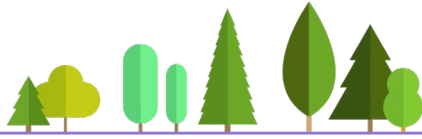




PEEC
Pocono Environmental
Education Center



Seasons

Spring Equinox 2023

A Quarterly Publication to Advance Environmental Literacy

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**Pocono Environmental
Education Center**

538 Emery Road
Dingmans Ferry, PA
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www.peec.org



Give Amphibians a Brake

By Kate Hausman

As spring grows nearer, the forest begins to awaken again. With warmer temperatures and longer daylight hours, hibernation ends for many of our native species, prompting them to move around, looking for both food and mates. This can be a dangerous time for both people and animals, as vehicle collisions with wildlife are more likely to occur. We tend to be more aware of large animals to look out for, like deer and bear, but some of our most vulnerable wildlife species are on the much smaller side.

Spring is a vital time for amphibian populations like frogs and salamanders. Upon awakening, amphibians seek out vernal (seasonal) pools of water where they return to breed. But as human populations grow and spread, and the climate continues to warm, these tiny critters are facing an uphill battle. One of the biggest threats to these breeding populations of amphibians are paved roadways they have to cross to access their breeding pools. In a battle of car against salamander, the salamander is always going to lose.

Over the last few years, there has been a push to help protect these critters during this vital breeding time. In a combined effort between various environmental agencies and dedicated teams of volunteers, many states have established a crossing guard program to protect breeding amphibians by helping them to safely cross roadways. These teams collect data such as type and number of species crossing, temperature and relative humidity, and even the amount of dead amphibians they encounter. This data helps contribute to a better understanding of the breeding habits of amphibian species, and gives scientists a benchmark to keep track of population numbers. In areas where there are no established crossing guard programs, seasonal road closures are also implemented to help keep these animals safe.

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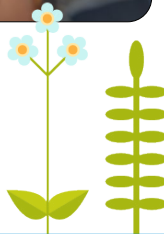
Message from the Executive Director

Spring 2023

Good-Bye Winter! Hello Spring!



Spring, to me, oozes renewed life with the skunk cabbage, longer days, sap flowing and air full of pollen. I enthusiastically sneeze my way through spring. As I think of how full of life PEEC will be with staff arriving, educational school groups, public events and trail use, I feel a renewed excitement in myself for PEEC's mission. There is something joyfully magical about children getting to romp around a national park, see the sun rise with your classmates and favorite teacher, connect with creatures in their habitat, challenge themselves to grow as individuals and take that personal renewed growth back to their own neighborhood. What is there not to love about spring? The sounds of peepers and children's laughter are just around the corner.



Kelly Daly



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Pocono Environmental Education Center

ANNUAL EARTH DAY FESTIVAL



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EARTH!

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SATURDAY, APRIL 29 • 11AM-4PM



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MAY 13 & 14 • 9:00AM – 4:00PM

PEEC MEMBERS PRE-SALE
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FREE ADMISSION



Winter Storm Riley - 5 Year Anniversary

By George Johnson

While I'm at our front desk, there's one question I am asked the most when guests return from their hike, "What happened to all the trees?" As many of our readers may know already, the majority of the downed trees on our trails are from Winter Storm Riley. It's hard to believe, but this spring will be the 5-year anniversary of the storm that brought down the approximately 1,000 trees that we cleared on our property.

In March of 2018, our area experienced a massive winter storm. It was a recipe for disaster and crippled the surrounding area. Roads were blocked; power was down for about a week; and some of our trails were closed for months. (Some areas within the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area are still closed from that storm.) Leading up to the storm, we had abnormally warm weather that loosened up the soil. The storm itself had wet, heavy snow and wind gusts up to about 75mph. The majority of the downed trees were also evergreens (mostly hemlock and pine) that retain their leaves and have shallow root systems. The leaves caught the wind, acting as a sail, and the shallow root systems couldn't provide them with enough anchor support, leading to them eventually falling over.

On this anniversary, I wanted to check-in with our heaviest hit area and see how the forest has responded since the storm. Trees, and the larger ecosystem as a whole, can be resilient. It takes time, but the forest will eventually recover.

Since the day of the storm, the damaged area has been slowly changing. Trees need a lot of time to grow and a lot of time to decompose when dead. With the older, mature trees gone, it's opened up a huge area of sunlight for the plants below. The competition for sunlight has been significantly lessened and the undergrowth got a sudden surge in their primary restricted resource. So now, 5 years later, we see tons of new trees coming in and crowding on the forest floor.

Additionally, as the downed trees rot, they are providing homes for different types of critters, woodpeckers, insects, rodents, etc. The insects are slowly eating and breaking down the dead trees. Their waste is incorporated into the soil that the new, younger, trees use as nutrients to grow. The soil there is slowly becoming thicker and more nutrient dense.

Moving forward, these young trees will continue to grow and develop. In 5 more years, the area will likely look very different than it does now. Those new trees will get taller and will start shading out the undergrowth again. Around that time, the area will start to move towards being considered a young forest, which will continue to grow into a mature forest if left unchecked by future storms.

From an environmental standpoint, it is always tragic to witness an area become so damaged. No one wants to see all those trees come down. However, we do take solace in the fact that the forest will recover. New homes are being created, new soil is being added, and new trees are growing in to replace those that came down. In time, you won't even be able to tell that anything had happened.



Budburst: Times are a-Changin’

By Stephanie Sherman

It is a balmy February week as I write this article, to the point where my brain and all of nature is screaming the approach of spring. With temperatures ten to twenty degrees higher than the historic average, the birds and buds are as confused as I am. Crocuses and daffodils are starting to emerge and I could have sworn I already heard and caught a glimpse of a robin around campus. My heart is yearning for spring as we all desperately seek more sunlight toward the end of winter, but my head is saying this weather should not be here until next month at the earliest. We know the seasons are shifting. Whether you favor that shift or not, the phenology of our forest says change is happening now with each emerging bud.

Simply stated, phenology is the science of happenings in nature. People have always anticipated the changing of the seasons and the recordkeeping of plant blooms in particular dates back over a thousand years to Japan tracking the timing of the cherry blossoms. Sound familiar? Nowadays, you will have to go a few weeks earlier to actually see the cherry blossoms in D.C. as the National Cherry Blossom Festival’s April timeframe no longer matches the trees’ biological clocks. More people are noticing these shifts, and that is where the cell phone app Budburst comes in.

A citizen science project piloted by the Chicago Botanic Garden, Budburst allows you to track the changes in plant life and pollinators in your backyard. Why bother you may wonder? What good does it do? Aldo Leopold, father of wildlife management, stated once “keeping records enhances the pleasure of the search and chances of finding order and meaning in these events.” Wouldn’t it be nice to validate your gut that things are shifting from year to year? Moreover, our search for spring now becomes a scavenger hunt as we track these data points to show the emergence of plants in our area.

Collecting data is easy and takes under a minute to do. Simply snap a photo of the plant you are interested in through the app and it will get you started by recommending similar plants for identification. The app collaborates with iNaturalist, another citizen science app, to help you figure out what the plant could be. From there, it’s a few quick questions on if you are recording a seasonal observation of the plant, phenology, or a pollinator observation. They then ask about any flowers, fruits or leaves that are on the plant and break them down into various stages. Add a few notes if you want and you are done! It is actually kind of addicting to go around snapping photos and uploading to start. I do recommend starting with your familiar back yard as early or late season identification can be tough if you do not already know the general species of plants.

The observations sent in go into a large public database at Budburst.org, where anyone can download the data for research. This is not just for researchers. There are plenty of activities and ideas on the project’s website of how to keep involved on a group, family or educator level. For example, you can choose to adopt a trail with friends to record findings or try to find plants from the different groups listed in the app. For students from pre-K to middle school, there are a variety of activity lessons with activities about plants and how to get involved doing a BioBlitz to catalog species in your area. If you are a teacher, they offer curricula from pre-K to college to supplement your lessons. It is very much a “choose your own adventure” in that it could be just a hobby or a full-blown research expedition.

I hope this has sparked a little bit of inspiration to start looking closer at what is happening around us. With January 2023 setting new “warmest on record” statistics for multiple areas in the world, it is a sign we need to pay closer attention to what nature is doing before the ripple effects become so dramatic that growing seasons and food chains become disrupted. While it may seem like such a small gesture to take a photo and upload it, tiny steps add up big results when everyone helps. It’s true of how climate change started; it’s also true of how we can learn and tackle the problem. Whenever you may be reading this, I hope the birds are singing and the flowers are in bloom.



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BIRDS & BREWS

MAY 5-7

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\$230
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& day rates



PA Businesses can offset taxes by donating to PEEC through the EITC program

PEEC is a qualified Educational Improvement Organization (EIO) through the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development’s EITC program. Any business in PA can apply online and become eligible to receive tax credits by supporting a charitable cause. Learn more online at <https://dced.pa.gov/programs/educational-improvement-tax-credit-program-eitc/>

New businesses should apply by July 1.



PEEC
Pocono Environmental
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2023

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Go to www.peec.org/tough-as-trails-2023

\$35 PER PARTICIPANT

SATURDAY, APRIL 29TH

The Colors of Spring

By Derek Scott

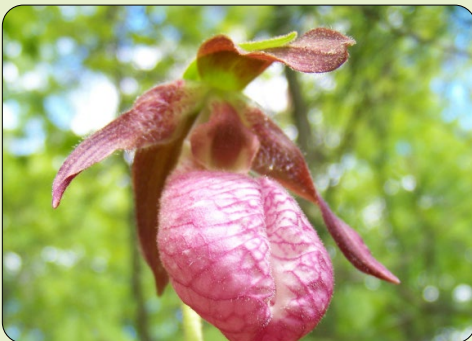
Have you heard the expression, April showers bring May flowers? Well that's because it's true! Warming weather encourages plants to emerge from what seems like a winter slumber. By the time May rolls around, many of these plants have already begun flowering. The result is a beautiful landscape of vibrant colors. Of all the flowers that bloom in the spring, there are several that truly stand out.

One of the more commonly sought after spring flowers is Pink lady's slipper. This flower is a member of the orchid family, one of the largest and most widespread families of plants. Flowers in this family are notorious for having colorful and fragrant blooms. Pink lady's slipper is no exception, having a showy, pink labellum, or lip. This petal stands out from the others because of its size and shape, and is used by the flower as a method of attracting pollinators. Pink lady's slipper can tolerate a range of shade and moisture, but is commonly found in coniferous forests where they thrive in the acidic soil conditions.

Red trillium is another flower that draws attention every spring, especially in the Northeast. Trilliums are a type of ephemeral plant, meaning that it has a relatively short life cycle. In the spring, these flowers quickly emerge and reproduce before dying back to their underground vegetative parts. Their short annual blooms make them popular among flower enthusiasts. Red trillium can be identified by the 3 distinct petals it has above a whorl of 3 pointed leaves. Although the petals are typically a deep red, there is a white petal morph that is considered a rare find. If you're unsure of whether you've stumbled across a trillium, give it a smell. The flowers have the smell of rotting meat, as the flowers are pollinated by flies.

Red columbine is one of my favorite spring flowers. These eastern woodland natives are prized for their vibrant red and yellow trumpet flowers, which bloom in late spring. These flowers are sought after by butterflies and hummingbirds for the nectar located in the flower spurs. The spurs are said to resemble eagle talons and explains the origin of the genus name, *Aquilegia*, which comes from *aquila*, the Latin word for eagle. The flowers grow on the ends of the plants' slender stalks face down and are surprisingly odorless. Red columbine can grow in shaded or sunny conditions with adequate moisture so it makes a great garden perennial!

Spring truly is such a magical time of year. Take an opportunity to look around this year to see what may be growing in your backyard. With so many different colors and fragrances, it's hard to choose favorites!



Pink Ladyslipper



Trillium



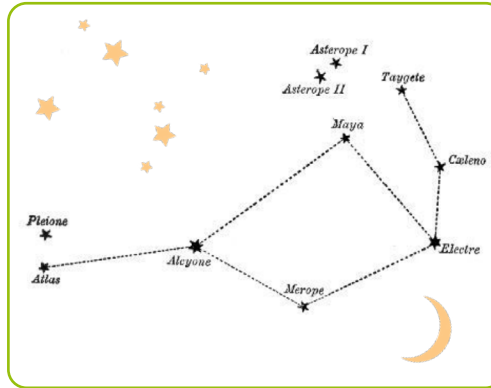
Red Columbine

The Sky and its Stories

By Sara Neral

A constellation is a group of stars forming a recognizable pattern in the night sky. Throughout history, people have used constellations to tell stories of their beliefs, experiences, creation, or mythology. Our own creativity combined with stories about local legends and myths has created a diverse set of constellations. Even though the stars do not change, people have found many different shapes in the same sky. From humans to animals, to objects, and even abstract concepts, I will be covering some of the different stories that make up the stars that we all see in the night skies.

Atlas: A triple star system in the constellation of Taurus is a star cluster that is used in more than 43 individual stories from around the world.



Of all the constellations in the night sky, no group of stars has been known longer or had more different stories, myths, and legends told about them.

Cave Paintings from Lascaux, France depict the constellations of The Pleiades, Taurus, and Orion, all of which were used to form early calendars for Paleolithic hunter-gatherers.

The Nebra Disk dated 1600 (B.C.E) is one of the oldest recognized depictions of the Pleiades. In the Bronze Age, the rising of the constellation marked the start of a festival devoted to the remembrance of the dead.

The Greek pantheon describes the Pleiades as the seven sisters of Atlas immortalized by Zeus.

In Maori tradition, the rising of the cluster marks the beginning of a new year.

In the black hills of Wyoming, the Devil's Tower National Monument is part of the Sioux Lakota telling of the Bear's Lodge and the seven little girls, in which the mountain rose to help children escape an attacking bear, and lifted the seven children to the sky.

All of these descriptions are brief summarizations of important cultural stories. If you would like to learn more, a great starting place is *Figures in the Sky*, a digital collection of the stars that make up the night.

Give Amphibians a Brake

Continued from Page 1

"In the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, River Road will be closed on several evenings between now and mid-April to protect breeding amphibians. The trigger for the road closures will be forecasts calling for evening rain with mild temperatures. Since the amphibians are active principally at night and have completed their treks by dawn, the road will be closed at approximately 6:00 pm and will remain closed until approximately 6:30 am.

Each year the National Park Service take steps to protect migrating amphibians by closing River Road in Middle Smithfield Township between Park Headquarters and Hialeah Picnic Area on several mild, rainy spring nights. This closure allows vulnerable amphibians to crawl or hop from distances of a few hundred feet to sometimes more than a quarter mile to moist breeding pools without the risk of being crushed by vehicle tires."

- Larry Hilaire,
Wildlife Biologist

We can all do our part to help protect these critters by being more aware of these peak times of activity, and avoiding driving through those areas while they are most vulnerable. For resources on how to start your own crossing guard program, check out <https://www.beec.org/get-involved/conservation-projects/salamanders/become-a-crossing-guard/>



Radicchio & Fennel Salad

By Judith Lanza

With spring warming the ground and the sunshine feeding the Earth, we'll start to see signs of life popping up all around us. Seasonal spring produce tends to be light and vibrant, exactly what our bodies need after the cold winter months. For this spring recipe, I use tender radicchio and fresh fennel and oranges to bring together a light and sweet, but hearty, spring salad. If you've never had fennel before, it's a crisp vegetable, with a texture somewhere between that of celery and romaine lettuce. It has a bright and citrusy licorice flavor. It can be eaten either raw or cooked, although I do love it in its raw form. Many people find the idea of licorice in a salad to be disconcerting, but alien as it seems, I really suggest trying it! The light licorice, sweet radicchio, acidity from the oranges, and brine of the prosciutto come together in an unctuous blend that is perfect for any cool spring afternoon!

For the salad, chop all vegetables into small pieces and put into a bowl. For the fennel, only the bulb should be used. Cut off the top stem and rinse bulb well. Halve the bulb and then slice like you would an onion. If the walnuts you have aren't roasted yet, you can roast in the oven or even in a toaster oven! Simply put walnuts on a baking sheet and bake at 350 degrees for about 5-7 minutes, or until they become fragrant. For the prosciutto, cut the slices into smaller pieces or strips. Toss vegetables, nuts, and prosciutto together.

For the vinaigrette, I find the easiest way to make simple emulsions is in a blender. Even a small bullet style blender will work! Just toss all ingredients into blender and blend on high until smooth.

To serve, toss vinaigrette with chopped salad and lightly fluff to combine. If you find your salad is still lacking a little something extra, you can always add a touch more salt and pepper, or even a sprinkle of parmesan to finish it off!

Radicchio & Fennel Salad

(Makes a salad for 2 people)

- 1 radicchio
- 1 fennel bulb
- ¼ cup thin sliced red onion
- 2 slices prosciutto di parma
- ¼ cup roasted walnut pieces

Citrus Vinaigrette

- 2 TBSP fresh orange juice
- 2 TBSP balsamic vinegar
- 1 TBSP honey
- ½ TBSP Dijon mustard
- 1 clove garlic
- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
- Salt and pepper, to taste



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Amanda Subjin

Director of Development

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PEEC Tax ID: 23-2424742

SPRING PROGRAMS AND GETAWAYS

2023

PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED
Unless otherwise indicated.

TO REGISTER:

Call PEEC at 570-828-2319

APRIL

Girl Scout Badge Festival

Saturday, April 1st

\$25 * Full Day 9:30am-4pm

Brownies will complete their Outdoor Adventurer & Cabin Camper badges. Juniors will complete their Eco Camper Badge. Cadettes will complete their Primitive Camper badge. Seniors will be working on their Adventure Camper badge. Overnight options are available for all age levels, ask for more information! **Payment is required at registration. Space is limited - call early! Don't forget to bring a lunch.**

Ecozone Discovery Room!

Sunday, April 2nd

\$2 * 1pm-4pm

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.**

Pocono Knitting Retreat

April 13th - 16th

\$280 Full Workshop

Join us for our spring Fabric Arts weekend!

Wacky Science Adventures

Saturday, April 15th

\$5 * 10am-12pm

Put on your lab coats and prepare to conduct some crazy experiments! You'll get to create your very own slime, oobleck, and attempt to launch a rocket into space. **Please call to register.**



Photo Credit:
Samantha Baisley

Salamanders, Frogs, and More!

Saturday, April 15th

\$5 * Full Day 1pm-3pm

Amphibians are stirring in the woods! Join us as we explore nearby breeding pools for salamanders, frogs, and egg masses. We'll provide nets and collection jars for gentle, up-close study. **Wear boots and clothes that can get muddy or wet.**

Bridge the Gap: Pond Paddle

Sunday, April 16th

Free * 10am-12pm

Join us for a paddle around our ponds! Beginners are welcome – we teach you everything you need to know! Dress appropriately – you may get wet. **Call in advance to reserve a boat. *Lead support is provided by the William Penn Foundation.***

Ecozone Discovery Room!

Sunday, April 23rd

\$2 * 1pm-4pm

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.**

Bridge the Gap: Spring Peeper Search

Sunday, April 23rd

Free* 7:30pm-9pm

These tiny tree frogs have thawed out and are active again in our forested wetlands. Listen to the impressive choir made by these vocal amphibians as we carefully catch, study, and release them. **Bring a flashlight for better searching! *Lead support is provided by the William Penn Foundation.* Please call to register.**

Earth Day Festival

Saturday, April 29th

\$5 per car * 11am-4pm

Help us celebrate the Earth! There will be hands-on learning stations, interpretive hikes, conservation exhibits, crafts, food, music, and much more! **Pre-registration is NOT required.**

PEEC Tough as Trails

Saturday, April 29th

\$35 per participant

Take a journey through the woods of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. Our 5k runs through our Main Campus and a variety of different woodland habitats on two of our gorgeous trail loops. This course has a variety of different surfaces, including pavement, dirt, rock, and gravel.

MAY

Birds and Brews

May 5th – 7th

\$230 / Call for commuter & day rates

Spring migration has begun! Join us for a wonderful weekend of bird watching and beer tasting. Enjoy guided hikes that teach how to identify birds by sight, sound and habitat. Program is geared towards beginners and experts alike. Saturday night we'll provide beverages from local breweries while you enjoy our campfire! **Includes two nights of lodging and meals from Friday dinner through Sunday lunch.**

Bridge the Gap: Pond Paddle

Sunday, May 7th

Free * 1pm-3pm

Join us for a paddle around our ponds! Beginners are welcome – we teach you everything you need to know! Dress appropriately – you may get wet. **Call in advance to reserve a boat. *Lead support is provided by the William Penn Foundation.***

Edible & Medicinal Plant Walk

Saturday, May 13th

\$5 * 10am-12pm

Nature provides food & natural remedies for us in the form of many plants. Join us on a hike focused on wild edible & medicinal plants. No collecting will be done in the Park. **Please call to register.**



SPRING PROGRAMS AND GETAWAYS 2023

Plant Sale!

Saturday May 13th & Sunday May 14th
Free admission * 9am-4pm

Choose from a variety of native and deer resistant flowers and grasses to beautify your yard at our annual plant sale! Sun loving and shade loving plants will be available. Sold out in 2021! **PEEC Members will be able to join us for a pre-sale on May 12th from 5 – 7pm.**



Ecozone Discovery Room!

Sunday, May 14th
\$2 * 1pm-4pm

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.**

Warbler Weekend

Saturday May 20th & Sunday May 21st
\$30 per person, per day * 7am-4pm

Join one us for one or both of these guided birding excursions in search of various warbler species migrating through our area. Bring a lunch, camera & sunscreen. **Call to reserve a seat in the van – Maximum of 18 spaces.**

Create Your Own Walking Stick

Sunday, May 21st

\$35 per walking stick * 12pm-3pm

Spend the afternoon with us as we create handcrafted walking sticks. Wood, tools, gloves, and aprons will be provided, as well as suggestions and pointers on how to personalize your work. **Pre-registration required.**

Memorial Day Family Camp Weekend
Memorial Day Weekend: May 26th-29th
Adults \$240 / 10% off ages 11-13 / 25% off ages 7-10 / 50% off ages 4-6 / Free ages 3 & under
Bring your family and friends to experience the best of what PEEC has to offer. Interpretive hikes, animal presentations, canoeing, campfire and more! **Includes three nights of lodging and meals from Friday dinner through Monday lunch.**

JUNE

Breeding Birds of the DWG

Saturday, June 3rd

\$20 per person * 7am-4pm

Enjoy a day trip around the Delaware Water Gap searching for and learning more about the breeding species of birds in our area. Please bring binoculars and a lunch. **Pre-registration required.**

Bridge the Gap: National Trails Day

Saturday, June 3rd

Free * 1pm-3pm

Take part in a national effort to introduce more people to the great outdoors. One of our knowledgeable staff will guide and teach about our forests. We never know what exactly we'll find out there, so don't be afraid to ask plenty of questions along the way. ***Lead support is provided by the William Penn Foundation.***

Ecozone Discovery Room!

Sunday, June 4th

\$2 * 1pm-4pm

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.**



Edible & Medicinal Plant Walk

Saturday, June 10th

\$5 * 10am-12pm

Nature provides food & natural remedies for us in the form of many plants. Join us on a hike focused on wild edible & medicinal plants. No collecting will be done in the Park. **Please call to register.**

Bridge the Gap: River Paddle

Saturday, June 10th

\$10 * 9am-3pm

Join us for a paddle around our ponds! Beginners are welcome – we teach you everything you need to know! Dress appropriately – you may get wet. **Call in advance to reserve a boat. *Lead support is provided by the William Penn Foundation.***

Frog Frolic

Sunday, June 11th

\$5 * 1pm-3pm

Spend the afternoon with us at our ponds and streams! Learn about some of our frog friends as we gently catch and release these hopping amphibians. **Wear boots and plan on getting wet and muddy. Please call to register.**

Geology Hike

Saturday, June 17th

Free for PEEC Members / \$5 for Non-PEEC members * 1pm-3pm

Take a hike on the Fossil Trail with **Paul Kovalski, aka Dr. Dinosaur**, as we discuss the geology of our area and what makes our park unique. **Please call to register.**

