for Cub Scouts and elementary Girl Scouts, is booked by group or den. Contact Scott Detwiler at (412) 963-6100 to make your reservation. \$7.50 per scout; one adult chaperone (free) required per den. Other dates are available by arrangement, subject to minimum fees.

BUFFALO CREEK COALITION PROGRAMS

Backyard Stream Repair

Saturday, October 5, 9am–12pm / BCNP

Is your stream getting deeper or wider? Are you losing some of your land every time it rains? Have you wondered why your streambanks are changing so rapidly? Join Audubon and Penn State Extension to learn more about backyard stream repair solutions. The program includes a set of pre-recorded webinars that you can view at your own pace, followed by an in-person field day where you can put what you learned to practice—including stream evaluation, and different approaches to riparian buffer and streambank stabilization. Participants in this workshop will receive a copy of the Penn State Extension publication, *Simple Solutions for Your Eroding Backyard Stream*. This program (\$30 value) is offered at a discounted rate, with funding from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, Environmental Stewardship Fund. Space is limited—registration is required. \$6 per member; \$10 per nonmember.

Buffalo Creek Coalition Meeting (Hybrid)

Thursday, November 14, 3:30–5pm

Do you live, work, or play in the Buffalo Creek Watershed? Join Audubon and the Buffalo Creek Coalition to learn more about the state of the watershed, habitat restoration and enhancement efforts, monitoring programs, and opportunities to get involved while also sharing your priorities, perspectives, and concerns within the region to help guide our work. Attend in person at Buffalo Creek or join us online.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Habitat Enhancement

Saturday, October 5, 9am–12pm / TNR

Saturday, October 19, 9am–12pm / BFNR

Volunteers are needed to help make Audubon's Nature Reserves even more bird- and pollinator-friendly. Activities will include removing invasive species and replacing them with high wildlife-value native species. All materials will be provided and all ages are welcome. Free.

PREVENT BIRD STRIKES

This product is pure magic when it comes to preventing bird window strikes. We even use it on the windows at our properties!

How does it work? It's hard for us to see, but birds can see it—and they steer clear of windows because of it. CollidEscape Bird Tape in white or clear is \$18.95 for a 40' roll that covers 2-3 windows. It's been proven 85% effective in preventing bird/window collisions. It's a cost-effective and long term (10+ years!) solution.

More benefits: it's made by a small business in the USA. Pick it up today at any of our three Audubon Nature Stores.



ASK THE NATURALIST

SPOTTED LANTERNFLY— SQUISH, DON'T STICK

Spotted Lanternfly numbers are up in our region, and we've heard numerous reports of well-meaning homeowners covering trees with sticky tape to capture the invasive lanternflies.

It's important to know that sticky tape is not the answer! The tape lives up to its name and can capture birds and beneficial insects, leading to serious injury or a prolonged and painful death. Birds trapped in the tape fight to escape, losing feathers, breaking bones, and leaving themselves vulnerable to predators.

Statistics show that less than 25% of birds that get trapped in the sticky tape are able to be released—and for many, that involves a long and arduous recovery in a wildlife rehabilitation facility.

Be a friend to birds and beneficial insects—say no to sticky tape and yes to the tried-and-true method of squishing Spotted Lanternflies. You can also use a vacuum to collect the Lanternflies. Just let it sit outside for a day or two before emptying it.

Visit our website, aswp.org for more information on invasive species in our region and to learn how you can make your own Spotted Lanternfly DIY trap.



MEMORIALS + HONORS

MEMORIALS

John Artz

Karen Olson
Murrah High School
Class of 1963

George Due

Ron Clark

Dave Henry

Jennifer Bryant

William F. Hill

Betsey Owens

Therese Maskulka

Raeanne Regan

Leslie Ann Parish

Kaitlin King

Jim Parker

Betsey Owens

Quinn Peyton

Amy and Rudolph
Maceyko

Ruth Ralston

Amy and Rudolph
Maceyko

Elaine Stovcsik

Russell Gray

Peter Tallerico

Laurie Bartolotta

Shirley Todd

Sarah and Dante Romito

Mary W. Tucker

Jacque and Bill Davis
James Shearer

Ruth Weir

George Weir

Barb Wishart

Betsey Owens

Ruth Wyszomierski

Faith Weppelman

HONORS

Tingle Barnes

John Culbertson

Jim Bonner

Bonnie and Franklin
Blackstone

Janet Smith

Nancy Gatti

Tom and JoAnn Succop

Gus and Beth Succop

Through July 31, 2024



FALL FOR MEADOWS!

Did you know that fall is the best time to establish a meadow? And we've got the seed to help you do it! Whether it's Part Shade, Full Sun, Butterfly & Bumblebee Mix, or Deer Resistant, Audubon Nature Store can help you to start a meadow on your property. PS—we have tips online to help you along the way: aswp.org.

ASWP NEWS

MON VALLEY BIRD-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

In June 2023, Audubon officially launched the Mon Valley Bird-Friendly Communities initiative to improve access to nature and environmental education while supporting birds, native plants, and other wildlife. We've been honored to work alongside the City of McKeesport, Versailles and White Oak Boroughs, community organizations such as the McKeesport Regional History and Heritage Center, and educational partners including Francis McClure Elementary School and SOY Pittsburgh.

The Mon Valley Bird-Friendly Communities initiative at work in McKeesport. Photo courtesy of Jennifer Vertullo.



Local artist Diane Pontoriero with her artwork at the North Hills Art Center.

MON VALLEY YEAR ONE HIGHLIGHTS

\$20,000 in mini-grants awarded

3,000 native plants distributed

2,322 birds counted during the first annual Mon Valley Christmas Bird Count (CBC)

1,177 students reached through in-school programming and summer camps

120 Certified Backyard Habitats

45 environmental education programs, reaching **615** people

15 Master Birders in training, including **12** lectures and **12** field outings

14 First-Friday walks in Renzie Park

4 bird-friendly demonstration gardens in progress

3 bi-lingual programs for students whose first language is Spanish

1 satellite ASWP office in McKeesport

This initiative was made possible with funding from the Richard King Mellon Foundation and through an assistance agreement with the Environmental Protection Agency. We're grateful for the warm welcome that ASWP has received and look forward to continuing our work in the Mon Valley to support people and birds! We hope to see you at an upcoming First Friday walk in Renzie Park or during the 2nd annual Mon Valley CBC.

A SEASONAL REFLECTION

Recently, local artist Diane Pontoriero held an art exhibit at the North Hills Art Center titled "A Seasonal Reflection: Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve." The event featured a collection of paintings and sculptures encapsulating her years of hiking, bird watching, and relaxing at Beechwood.

Pontoriero says that "the beautiful fall colors at Harts Run along the Spring Hollow Trail were the inspiration and the subject of the first painting of this artistic journey." Her work features scenes from all four seasons along Spring Hollow, Pine Hollow, and Meadowview trails.

"The pieces included in the show not only reflect the seasonal changes but show how the reserve has changed over the 30 years," she states. In addition to the seasonal paintings, Pontoriero included ceramic pieces inspired by the grasses, meadow plants, and the scars left on the ash trees. "Even though it has taken me 30 years to complete this body of work, I will continue to be inspired by this special place."

KIDS LOVE OUR SUMMER CAMPS!

Check out this quote from the happy parent of a happy camper: "[My son] has come home every day with so many stories to tell us—which is not the case when he has gone to other camps). We really love the camp that you run there and can't wait to send him again next summer—hopefully with his little sister in tow. Thank you for putting together a really meaningful experience rooted in nature and full of fun memories."



COLLEGE BIRDING PROGRAM

ASWP's College Birding Program, funded by the Richard King Mellon Foundation, launched in 2023 and connected us with 145 energized young birders from seven local universities—University of Pittsburgh, Duquesne University, Chatham University, St. Vincent College, Allegheny College, Penn West University—Slippery Rock, and Community College of Allegheny County. We engaged the students with on-campus programming and off-campus excursions—and in some cases (quite literally) opened their eyes to the many birds located right on campus.

The program feeds into research proving that college students gain mental health benefits by interacting with birds. A recent study published in Environmental Psychology (from researchers at North Carolina State University) supports the concept that birdwatching not only improves mood—it's also easy for students to get involved and quickly feel the benefits.

By participating in regional outings, on-campus activities, and submitting eBird checklists, students collect points toward earning a pair of Kowa BDII XD binoculars. In the near future, ASWP is planning a scholarship-based trip to Belize to further expand and promote a lifelong love of birds.

If you're an alum of one of these schools and would be interested in helping to mentor and encourage future college birders, please contact us to get involved at info@aswp.org.

CELEBRATING NATIVE PLANT NURSERY MILESTONES

As we prepare for the 25th anniversary of ASWP's native plant nursery in 2025, we're excited to share some major milestones over the past year.

Gardening with native plants supports birds, pollinators, and other wildlife. It also reduces water consumption and helps to create resilient landscapes. Thanks to everyone who made the active decision to choose native plants for their yards and community spaces.

PS—we're holding a Native Tree and Shrub sale during the month of October. 25% off for members and 15% off for non-members. Stop into Beechwood Tuesday through Sunday from 9am-5pm to pick some up!

NATIVE PLANT NURSERY MILESTONES

23,000: Total plant volume during Fiscal Year 2023-24

8,000: Square feet added to the nursery propagation area with funding from Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

5,600: Number of plants sold during our Spring Native Plant Sale date on May 11

2,857: Number of nursery volunteer hours

201: True western Pennsylvania native species available at the nursery

55: Native plant educational programs provided to the public

OUR BEST DEAL ON THE BEST OPTICS!

NOW THROUGH OCTOBER 31,
SAVE \$500 OFF ALL SWAROVSKI
NL PURE BINOCULARS.

Call Audubon Nature Store at Beechwood today (412) 904-7364 to place your order and upgrade your optics! Get an incredible deal on these exceptional binoculars.



**FOR EVERY
CABINET ORDER >\$10K
Sawyer + The Grove will
donate a tree of the
same wood type as the
cabinets to Audubon
Society of Western PA.**

sawyerandthegrove.com



The Cabinets to Canopy Initiative

THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS!

We're grateful to the many individuals and groups who donate their time as volunteers at ASWP. This Spring, volunteer groups from **American Eagle Outfitters, Ally Financial, Manchester Bidwell, Columbia Gas, Zion Methodist Church, Fox Chapel High School, Stantec,** and **Sarver Moms Community Rocks!** took on large projects at Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve and Succop Nature Park—and helped us to make our reserves look even more fantastic! We sincerely appreciate their time, effort, and generous donations.

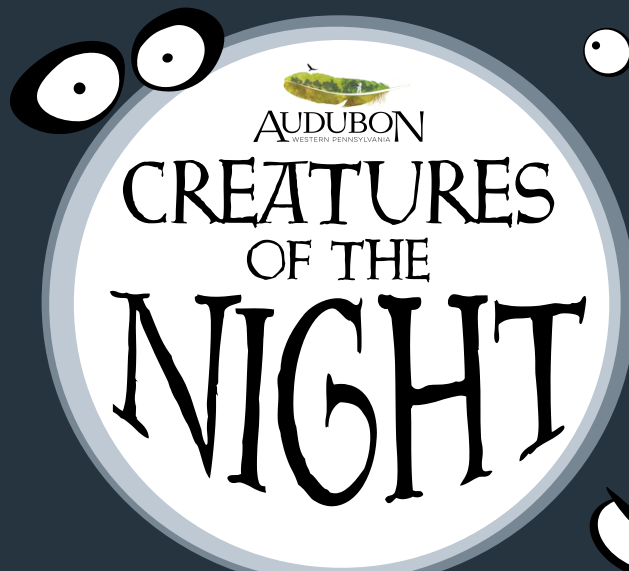
Is your club, group, or workplace looking for volunteer opportunities? We have year-round options for large or small groups. Please reach out to us to learn about opportunities at info@aswp.org. We're also seeking individuals interested in helping out in our Nature Stores at Succop Nature Park or Buffalo Creek Nature Park and in our native plant nursery at Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve. We'd love to have you volunteer alongside us! Please email info@aswp.org to let us know you're interested.



JOIN US FOR VOLUNTEER NATURALIST TRAINING!

Mondays, September 15 through October 21, 9:30am–2:30pm at Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

Join our crew that leads school field trips! Audubon Volunteer Naturalists lead groups of 8 to 12 school students on field trips on the trails at Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve. Primary field trip seasons are September through October and March through early June. This training will give you basic teaching techniques and natural history. Free with a commitment to lead.



FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS IN OCTOBER

Oct. 11 & 12, 18 & 19, 25 & 26
6:30, 7, or 7:30pm Start Time

BEECHWOOD FARMS
NATURE RESERVE

Delight in our annual autumn experience as fireflies guide you on our trails to encounter larger-than-life costumed nocturnal creatures. Register now at aswp.org or by calling (412) 963-6100.



AUDUBON
WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

614 Dorseyville Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15238-1618

SHOP AUDUBON NATURE STORES

FOR EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO
ENJOY THE BIRDS THIS FALL/!

Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

614 Dorseyville Road in Fox Chapel / 412-963-6100
Tuesday–Sunday from 9am–5pm

Buffalo Creek Nature Park

154 Monroe Road in Sarver / 724-295-3589
Tuesday–Sunday from 9am–5pm

Succop Nature Park

185 W. Airport Road in Butler / 724-586-2591
Tuesday–Sunday from 9am–5pm



Cardinal

JOIN US FOR NATURE STORE SPECIAL EVENTS

**Members' Sale and Holiday Shopping
Kickoff at Audubon Nature Stores**

Saturday, November 9, 9am–5pm

ASWP members, this day is for you! Get a head start on your holiday shopping and find the perfect gifts for all the nature lovers on your list—and maybe an item for yourself, too! During the sale, ASWP members receive 20% off* merchandise in any of our three Nature Stores, located at Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve, Succop Nature Park, and Buffalo Creek Nature Park. PS: Don't miss our special store programming at each location!

**20% discount excludes optics, birdseed, and select artwork.*

ASWP MEMBERS CAN ENJOY EXTRA DEALS!

During the month of December, ASWP members will enjoy extra deals on seasonal merchandise at Audubon Nature Stores. Follow our Facebook page for info on these special savings! [Facebook.com/AudubonWesternPA](https://www.facebook.com/AudubonWesternPA).