

A Quarterly Publication to Advance Environmental Literacy

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## Pocono Environmental Education Center

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Grizzled Skipper ©2007 Jeffery Pippen

# Appalachian Grizzled Skipper Conservation Efforts at PEEC

By Derek Scott

The Appalachian Grizzled Skipper (*Pyrgus centaureae wyandot*) was once spread throughout much of the Mid-Atlantic, but coming across one of these butterflies now is a rare occurrence. Over the last several decades, heavy pesticide use to combat gypsy moths and mosquitos has had devastating impacts on the population of this species. These impacts are so widespread that throughout its historic range, this

butterfly is listed as critically imperiled and potentially extirpated in some regions. In our area alone, some of the last recorded observations were over 30 years ago.

Despite being on the edge of extinction, there may still be hope for the Appalachian Grizzled Skipper. Throughout the Mid-Atlantic, conservation organizations and concerned individuals are working to identify suitable habitats where this species could thrive. More specifically, they're looking for habitats where the Appalachian Grizzled Skipper's host plant, Dwarf Cinquefoil (*Potentilla canadensis*), grows in relative abundance. This cinquefoil species is not uncommon throughout much of the skipper's historic range, but needs to be present in an area free of pesticide use.

This is where PEEC comes in. In the spring of 2019, we'll be working with local Girl Scout, Olivia Baldwin, to restore habitat for the Appalachian Grizzled Skipper here on our property. As part of her Gold Award Project, Olivia has been working with local organizations and communities to organize large plantings of Dwarf Cinquefoil. Together, we believe that PEEC's location in a national park will serve as the perfect pesticide-free environment to allow the Appalachian Grizzled Skipper population to rebound. In addition, we hope that our combined efforts, coupled with PEEC's history of environmental education for over 24,000 annual visitors, will help spark more interest in similar conservation efforts throughout the region.



Dwarf Cinquefoil

By Jomegat - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4156608

Winter Solstice 2018



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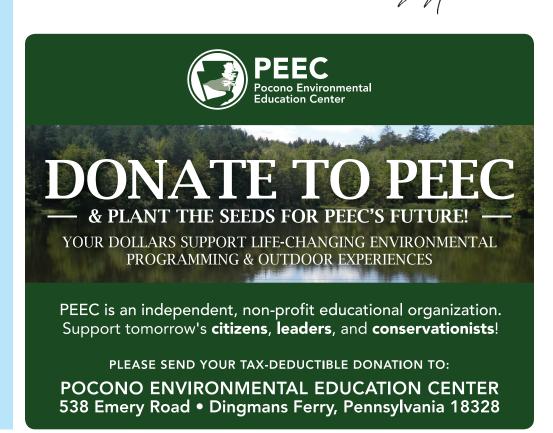


## Message from the Executive Director

Those of you who have been following and supporting PEEC's work over the years may already know, but PEEC is a non-profit that receives no government operating support for the environmental education work we do. Instead, our ongoing operations rely on user fees, heavily subsidized by grants, private donations, the National Park Service's partnership which allows us to use the PEEC buildings, and our fundraising activities.

Like many non-profits, over the years PEEC has organized large fundraising galas—most recently a series of amazing Wild Things Balls. Last year, however, we decided to forgo the gala and undertake a fundraiser named "100 for \$1000," where we ask 100 donors to give PEEC a gift of \$1000 or more—without any event or party or auction. The concept was triggered by the money we, and other non-profits in the area, were spending to host gala events. Catering, rentals, marketing and staff time, not to mention all the volunteer hours, consume half the revenues of these events and distract our staff from their primary goal of education. PEEC's 100 for \$1000 fundraiser, on the other hand, allows 100% of the donations to go to supporting PEEC programs for underserved youth. In the first year of 100 for \$1000, we raised \$100,000 and in 2018, as I am writing this, we are approaching our goal again—but it is still not too late if you want to contribute.

While I miss the PEEC Wild Things Balls because they were fantastic parties, the 100 for \$1000 is just a more efficient way of raising money for PEEC –and the donations go straight to supporting programming. Besides, PEEC's 50th anniversary is coming up in 2022 -- and that deserves a really great party.





### Hiking Tips for Beginners

By George Johnson

PEEC sees a large number of hikers and visitors throughout the year, roughly 25,000 people total in 2018. People from all across the country have visited here, and it's easy to see why. A brand new visitor can essentially pick and choose what kind of experience they'd like to have here. Want a short but intense hike? Go for Fossil Trail. Have young children? Give Two Ponds a try. Here for the waterfalls? Venture down Tumbling Waters then. Believe it or not; however, the majority of hikers who visit here are relatively new to the outdoors experience. There's nothing wrong with being a beginner; PEEC is a fantastic place to learn after all. Unfortunately, even at PEEC there is the occasional group of hikers who come across trouble that could have been avoided. It's nothing to be ashamed about; I've gotten myself into some tricky situations too, but here are some general tips that every hiker should be aware of before starting a new adventure.

#### 1). Do Your Research

Whenever you are hoping to explore someplace new, it's always important to put as much time and effort into researching the trail or park as possible. The more that you can research, the more you can prepare. Most parks have a website with a trail map and short descriptions of each of their trails. While the descriptions may not describe every turn and hill in the trail, they do offer a general snapshot about what to expect with the notable features. At PEEC, visitors can also check in and ask additional questions at our main office which is open every day from 8:30am-4:30pm. Our staff is very knowledgeable and extremely familiar with our trails and will be able to make the best recommendations for new explorers.



#### 2). Check The Forecast

Weather can be unpredictable, just go ask any meteorologist. A bright and sunny morning can quickly turn into a miserable and cloudy afternoon. I've heard plenty of horror stories about hikers who have gotten caught in snowstorms or heavy downpours. Sometimes it is a freak incident that couldn't have been avoided, but most times a simple weather check before starting out can do wonders. Additionally, always check up on what time sunset occurs. During the winter, it can get very dark very quickly and catch an unsuspecting hiker in the dark if they are unprepared. There's nothing worse than having to rush towards your vehicle in the fading light.

#### 3). Know your limits

This topic goes hand and hand with doing your research. However, there's only so much research one can do. At some point, you have to just go out and experience the trail in order to really know it. All of the trail descriptions are purposely written rather vaguely since a trail

that might be easy for one person may be difficult for another. It's at that point that knowing and understanding your own personal limits can help. While you're hiking, only you can understand how your body feels. If you need water, then take a sip. Getting a little winded walking up a hill, then take a small break to catch your breath. You are the best judge of your own physical condition and not listening to your own body can lead to disastrous results.





#### 4). Come Prepared

There are always certain items that any and all hikers should have on them regardless of how far their intended hike is. In general, there are 10 essentials that every hiker ought to carry: navigation, headlamp, sun protection, first aid kit, knife, fire, shelter, extra layers, food, and water. Having items on your person that can fulfill these 10 roles can potentially come in real handy if the need ever arises. 99% of the time you'll never need them, but it's that 1% when you do that they show their real worth. There's nothing worse than coming across a situation and not having the right tool for the job, especially when that job involves your own well-being. On the flip-side, there is such a thing as being over-prepared, such as hauling a week's worth of food for a 2 hour hike.

#### 5). Communication

This little advice is something that most people tend to forget about since the advent of cellphones. Everyone has a mobile device and so generally most people can be reached at a moment's notice. However, that is only if you happen to have service. The average person wouldn't believe this, but our main building is notorious for having poor cell service. A good portion of our property has fairly poor service. If an emergency were to happen on the trail, then there's a fairly decent chance that you wouldn't be able to make a phone call for help. So before going anywhere, it's incredibly important to notify friends/family members of where you'll be, what your route is, and how long you plan to be out. That way, if something does happen and you miss your check-in time, then they'll be able to reach out for help in a timely manner.

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## They're Back! And the Fisher is Here to Stay!

By Dennis Miranda

On October 27, 2006, I personally witnessed a large weasel crossing the southbound lane of Route 15 in Sparta Township near Weldon Brook Wildlife Management Area. The large weasel measured nearly 4 feet long and was markedly taller than a housecat; it was a Fisher. The Fisher was fearless as it crossed the highway in broad daylight, even though I knew the Fisher is a nocturnal mammal. After that experience, I kept the sighting to myself. Nobody would ever believe that I had witnessed a ghost from the past. After all, the Fisher had been extinct in the Eastern United States for nearly two hundred years.

But in 2007, while attending a conference, I befriended a young aspiring PhD mammologist from Rutgers University named Charley Contos. We struck up a conversation and I learned that he was now a known celebrity in the scientific world. He had observed and photographed a Fisher at Stokes State Forest in NJ in early October 2006. That was the first documented sighting of a wild Fisher in NJ in over a century.

Apparently, in recent decades, the Fisher has quietly been reclaiming all of its old range in the Eastern United States. But Mankind has also helped. A reintroduction plan, spearheaded by the Pennsylvania Game Commission from 1991-1998, released 190 Fishers in central-northern Pennsylvania. Since then, this member of the weasel family has rapidly spread throughout the Commonwealth, including the Pocono Mountains.

Fishers are powerful, unfussy predators of small mammals, snakes, amphibians, and a favorite, the snowshoe hare which is found in Monroe and Pike Counties. An expert tree climber, the Fisher is one of the few predators to figure out how to kill porcupine for food. To avoid its quills, the Fisher attacks the face of the porcupine. Once killed, the Fisher will make a meal of the porcupine beginning with its soft belly that is bereft of quills.

It was no surprise then, that in the spring of 2018, Lehman Township contacted PEEC with a report that a road killed Fisher was found in Dingmans Ferry. A local taxidermist stuffed the Fisher to a lifelike pose and today, the restored and mounted Fisher rightfully stands amid its brethren of stuffed birds and mammals of the Pocono Mountains in our main building, greeting all who visit.









## SATURDAY JANUARY 19TH 9AM-3PM

Bring a lunch, camera & warm clothes. Call to reserve a seat in the van – Maximum of 20 spaces

\$20 PER PERSON

#### Disfor Dichromatic - A Look at the Screech Owl

By Sheri Bone

**Dichromatic. 'Di' means two. 'Chromatic' is related to color.** So, if the screech owl is dichromatic, does that mean it has two colors? Yes. It can come in a gray 'morph' or a red 'morph.' Screech owls in the eastern United States can usually be found wearing their red outfit. Not red like a cardinal, but reddish brown like a red tailed hawk.

Screech owls, as suggested earlier, are found in the United States and across the North American continent. They are a small owl with yellow eyes. They are only about the size of a robin. They have ear tufts which they usually keep raised. Their beaks are yellowish to greenish. The banded pattern of their feathers gives them a great camouflage when they sit against a tree trunk. In comparison to other owls, the screech owl's feet are large, and their toes are feathered.

Even though they are called "screech" owls, their call is more like a trill or whinny. If you want to hear what one sounds like, go to this link:

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Eastern\_Screech-Owl/sounds.

On the Audubon website, there is a place to listen to the sounds- just scroll down and it's on the right side of the page.

https://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/eastern-screech-owl.

Like many other owls, screech owls hunt for small rodents, but also eat worms, small birds, frogs and lizards. Their hearing is superb: they can hear animals under the snow. "Smart as an owl" pertains to this species because when food is plentiful, screech owls know to find places to store extra food for up to a few days in their nest cavities. While they are usually nocturnal, they are often crepuscular (active at dawn and dusk) but occasionally have been found active during the day. Their usual daytime routine, though, is quiet.

They nest in cavities or nest boxes. They do not dig their own nest cavities so they rely on openings in trees that were made by other animals. They will also readily adopt nest boxes that were placed for other animals. They do not make a neat nest. The female screech owl will lay her eggs on whatever debris is at the bottom of the cavity. She can lay as few as 2 and up to 6 eggs, but usually 3 or 4. During the 4-5 week-long incubation period, mama screech owl will leave the eggs for short periods of time at dawn and dusk. When the babies hatch, though, she stays with them and her mate will bring food for them all. She, however, will tear apart the food to feed to the babies. The young will begin to fledge at about one month old. They will be fed by both parents for about two more months until they are on their own.

Screech owls. Number Five on my list of the Eight Owls that can be found in Pennsylvania. I am learning so much about owls, and need to report that the Cornell Ornithology website and the Audubon Society website have been extremely helpful in my studies.

As a review, A was for Adorable (Saw Whet Owl), B was for Barn and Barred, C for Country Hunter (Short Eared Owl) and D for Dichromatic.

If you want to know what E is for, be sure to check the Spring Seasons Newsletter.



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### Questing, A New Adventure

By Stephanie Sherman

There's a true excitement that comes from learning a new place. Maybe it's the thrill of discovery. The same could also be said for sharing a place with new people. I love being able to share PEEC with visitors because seeing their delight only rekindles the same passion I felt when arriving here. PEEC is a unique place. From our roots in Honeymoon Haven, to our Park partnership, to our custom built EcoZone, there's no other place like PEEC, and I have heard so many people reminisce fondly of their memories here. PEEC is a wonderful example of place-based learning, where people foster both knowledge and an emotional connection to nature. Seeing kids and adults excited to explore PEEC is exactly what Questing is all about.



Armed with a map and clues, the River Valley Waldorf School of Upper Black Eddy, PA piloted the first Questing class. Bundled up and undeterred by the cold October day, they ventured across the campus to solving riddles that would lead them to hidden treasure. "It was awesome!" "You're gonna love it!" the first group of kids shouted as they passed their friends who were about to set off on the same adventure.

Questing is similar to geocaching, but does not require a GPS or electronics to accomplish. Instead, students use deductive reasoning and landmarks to follow the clues to a new location. When they arrive, they must search for a hidden riddle that will fill in another blank to their treasure map and ultimately reveal the location of the treasure. This place-based learning model not only allows kids to explore, but is meant to inspire others to create treasure hunts for their own favorite places.

Sound like fun? Please come and experience it yourself! We have everything set up for a visiting family, homeschool group, or club to embark on their own mini excursion. Just stop by our Front Office for a Quest Map. If you're up for more adventures, Questing has roots in Letterboxing, which uses custom stamps as trophies for each challenge that you complete. For more information, you can look at letterboxing.org and never have to worry about a GPS or what to leave behind in all those caches you may find. Happy exploring!





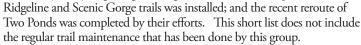
### **Trail Stewards**

By Sheri Bone

For the past three years, PEEC has been the fortunate recipient of the work of very dedicated volunteers known as the DEWA Trail Stewards. These hard working people come to PEEC one weekend a month for 8 months out of the year to upgrade trail conditions. They come from near and far (as far away as Virginia!) to share their talents as they move rocks and logs, trim invasive plants, and keep the trails safe. As a result of this labor of love, they have become fast friends.

So, when tragedy strikes any member of this dedicated group, it is felt deeply by all. This year, two members passed away, and they will be dearly missed. Neil Spear and Greg Molyneux were long time Trail Steward members, as this group has been working together for over a decade. Neil took many pictures of the work crew and their projects. The work they have done has been well-documented because of his efforts. Greg was the Trail Steward leader. It was his job to coordinate projects with the DEWA Trail Crew Supervisor, John Casey, and to communicate details about their PEEC stay to the rest of the Stewards.

If you have hiked any of PEEC's trails, you will have seen the results of the efforts of this group: Tumbling Waters steps and switchbacks were upgraded; a new (very heavy) log bridge leading over the creek that is part of the



The families of both of these men have asked that memorial donations be made to PEEC so that the work of the Trail Stewards will continue. If you choose to do so, just visit PEEC's home page (www.peec.org) and click the "Donate Today" button. There is a place on the donation page to leave a message. Any donations made in Greg's and/or Neil's names will be put into a special "Trail Stewards" fund so food and lodging will be covered when they come back to PEEC in the future.

Thank you, Greg, Neil, and all of the Trail Stewards.



## PEEC Seasons



## PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED Unless otherwise indicated.

#### **TO REGISTER:**

Call PEEC at 570-828-2319

#### **JANUARY**

Cross Country Skiing
Saturdays, January 19 & 26 • 10am -12pm
\$20 adult / \$10 child
Bridge the Gap - Saturday, January 12
FREE Admission\*- 9am - 12pm
Enjoy the winter woods with beginner ski
lessons. Learn the basics of cross country
skiing and practice on our campus. Skis, poles
& boots provided - register w/shoe size to
guarantee a spot. \*Bridge the Gap date funding
provided by the William Penn Foundation.

Ecozone Discovery Room! Saturday, January 12 • 1pm - 4pm \$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.* 

Intro to Snowshoeing Sundays, January 20 & 27 • 10am - 12pm \$10 adult / \$5 child Bridge the Gap - Sunday, January 13 FREE Admission\*

Learn the basics of snowshoeing and enjoy a winter walk through the woods. No experience necessary – we provide the equipment and teach you everything you need to know. Register early to reserve a pair of snowshoes & guarantee a spot. \*Funding for the Bridge the Gap date is provided by the William Penn Foundation.

Animal Tracking
Sunday, January 13 • 1pm - 3pm
\$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.

Eagle Watch Saturday, January 19 • 9am - 3pm \$20

Join us on a trip north in search of eagles and other rare wintering birds. Visit the Mongaup Reservoir, the Delaware River, & the Delaware Highlands Conservancy to look for winter residents and nesting pairs. Bring a lunch, camera & warm clothes. *Call to reserve a seat in the van – Maximum of 20 spaces*.

Winter Ecology Hike Sunday, January 27 • 1 pm - 3 pm \$5

Learn how different plants and animals survive the winter. Enjoy the interactive activities that teach how other living beings have adapted to the cold. Join us on a hike and experience PEEC in the wintertime. *All ages welcome*.

#### **FEBRUARY**

Cross Country Skiing
Saturdays, February 2 & 23 • 10am - 12pm
\$20 adult / \$10 child
Bridge the Gap - Saturday, February 9
FREE Admission\* 9am - 12pm
Enjoy the winter woods with beginner ski
lessons. Learn the basics of cross country skiing
and practice on our campus. Skis, poles & boots
provided - register w/shoe size to guarantee a
spot. \*Bridge the Gap date funding provided by
the William Penn Foundation.

Intro to Snowshoeing Sundays., February 3 & 24 • 10am - 12pm \$10 adult / \$5 child Bridge the Gap - Sunday, February 10 FREE Admission\*

Learn the basics of snowshoeing and enjoy a winter walk through the woods. No experience necessary – we provide the equipment and teach you everything you need to know. Register early to reserve a pair of snowshoes & guarantee a spot. \*Funding for this program is provided by the William Penn Foundation.

Animal Tracking Sunday, February 3 • 1pm - 3pm \$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.

DIY Birdfeeders Saturday, February 9 • 1 pm - 3pm \$5

Spend the morning putting together your own unique and custom bird feeder from a variety of recycled materials just in time for spring. We'll provide everything you need, but you are welcome to bring your own supplies.

Ecozone Discovery Room! Sunday February 10 • 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 Wonderland" Family Camp Presidents Day Weekend: February 15 - 18 Adults \$225 / 25% off ages 7 -10 50% off ages 4 - 6 Free ages 3 and under Bring your friends and family to experience PEEC in the wintertime. Cross country skiing, animal tracking, nature hikes, campfire and more! Price includes three nights of lodging and meals from Friday dinner to Monday lunch. Join us for a wonderful winter weekend! Commuter and day rates available – call for details.

Ecozone Discovery Room!
February 19 - 22 • 1pm - 4pm
\$2 per person / Free for any teacher with a school ID

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.

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## INSPIRED AT PEEC! HELP PEEC CHANGE MORE LIVES



I first discovered PEEC through my first year with the Women in Natural Sciences (WINS) program. WINS takes a select group of girls in Philadelphia and introduces them to future careers in science and other professions by providing hands-on science workshops, career and college exploration, and positive youth development throughout their high school careers. The first summer starts with learning about science in the city and concludes with a weeklong trip to PEEC. It was here that I discovered my love for the outdoors and environmental science.

- Jackie

Jackie is a Pennsylvania native from Philadelphia who has gained an outdoor perspective through PEEC.

- She always excelled in science, but her love for it blossomed in middle school when she joined her school's Science Club.
- She kept science at the forefront of her high school studies with the WINS program, attending after school and field trips during the school year.
- After that first summer, she returned over the course of several summers to
  participate in the Women on the Water program and to be a camp counselor to the Wet
  & Slimies and the Tadpole groups.
- During her junior year, she landed an internship studying human impact on local marshes with the Patrick Center for Environmental Research at the Academy of Natural Sciences
- Because of her experience with WINS and PEEC, she is working on completing a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science, concentrating in ecology and conservation, with a minor in STEM Education at Drexel University.

Please help PEEC continue to change lives by donating to our Annual Appeal. Your donations help us to create programs that engage young people in science and environmental studies, changing their world, and ours.

Sincerely,



Jeff Rosalsky, Executive Director

**DONATE ONLINE AT WWW.PEEC.ORG** 



## THANK YOU!

FOR CONSIDERING PEEC FOR YOUR YEAR-END DONATION

PEEC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. PEEC's Federal Tax ID: 23-2424742





