

Outdoor Explorer Series

Speaker Series

February

Date: Saturday, February 7th at 2:30 p.m.

Title: Spring Snow Goose Migration Hike

Description: Join the Keystone Trails Association on a short, guided hike on the Millstone Trail (approximately 1 mile) to discuss Middle Creek history, the snow goose migration, and other natural wonders. Be sure to dress appropriately for rigorous outdoor activity and the weather. Additional trails are available nearby if you would like to hike more after the guided portion has concluded. Meet at the White Oak Parking Lot and bring your binoculars!

Date: Wednesday, February 11th at 6:30 p.m.

Title: Earl L. Poole and Maurice Broun: Berks County's Original Alpha Birders

Description: The Reading Public Museum's ornithologist and artist Earl L. Poole and Hawk Mountain Sanctuary's first curator Maurice Broun had a decades-long friendship - and rivalry - that began in the 1934 founding of the sanctuary and ended with Poole's death in 1972. Through their journal entries and published works along with contemporary photographs, Bill Uhrich examines the tensions between the two birders over Poole's groundbreaking research into the hawk migration along the Kittatinny Ridge during the shooting era at Hawk Mountain from 1929 to 1933 and Broun's observations during the first season at the sanctuary in the fall of 1934.

March

Date: Saturday, March 7th from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Title: Woodcock and Waterfowl

Description: Lancaster County Bird Club Board Member, John Lahr, will lead a late afternoon and evening field trip to Middle Creek for woodcock and waterfowl. The main objective of this trip will be to hear and/or view the courtship display of the American Woodcock. The group will visit an area where there is an opportunity to hear and view this unique event. Some time before dusk will be spent scanning the lake and surrounding habitat for waterfowl and other birds that might be in the area. Winter visitors may include Short-eared Owls and Northern Harriers. Meet at the Visitors Center parking area at 4:30

p.m. Visitors Center facilities are only available until 4 p.m., portable toilets are also available onsite.

Date: Wednesday, March 11th at 6:30 p.m.

Title: Cradle of Conservation: An Environmental History of Pennsylvania

Description: From the origins of “Penn’s Woods” to the evolution of working landscapes and conservation practices, this event will provide an engaging overview of Pennsylvania’s environmental history. The speaker will explore the state’s “working landscapes” and the people, places, and policies that connect the problems of the past to today’s pressing issues. The talk will especially highlight the origins of Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area and its connection to the state’s conservation and environmental movements.

April

Date: Wednesday, April 8th at 6:30 p.m. in the Auditorium

Title: Cerulean Warbler Habitat in the Kittatinny Ridge

Description: Cerulean Warblers, once widespread in the eastern U.S., have declined by about 70% since 1966 due to habitat loss and degradation. The Kittatinny Ridge Conservation Landscape (KRCL) provides critical breeding habitat, and targeted forest management—such as shelterwood harvests, canopy gap creation, and crop tree release—has been implemented to restore the structural diversity these birds need. As a designated climate refugia, the ridge also helps buffer biodiversity from the impacts of climate change, supporting long-term resilience for forest-dwelling species.

Date: Saturday, April 18th at 10:00 a.m. (Rain Date: April 25th)

Title: Prescribed Fire Festival

Description: Discover the benefits of prescribed fire and get to watch one live! Habitat managers will be on hand to answer questions and to display the equipment that enables the safe use of fire as a natural management tool for forests and fields. Guided walks to other burn units and a food truck will be available! This event has a rain date, so keep an eye out for last minute event information. Call the Middle Creek Visitors Center for more information.

May

Date: Wednesday, May 13th at 6:30 PM in the Auditorium

Title: Stewarding for Biodiversity

Description: Todd Bauman, Director of Stewardship for Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, will take us ‘behind the scenes’ of the inner workings of what it takes to manage Hawk Mountain Sanctuary for its intended purpose, protection of ALL wildlife. The job of stewarding wildlands has many challenges, and those challenges are increased when hosting an annual 60,000 visitors and a public road dividing the property.

Date: Saturday, May 23rd at 1:00 p.m.

Title: Wildlife Photography in the Field

Description: This program, featuring photographer Joe Endy, covers choosing the right cameras, lenses, and settings used for outdoor wildlife photography. Get tips on locating and photographing different wildlife depending on the subject, area, and weather conditions. Bring your own camera or learn from others using theirs.

June

Date: Wednesday, June 10th at 6:30 p.m.

Title: Wildlife Corridors and Conservation Connectivity in Pennsylvania

Description: Join us for a conversation about wildlife corridors in Pennsylvania with State Representative Mary Jo Daley. With Pennsylvania having the fifth largest highway system and ranking as second for wildlife-vehicle collisions, there was a need to reduce the number of wildlife-vehicle collisions. Her legislation initiated a study of existing corridors as a step to create safer roads for people and large and small animals.

Date: Saturday, June 27th at 10:00 a.m.

Title: Exploring the American Longrifle

Description: John D. Beck comes from a long line of Pennsylvania gunmakers, including one who made a flintlock that was given to George Washington in the late 1700s. Join us in celebrating the longrifle’s history and heritage throughout America’s 250 years with a display of original rifles and examples of the carving process.

July

Date: Wednesday, July 8th at 6:30 p.m.

Title: The Lebanon Valley Conservancy: Conservation in your Community

Description: Lebanon Valley Conservancy's Executive Director, Abigail Harvey will be visiting Middle Creek to share information about TLVC's history and how to get involved locally. Current projects will be explored in conserving our landscapes such as along the Kittatinny Ridge and Sentinel Landscapes.

Date: Saturday, July 18th at 10:00 a.m.

Title: Middle Creek BioBlitz

Description: Explore the diversity of life at Middle Creek by partaking in an activity called a BioBlitz! Attendees will be meeting at the Visitors Center for a short tutorial on downloading and utilizing the iNaturalist app to observe and record species. Groups will set out to different habitats in search of different species, then return to review the results! This program will last approximately 3 hours. Dress for outdoor activity.

August

Date: Wednesday, August 12th at 6:30 p.m.

Title: Highlighting Migration Strategies of the Northern Saw-whet Owl using Motus

Description: Join us to learn how utilizing the power of automated radio telemetry and a dense network of receivers strategically placed throughout eastern North America, tells us about the migration strategies and movement patterns of Northern Saw-whet Owls. No study to date has produced multi-year telemetry data at the regional scale for the species. This exciting research fills knowledge gaps of their winter behavior, spring migration timing, and attempts to describe their migratory connectivity and annual cycle behaviors.

Date: Saturday, August 15th at 9:00 a.m.

Title: Hummingbird Banding Demonstration

Description: Join us for an exploration of the world of hummingbirds. Learn about the biology of these birds and which flowers they prefer in our Visitors Center's gardens. A federally licensed bird bander will be on hand to catch, band and then release some of the hummingbirds that frequent the gardens.

September

Date: Saturday, September 5th from 12-3 p.m.

Title: Deer Processing Workshop

Description: Processing and butchering a deer you harvest can be quite a barrier to the new and even seasoned hunter. Join Game Commission staff at a hands-on workshop where you will be guided through processing a deer. Processing tools provided. Limited to 25 processing trainees. Contact the Visitors Center to sign up. Participants must be 18 years of age or older.

Date: Wednesday, September 9th at 6:30 p.m.

Title: Ticks and Tickborne Diseases of Pennsylvania - What You Need to Know

Description: This program provides an in-depth look at the ticks commonly found across Pennsylvania and the pathogens they carry. This talk will highlight how ticks spread disease, current trends in tick activity and distribution, and practical steps for prevention and personal protection. The presentation will also discuss the Pennsylvania Tick Research Laboratory's free tick testing program, which helps residents identify tick species and potential pathogens while supporting ongoing surveillance and research.

October

Date: Saturday, October 3rd at 10:00 a.m.

Title: A Walk in Penn's Woods

Description: Join a guided hike that's part of a statewide event! This walk participants on a short journey through Penn's Woods to learn more about forestry, wildlife habitat, ecosystem services, history, and much more! You'll leave looking at forests in a new way!

Date: Wednesday, October 14th at 6:30 p.m.

Title: Life, it's all about the Journey: 50 Years in a Log Cabin in Lycoming County

Description: Robert and Dottie Webber lived in a one room, log cabin without electricity or running water for over 50 years in the mountains of Lycoming County Pennsylvania. Robert Webber was born in Schaeffertown. Their lifestyle was simple, but inspiring to generations of families, friends, and colleagues. The Webbers believed that it is the journey, not the destination, that brings true meaning and satisfaction to life. Join Jeff Swingholm, the Director of the documentary that follows the life of Robert and Dottie called "Mountain Souls." Screenings of the documentary will be shown at Middle Creek throughout the year.

November

Date: Wednesday, November 11th at 6:30 p.m.

Title: American Chestnut Restoration

Description: After the functional extinction of the American chestnut, many restoration efforts have taken place using different strategies to try to create a resistance to the invasive blight responsible for the tree's demise. This program will review the biotechnology involved in the chestnut restoration program and the approval status of the "Darling," a blight tolerant pure American chestnut. Regulation and launch of the blight tolerant American chestnut is expected in 2026.

Date: Saturday, November 14th at 1:00 p.m.

Title: Primitive Survival Skills

Description: Join us for an immersive wilderness survival workshop, connecting with the natural world in a new way, while learning timeless outdoor skills. The workshop begins with a guided field walk focused on identifying and responsibly harvesting useful wild plants. Then, put your knowledge into practice with hands-on instruction in essential survival techniques, including fire-by-friction and natural cordage making. You'll build new skills and also take home the handmade tools and materials you create yourself. Perfect for adventurers, nature enthusiasts, and anyone seeking self-reliance in the wild! Dress for the weather and bring a sturdy, non-folding knife if you have one. This event is limited to 15 attendees. Please contact the Visitors Center to RSVP in advance.

December

Date: Saturday, December 5th at 10:00 a.m.

Title: What to do When You Get Lost

Description: People can get lost while recreating for all kinds of reasons. What can be a terrifying and confusing situation can happen to anyone. Middle Creek Search and Rescue (MIDSAR) will be explaining the common how's and why's of getting lost, and how to best avoid and prepare for those situations. Additional demonstrations will take place such as emergency shelter building, navigation, and K9 use.

Date: Wednesday, December 9th at 6:30 p.m.

Title: Snowshoe Hares in Pennsylvania

Description: Snowshoe hares are a truly unique and elusive wildlife resource in Pennsylvania. One of about 20 species in the entire world that transitions to white in winter to camouflage with snow, the snowshoe hare appears to be in decline in Pennsylvania. The

Game Commission to working to better understand how they can benefit this species through management and conservation.