



**PEEC**

**Pocono Environmental  
Education Center**

# Seasons

Autumnal Equinox 2020

A Quarterly Publication to Advance Environmental Literacy

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**Pocono Environmental  
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## Hidden Gems-Walpack Ridge

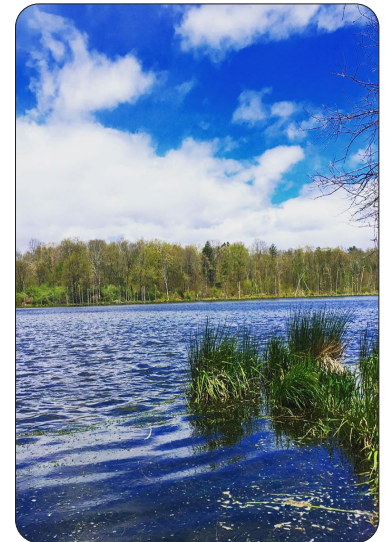
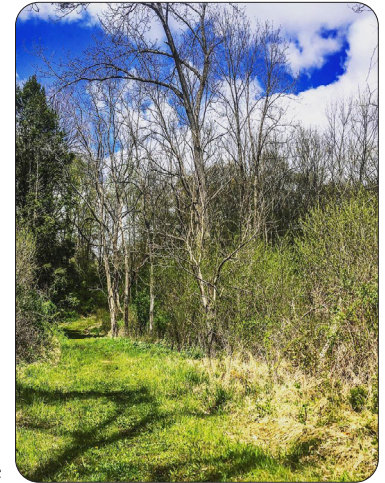
*By George Johnson*

Welcome back to another addition of our Hidden Gems series. As some of you might be aware, this started as a video series on our social media accounts during the beginning of the pandemic. With our trails and center re-opening, I just haven't had the time to go out and film, but I did quite a bit of scouting throughout the park that I can certainly share with everyone. Now, the purpose of this series is to introduce folks to some of the lesser known areas of the park so that families/individuals can spread out a little more and not be confined to the more popular spots. Everyone is surely already aware that Dingmans Falls, Raymondskills Falls, and Mt. Tammany are entirely full and booked by midday on the weekends. This series will hopefully provide park visitors some well-informed back-up plans in the event that you arrive a little late to a destination that's already jammed packed.

For this addition, I went out and explored the Walpack Ridge trail over in NJ. This is a 3-mile loop and rated by the park as moderate, but I found it to be on the easier end. There really aren't many large hills to travel up or down along the way (maybe one larger hill to get on top of the ridge). The majority of the trail is very well forested and shady, and 3 miles is a great length of time that should take most folks about 2-2.5 hours. The main focus of the trail however, is the lake that the trail encompasses. It's a gorgeous lake and the trail provides many great views of it as you hike. Its views are especially great because the trail sits up on the ridge and the lake is down below at the bottom of the ridge. So, while you cannot physically go down to the lake, the trail provides many scenic overviews of the lake.

About half way through the loop, the Walpack Ridge connects with the old Military Rd. This trail does have a little bit of history, but it's fairly easy to see why it is named Military Rd. Back in the French and Indian War, along with the Revolutionary War, this road was used by soldiers to get over the initial ridge to get to and from the river. Because of that, the road is larger and has a gravel base, making this stretch the easiest part to hike. Just make sure to make the turn back onto the Walpack Ridge trail, otherwise you'll be heading all the way down to the Walpack Center. The back half of the loop is probably my favorite section of the trail though. Along the way back, the trail winds through a hemlock forest. Hemlocks clear away a lot of the undergrowth, making it very easy to see the surrounding forest. The return trip, in my point of view, also seemed to go a little faster than the first half.

The entire time I was out on the trail, I did not come across a single other person. The entire time I was completely on my own, which is exactly what I wanted. To get there, the entrance to the trail is all the way at the end of Thunder Mountain Rd, which is right off of Kuhn Rd and just past Peter's Valley. You can also access the Walpack Ridge Trail via the Military Rd on Old Mine Rd, however, I'm not sure exactly where that is or how those ends of Military Rd look. Just make sure to remember to be respectful on the trails and come prepared; there are no bathrooms while you're out there either. If you know of any other places that haven't been explored, then please don't hesitate to let us know! I'm always on the lookout for new places to go hiking.



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## Executive Director Message Fall 2020

By: Jeff Rosalsky

The past few months at PEEC have been vastly different than any other time in my 11 years as Executive Director. As I write these words, however, I am thinking to myself that the same thing could have been said in other Seasons messages. In fact, if things weren't vastly different between these quarterly messages then life would have been incredibly boring and I wouldn't have been doing my job. In my time at PEEC we survived Hurricane Irene, Super Storm Sandy, Winter Storms Riley and Quinn, killer Eric Frein at large, the Financial Crisis, Federal Government shutdowns and probably a few things that seemed momentous at the time, but that I have forgotten. The world throws things at us, it shifts slowly and then suddenly, life changes, we all adapt and hopefully learn. The best that we can do is to influence the things we can for the better and adapt to the events over which we have no control. Instead of dwelling on the loss, the key is to make sure that we prevent further or future losses and then get to solving the problem. Every hardship is a lesson in resilience and an opportunity for creativity and compassion.

In this crisis, the Governor of Pennsylvania and the National Park Service instructed us to close PEEC and its trails for the safety of all. Thousands of students missed an amazing hand-on learning opportunity. Once we were allowed to reopen, however, we made every effort to offer as many of our programs as possible with all appropriate CDC, ACA and Commonwealth safety precautions in place. We were able to run virtual programs, in-person summer day camp, Sci-Q Project STEM camp, our Farm to Table dinner and we have had scout groups and Family Camp Weekends. Yes, we have reopened our trails and even added a few midweek guided hikes and pond paddles. Everything is not the same, but the incredible PEEC staff has been able to make it work and get children and adults to enjoy the outdoors and learn despite a pandemic. If anything, the natural world has become a refuge. The trees, wildlife and the Delaware River itself don't care about COVID-19. It has had no effect on them, other than more of the weird two legged creatures walking about and excess trash left in the woods—don't get me started on that. From their perspective, it is really life as usual. There is some irony in this. Usually, it is we humans forcing nature to adapt to our whims, of land development, stripping out natural resources, putting in roads, polluting—you know—the good things that make our lives "better." Now it is we humans that need to adapt for our species survival with masks and distancing and cleaning. Hopefully, when there is a vaccine in the not too distant future, we will not forget what a challenge adaptation is and the cost of lives lost in the process. Maybe we can all be a little gentler with the natural world and not make her work so hard to adapt to changes we humans want, but don't necessarily need.



## IN PURSUIT OF GRANTS

Does your employer support  
charitable giving?

PEEC is always looking to partner with companies that share our vision of a sustainable future. If your company has a charitable or foundational giving program, please let us know if you would be willing to write a letter of support on our behalf. Your backing of PEEC's work means the world to us and will help maintain the work we do. Together, we can foster the next generation of environmental stewards to help create a sustainable future for all.







## Unwritten Rules of Outdoor Recreation

By Derek Scott

While nothing about COVID-19 has been positive over the past several months, if you were going to look for a silver lining, it might be that now more than ever, people are flocking to the outdoors. This surge of interest in exploration and adventure has been a boon for environmentally focused organizations and has helped lead to initiatives like the “Great American Outdoors Act”. But with the good comes the bad and with lots of new outdoor enthusiasts taking to the trails and waterways, it’s becoming apparent that many of the “unwritten rules of the outdoors” may need to be spelled out.



### KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Before you go anywhere to recreate, make sure to check the status of where you’re traveling. Certain trails and parks may have restrictions on the hours or days they’re open. If they’re closed, go somewhere else - the same goes for areas that are overcrowded. It’s best to always have a back-up.



### PLAN AHEAD

This goes hand in hand with “Know Before You Go”. Having a plan of where to go with back-ups in case of closures or overcrowding is always a good idea. It’s also important to make sure you’re prepared with what you may need during your outing. This includes things like extra clothing depending on the weather, plenty of water, some snacks, sunscreen and bug spray. With restrictions in place due to COVID-19, it’s also worth making sure you pack a mask and some hand sanitizer.



### KNOW YOUR LIMITS

When you plan ahead or consider an outing, it’s important to keep in mind your own limitations and when in doubt, play it safe. That strenuous 3-mile hike to some waterfalls might sound like a great idea, but are you prepared with proper footwear? Is this in the scope of your typical outing, or something that might be more challenging? Do you have extra water to compensate for the heat? If you’re on the fence about whether or not to go, opt into something else. Not only are you potentially putting yourself at risk for injury, but you’re also jeopardizing the well-being of emergency responders.



### LEAVE NO TRACE

This is not exclusive to trash and recycling and includes any lasting human impact. When people recreate, they want to see the untarnished beauty of the natural world. Things like campfires in undesignated areas or stone cairns along riverways really diminish the experience for other users. Remember to take only photos, leave only footprints, and kill only time.



### MUTUAL RESPECT

Respecting others is probably the golden rule of outdoor recreation. Just like you, these other individuals are trying to escape everyday life and enjoy the many health benefits of spending time outside. Be mindful of that fact and make sure you treat others the same way you’d like to be treated while in the great outdoors.



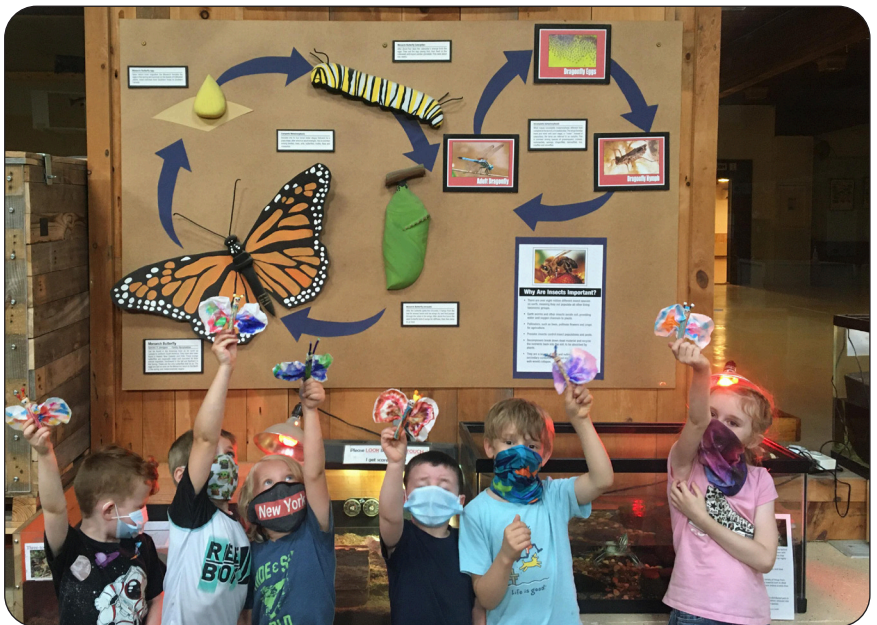
# THANK YOU! FROM A GRATEFUL (AND TIRED) CAMP DIRECTOR

By Stephanie Sherman



To all of my camp families, I owe a huge “Thank you” for making this summer a success. If you asked me about summer in April, all I could say at that time was “we are hoping camp happens.” Nathan and I bit our nails and crossed out fingers as we poured over COVID-19 protocols from the American Camp Association. We scoured the CDC website recommendation for summer camps and child care centers, looking for everything we needed to do to keep our campers safe. In the end, we decided we could run camp. Maybe not quite like normal, field trips and group events were out, but PEEC had the space and the small size to make it work.

Now I sit at the end of our ninth week of summer camp, with one last big week ahead of us that would finish our normal camp season. My heart is full even if my body is tired. I feel like this year I’ve been able to get to know our camp kids even better by seeing them personally every single morning for health check-ins. Yes, it’s been a little redundant some weeks as we couldn’t take kids to Akenac or head out in the vans to explore the park, but seeing the friendship that have grown amongst our campers is priceless.







Has it been a tough summer? Yes, masks, social distancing, and cleaning to an extreme has been a huge adjustment. I have no regrets encouraging all of our kids to mask up if that means they could share a table to socialize over crafts and games; and as the school year approaches, all of our kids are mask capable for heading to class. To all the parents who helped support our efforts in safety, my heart is truly grateful for your support as we found this new balance of normal.

This also been a record summer for us. Our enrollment numbers have matched and topped all the summers I've previously seen here at PEEC. I hope that all of the friends and families who found us in these trouble times will continue to return for an even better summer next year after the pandemic (hopefully) concludes. To all of the families that decided to stay home this year, thank you for doing what was best for your family and I hope you'll return to PEEC to see an even bigger family of camp friends. To all of our attending families, thank you as well for helping to keep us all safe. Whether it was daily updates on your kids sniffles or your emails of kind words, your support for our program helped make us great. Thank you so much and I hope to see you all next summer!







Growing Green - 2018

## A Virtual Summer with Camp Growing Green

By Emma Roth

Since 2010, PEEC has been partnering with Easterseals of Eastern PA to host Camp Growing Green, a residential camp for youths and adults with special needs. During my first year at PEEC, as a new instructor, I was nervous and slightly intimidated to have been assigned as PEEC liaison for the 2018 camp. I had no experience working with special needs campers, and was not sure what I was about to get myself into. It turned out to be the most fun camp experience I have ever had. In 2019, I had become Program Planner here at PEEC, and while excited and happy with the new position, I felt a twinge of disappointment knowing that I couldn't be Growing Green's "PEEC Person" again. That didn't stop me from attending all weekly talent shows and enjoying the delicious baked good prepared lovingly by the campers.

Then 2020 hit. It was a rough season. Schools and groups cancelled left and right, PEEC was shut down and barricaded, and we were told Camp Growing Green was not happening. I think everyone at PEEC was bummed out by that. Growing Green has become such an integral part of our summers, and something we all look forward to. However, the safety of the campers was, as always, the most important aspect of camp, so Easterseals made the right decision to call it off. At least, I thought it was called off. That was until I got a call from Karissa, Director of Camp Growing Green, to ask if we could partner with them again for a virtual camp season.

So, for the 2020 season, I have had the absolute pleasure of being Growing Green's "PEEC Person" once again. For an hour or two every day, Karissa came to PEEC and we streamed activities to the campers together. Camp was definitely different this year. The group is smaller and the days are shorter, but seeing the camper's faces became a bright spot in what was, let's face it, a pretty dark year. There were also new challenges to virtual camp (which were all handled expertly by Karissa), as I'm sure everyone holding similar programs faced. We dealt with lost craft supplies, internet problems, and power outages. Despite these issues, spending time with Growing Green never failed to put a smile on my face. We played games, made crafts, and learned about critters around PEEC. The campers met our EcoZone animals, went on scavenger hunts around the building, and even ate s'mores around a campfire. Mixed into all these activities was the joking, story-telling, and general shenanigans that are at the heart of every camp experience.



Growing Green - 2020



Growing Green - 2018



Growing Green - 2020

# OWL PROWL

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24  
7PM - 8:30PM

## \$5 PER PERSON



# AUTUMN PROGRAMS AND GETAWAYS

**PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED  
Unless otherwise indicated.**

## TO REGISTER:

Call PEEC at 570-828-2319

**Please check [www.peec.org](http://www.peec.org) for  
program updates.**



## OCTOBER

**Columbus Day Family Camp Weekend**  
October 9-12

Adults \$225 / Child, Commuter, Day Rates  
Available

Bring your friends and family to experience PEEC in the splendor of autumn. Animal presentations, canoeing & kayaking, nature hikes, crafts, campfire and more! Price includes three nights of lodging and meals from Friday dinner through Monday lunch.

**Owl Prowl**

Saturday, October 24 – 7:00pm-8:30pm  
\$5

Pennsylvania is home to a number of different species of owls. There are a handful of different species that live around PEEC. Let's explore and see who we can find!

**Signs of Fall Hike**

Sunday, October 25 – 10:00am-12:00pm  
\$5

Take a hike with us and discover the science behind the wonderful season of fall. We'll discuss changing animal behavior, why leaves change color, and why it's the best season to be out and about!

**Animal Tracking**

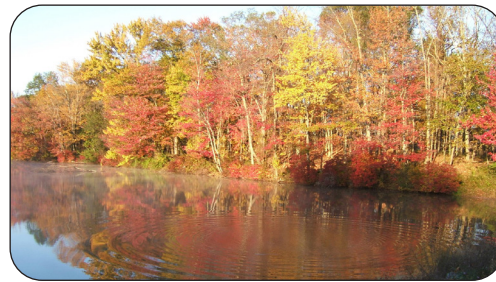
Sunday, October 25 – 1:00pm-3:00pm  
\$5

Animals leave behind clues that give us glimpses into their lives. Explore our natural areas for tracks, trails, scat, territory marks, chew marks, and other signs animals leave as they travel through the fields and forests of the Poconos.

**Girl Scout Badge Festival**

Saturday, October 31 – 9:30am-4:00pm  
\$25 Full Day

Brownies will work on their Hiker and Letterbox badges. Juniors will participate in Camper badge work. Cadettes will work on the Primitive Camper badge and Seniors on their Adventurer badge. Overnight options are available for all ages, ask for more information! Payment is required at registration. Space is limited - call early! Overnight accommodations with meals are available for \$43/person.



## NOVEMBER

**Animal Tracking**

Sunday, November 1 – 1:00-3:00pm  
\$5

Animals leave behind clues that give us glimpses into their lives. Explore our natural areas for tracks, trails, scat, territory marks, chew marks, and other signs animals leave as they travel through the fields and forests of the Poconos.

**BSA Scout Badge Festival**

Saturday, November 7 – 9:30am-4:00pm  
\$25 Full Day

Bears and Webelos will participate in our Scout Ranger program. Scouts will work on the Nature merit badge (pre-req 4.a.2, 4.d.1- collect 10 insects/spiders). Payment is required at registration. Space is limited - call early! Overnight accommodations with meals are available for \$43/person.



**Fire Building**

Sunday, November 8 – 10:00am-12:00pm  
\$5

Learn some primitive and modern fire making skills. Try your hand at a flint & steel and more! Ages 10+ please.

**Beginner Conservation Photography**  
Sunday, November 8 – 1:00-3:00pm  
\$5

Learn some beginner techniques on how to frame a picture, and we'll take you out to practice those skills on our campus. Great for children and those starting from scratch. Participants will need a camera for pictures, even a phone camera will do!

**Flying Needles – Fiber Arts UFOs**  
November 12-15

\$280 Full Workshop-Call us for day rates Join other crafters while finishing your knitting, crocheting, quilting, or other fiber art works-in-progress (WIPs). Or, start a new project if you are short on Un-finished Objects (UFOs). Includes lodging and meals!

**Signs of Fall Hike**

Sunday, November 15 – 1:00pm-3:00pm  
\$5

Take a hike with us and discover the science behind the wonderful season of fall. We'll discuss changing animal behavior, why leaves change color, and why it's the best season to be out and about!



*Continued on Page 8*



Continued from page 7

## NOVEMBER



Ecozone Discovery Room!  
Saturday, November 21 – 1:00pm-4:00pm  
\$2 per person  
Climb into a bald eagle's nest, crawl into a bat cave, explore a beaver lodge, and dig in a fossil pit! Explore this indoor discovery room and enjoy hands-on exhibits on natural history, sustainability and the local environment. No registration required.

Game Dinner  
Saturday, November 21 – 6:00pm-8:00pm  
\$35/person  
Enjoy the bounty of the season at PEEC's 10th annual game dinner! This dinner features local game and seasonal harvests. Bring your friends & family to enjoy this cozy evening.  
*\*Recommended ages 14+.* \*Call early to guarantee a seat.

Vacation Nature Camp: Tour De Park  
Monday, November 30 – 9:00am-4:00pm  
\$40 per Child  
Fall is the perfect time for a field trip to see all of our favorite waterfalls and hiking trails. We'll spend a day visiting Grey Towers and other fun places around the park!

## DECEMBER

DIY Birdfeeders  
Saturday, December 5 – 10:00am-12:00pm  
\$5  
Spend the morning putting together your own unique and custom bird feeder from a variety of recycled materials. The local birds will appreciate it through the cold winter months. We'll provide everything you need, but you are welcome to bring your own supplies. Great craft for children.

Ecozone Discovery Room!  
Saturday, December 5 – 1:00pm-4:00pm  
\$2 per person  
Climb into a bald eagle's nest, crawl into a bat cave, explore a beaver lodge, and dig in a fossil pit! Explore this indoor discovery room and enjoy hands-on exhibits on natural history, sustainability and the local environment. No registration required.



Winter Ecology Hike  
Sunday, December 6 – 10:00am-12:00pm  
\$5

Learn how different plants and animals survive the winter. Join us on a hike and experience PEEC in the wintertime. All ages welcome.

Holiday Bows and Boughs  
Sunday, December 6 – 1:00pm-4:00pm  
\$20 per wreath  
Create your own holiday decorations using natural materials! We provide evergreen boughs and materials for you to make wreaths, swags, and table decor. Come join us as we introduce making swags from hangers. You can also bring your own supplies and decorations – we'll bring the music, drinks, and snacks! Preregistration is required for this program.

Wacky Science Adventures  
Saturday, December 12 – 1:00pm-3:00pm  
\$5

Put on your lab coats and prepare to conduct some crazy experiments! We'll get to create your very own slime, oobleck, and attempt to launch a rocket into space. All ages welcome.

Vacation Nature Camp: Snow Survival  
Monday, December 28 – 9:00am-4:00pm  
\$40 per Child  
Animals survive, can your camper? Join us and learn the secrets to winter shelters and fire building.

Vacation Nature Camp: Science and Spells  
Tuesday, December 29 – 9:00am-4:00pm  
\$40 per Child  
Spend a day concocting new creations and performing weird experiments! Bottle rockets and wands are camp classics!



**Some jokes to  
brighten your day,  
make you smile &  
possibly laugh.**

*Compiled by Kirsten Larick*

**What is a snake's favorite subject?**  
Hiss-story.

**How can you get down  
from a tree?**  
You can't – down comes from  
a duck.

**Why can't pine trees sew?**  
They always drop their needles.

**What kind of music do  
frog's listen to?**  
Hip hop.

**How can you learn more about  
spiders that live in the rainforest?**  
Check out their web site.

**What do bears do when they are  
having a bad day in the forest?**  
Grin and bear it.

**What did one worm say  
to the other?**  
Where in the Earth have you been?

**How do porcupines play leapfrog?**  
Very carefully.

**Why don't bats live alone?**  
They like to hang around with  
their friends.



# ANIMAL TRACKING

OCTOBER 25, 2020 • 1-3PM

**\$5** PER  
PERSON

