



Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council
13555 Beaver Dam Road
Cockeysville, MD 21030

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TRAILBLAZER

Feb - March 2015

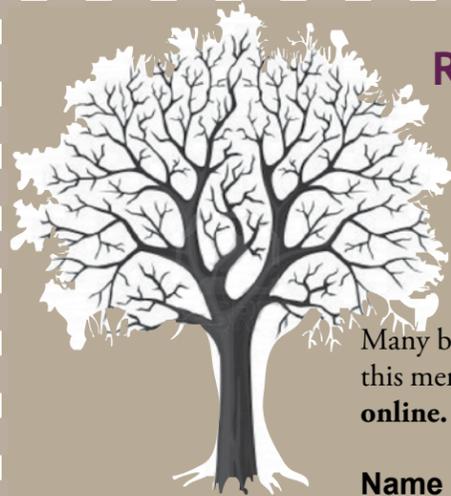
Supporting Oregon Ridge Park and Nature Center for 32 years

*Today a smile and tomorrow a tear
We're never sure what's in store
So learn your lesson before it is too late.*

*So be like I, hold your head up high
'Til you find the bluebird of happiness.
You will find greater peace of mind
Knowing there's a bluebird of happiness.*

*And when he sings to you, though you're deep in blue
You will see a ray of light creep through.
And so remember this, life is no abyss
Somewhere there's a bluebird of happiness.*

(Lyrics from the Bluebird of Happiness song by Jan Peerce)



RENEW NOW AND SIGN UP A FRIEND, TOO!

SUMMER CAMP REGISTRATION FOR MEMBERS BEGINS 2/17!!

(Forms online. No phone reservations accepted.)

Many branches make a strong tree. Many members make a strong Council. Use this membership form to renew and give a copy to a friend. **You can now renew online. Please visit: <http://oregonridgenaturecenter.org/membership.html>**

Name _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Address _____ State _____ Zip _____

- \$ 15 Individual
- \$ 30 Family
- \$ 75 Supporting
- \$ 250 Sustaining
- \$ 500 Lifetime



Checks payable to ORNC Council, Inc., 13555 Beaver Dam Rd., Cockeysville, MD 21030

EASTERN BLUEBIRDS: Twenty Years of Stories and Observation

Katharine Patterson
March 16, 7:30 PM
Oregon Ridge Nature Center

Katharine Patterson has spent so much time observing bluebirds, she must be one of the happiest people in the world. Seeing a bluebird perched on a tree branch, or just catching a glimpse of bright blue as one flashes by, makes our hearts skip with joy.

Katharine's presentation will include digiscoped photographs of bluebirds on her farm, the history of the "Bluebird Movement" and the establishment of the North American Bluebird Society, natural history of bluebirds, habitat, nesting, nest box design, predators and competitors, trouble shooting, gardening for wildlife and the importance of monitoring nest boxes. Participants will receive several resource handouts and construction plans for an Eastern Bluebird nest box.

Katharine Patterson is an avid birder and has studied bluebirds for 20 years on her small farm in Butler, Maryland. She worked as a bluebird trail monitor for nine years at Oregon Ridge Nature Center. She's an educator, a volunteer naturalist, and is currently

WHAT'S INSIDE?

Maple Sugar Weekends - Feb. 21, 22, 28, and March 1

Annual Pancake Breakfast - March 7 & 8

Master Naturalist Training - March 23

Good Deeds - Boy Scouts and Trailblazers

Cole Snyder "Tree Reflections in the Park"

Introducing New Interns

New Exhibits Use Technology

a member of our Council board. She is a past board member at Irvine Nature Center. A former Child Life Therapist, Katharine holds a degree in Early Childhood Education from the University of Delaware and a certificate of Environmental Studies from Johns Hopkins University. She believes strongly in getting kids outside and educating them about the natural world. Katharine and her two daughters have raised chickens and a 4-H flock of wool sheep for many years.



FROM TREE TO PLATE!

MS. MAPLE TREE IS IN HER GLORY DURING SUGARING SEASON!

Join us to learn how her sweet sap
gets from the tree to the steaming
stack of hotcakes on your plate!



MAPLE SUGAR WEEKENDS

FEBRUARY 21, 22, 28 AND MARCH 1
10 AM - 4 PM

Let it snow, let it snow...just not too much snow. Somehow it feels right to have to walk through snow to the sugar bush to gather sap from our maple trees. If weather conditions are right, with warm days and freezing nights, the sap will flow steadily with each drilling.

Join one of our adventurous hikes to the woodland maples, starting at 10 AM from the Sugar Shack, the last one going out at 3 PM. Hikes include tree identification, tapping and collecting sap along the way, with a reward of warm syrup to taste on your return. If there is snow, there will be campfire demonstrations of making homemade "sugar on the snow" (maple taffy) at 12:30 and 3:45 PM each day. There will be informative movies, demos of the different methods of making syrup, face painting, and plenty of tasty syrup and maple candy to take home. If you enjoy maple syrup, come and experience this *tree-to-plate* phenomenon!

ORNC COUNCIL'S 29TH ANNUAL PANCAKE BREAKFAST

MARCH 7 AND 8, FROM 8 AM - 12 PM

The Pancake Breakfast is the Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council's largest annual fundraiser. Proceeds from the Pancake Breakfast help the Council, a non-profit organization, fulfill its main purpose: To support the Nature Center's programming, activities, animal care, exhibits, gardens, trail maintenance, and more. Your support at the Pancake Breakfast helps us provide just about everything you see or do at the Nature Center and Park.

The first breakfast was served in the Nature Center auditorium in 1986 and has grown to include live music, fun raffles, face painting, syrup and other nifty things to buy. The breakfast is always a great opportunity for fellowship with all sorts of folks, some of whom were present at that first breakfast 29 years ago. No reservations are required and you pay at the door: Adults \$7 and only \$4 for children ages 2-8. In addition to pancakes, your breakfast includes grilled sausage (veggie option available) and your choice of orange juice, milk, coffee or tea.

We want to take this opportunity to thank Bill LaBarre and Ginna Naylor, who have coordinated the breakfast for the past 15 years. This will be their last official year serving in that capacity, as they pass the golden spatula on to the next coordinators, Erin and John McCleary.

MEET OUR INTERNS

Eric Mazur is studying Environmental Science at Towson University. After graduating, Eric plans to attend graduate school where he will continue his studies about the biological world. Eric's favorite part of being an intern was learning more about nature and interacting with the animals and Park visitors. He helped with exhibits and animal care, and he led school children on trail hikes. Since Eric was so successful and helpful as an intern, he has been hired as a part-time naturalist this winter.

Alex Waugh is no stranger to the Nature Center; he began volunteering as a Ridge Runner in 2012 and transitioned to the role of intern over the summer. Alex is currently studying Environmental Science at CCBC. He plans to transfer to Florida Southern College in two years to continue his environmental studies. Interning at the Nature Center provides Alex with valuable experience that will help him with his future environmental pursuits. His favorite thing about interning is learning about and caring for the native animals that inhabit the Park, and he enjoys educating others about the importance of native animals. Alex also enjoys graphic design, photography, and botany. In his spare time, he plays video games.

Amanda Steinitz is also a former Ridge Runner. She is currently a senior at Towson High School, completing a work-study program that allows her to intern during the school year. When she graduates, Amanda aspires to go to college and join the Army or become a K-9 Police Officer. Since becoming a volunteer in 2012, Amanda has loved working with the animals and enjoys interning because of the opportunity to learn even more about the animals that live here. In her free time, Amanda likes to play video games, skateboard, and sleep. It is no secret among the staff that her all-time favorite foods are mashed potatoes and pizza!



Eric Mazur (left)



Alex Waugh (above)
Amanda Steinitz (left)

NEW EXHIBITS USE TECHNOLOGY

One primary focus at the Nature Center is to encourage people to enjoy the outdoors. Exhibits provide visual and tactile information that enhances a visitor's outdoor experiences. To better balance the time spent indoors and out, we have been retooling our exhibits to encourage outdoor activities and stewardship. Visitors gather information from the exhibits, which is translated and/or reinforced as they hike the trails or explore the meadow. They may recognize an animal or identify a plant that was highlighted in one of the exhibits. We hope this knowledge will be a door to understanding and empower people to use that knowledge in other areas of their lives.

The Exhibit Committee is reviewing outdated exhibits and replacing or creating new, more interactive ones. As we work to complete projects from last year, such as the bird panel, we will also start work on a new interactive exhibit — *The Conservation Kiosk*. Incorporating the use of an iPad, this new kiosk will allow users of all ages to go through different environmental topics, such as the Chesapeake Bay, and learn about what is happening and what each of us can do to help. We are also excited about revamping the woodpecker exhibit this year, incorporating a new technology with the use of a special electronic "pen" to listen to the different calls of the local woodpeckers. A *Habitat* exhibit is also in the works to showcase the habitats found in the Park with examples of local fauna and flora. We will also be installing a mural in the animal room as a way of bringing the outdoors inside. Look for these exciting new additions and changes on your next visit!

MARK YOUR 2015 CALENDARS FOR FREE SPRING EVENTS

PRIMITIVE
TECHNOLOGY
WEEKEND

May 2 and 3
10 AM to 4 PM

MUSIC IN
THE WOODS

May 9
10 AM to 4 PM

Check out the 2015 Spring Calendar of Events
online for more free events.

MASTER NATURALIST TRAINING

Mondays from March 23 to May 18
Plus Two Saturdays: April 25 & May 16
9:30 AM - 4 PM

Oregon Ridge Nature Center is holding its 6th Maryland Master Naturalist Training this spring! We are excited to share the wonders of the natural world and the foundation of nature interpretation with this new group of environmental educators. There may still be openings, so please inquire through the Nature Center about how to apply. There is a fee of \$250 for the 60-hour training, which includes resource materials. More information on this program can also be found at the University of Maryland Extension website: <http://extension.umd.edu/masternaturalist>.

We have recruited passionate volunteers to the Park through this training. Our Fall 2013 class graduated in November 2014, with most exceeding the minimum 40 hours of volunteer activity at the Park. In 2014, this class of 12 contributed over 625 hours, helping in a myriad of ways: Working at special events like the Pancake Breakfast, serving as members of the Council and on special committees, writing a Chesapeake Bay grant that awarded \$5000 for rain garden projects, applying to become a Green Center through MAEOE, helping with exhibits, creating an herbarium and tree sample collection, working on trail projects, creating garden designs and related maintenance, participating in Frog Watch and Monarch Watch activities, and leading walks for school children. We congratulate the following Master Naturalists from the Fall 2013 class for their tremendous work: Heather Amos, Andrea Barnett, Chris Carpenter, Katie Coolahan, Leila Hadj-Chikh, Joan Hoblitzell, Maria Hult, Jim Kelley, Ted Martello, Ellen Mering, Joe Mowery, and Darla Tewell.

Our Spring 2014 class (Susan Bassett, Nancy Berger, Georgette Frederick, Karen Jackson, Claire and Nora Zietz) has already dedicated many volunteer hours to painting the

parking lot spaces, setting up a list of grant opportunity, painting our Nature Center classroom, creating a new sensory garden, and jumping in to support our seasonal events.

In 2014, our forty Master Naturalists have amassed an amazing total of 2,000 volunteer hours. THANK YOU! We could not provide all the things we do without caring and thoughtful citizens like you.



(Back left to right: Jim Kelley, Ted Martello, Joe Mowery, Katie Coolahan, Ellen Mering, Joan Hoblitzell. Front left to right: Darla Tewell, Maria Hult, and Leila Hadj-Chikh)

UPCOMING SPEAKERS

April 20, 2015	May 18, 2015
<i>Want Butterflies? Don't Forget the Caterpillars</i>	<i>Wildflower Wanderings</i>
Sheryl Pedrick	Heather Helm
Education Director	Nature Exhibits and
Ladew Topiary Gardens	Program Consultant

FREE ADMISSION, 7:30 PM at ORNC

TRAILBLAZER STAFF

Editor/Design/Layout: Mary Jane Shanks

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

Writers: Jessica Jeannetta, Ted Martello, Mary Jane Shanks, Cole Snyder, Winny Tan

Photographers: ORNC Staff

OREGON RIDGE NATURE CENTER
 13555 Beaver Dam Road, Cockeysville 21030

410-887-1815; Fax: 410-887-1816
 info@oregonridgenaturecenter.org;
 www.oregonridgenaturecenter.org

Articles and graphics for the April/May/June issue are due February 16, 2015.

TRAILBLAZERS: ON THE GROUND TEAM THAT GETS THINGS DONE

by Ted Martello
 Grounds Committee Chairman

If you have been hiking our trail system lately, you may have noticed some newly installed and improved erosion control features while ascending the *Tan Trail* towards the gazebo. Or, perhaps you've had the pleasure of keeping your feet dry while hopping from one 'tree cookie' to the next across that muddy section on the *Yellow Blaze James Campbell Trail*. Have you noticed new improvements made to the *Orange Blaze* staircase ascending from the east side of the lake? If you were lucky, you may have sighted a group of six people hand-carrying a freshly debarked log for a construction project.

A team of hearty volunteers, known quite literally as the Trailblazers, accomplished all of this work on the grounds in 2014. Our team is comprised of a diverse group of people, from high school Kiwanis Club members and boy scouts working on their Citizenship in the Community Merit Badge to Nature Center staff and Master Naturalists completing their service hours. Work parties took place each month from March through November last year. Each participant was instructed on safe use of hand tools and sustainable trail design. Everyone practiced tree identification skills, and most importantly, we created an opportunity to work and have fun together in a team environment. On May 3rd, during Primitive Technology Weekend, Trailblazer participants got to go back in time by using a two-person crosscut saw. Wedges, axes, and a 5' long blade with wooden handles were the tools used to make

four cuts through two large trees in two hours in order to open up the trail once again.

This year we will be tackling more trail erosion issues, installing eight new trail map kiosks, and addressing safety issues throughout the Park. To join our team, just call the Nature Center to sign-up. Our first two scheduled dates are April 4th and May 2nd, from 9 AM to noon. Meet us at the Nature Center to help load up tools, and we'll head out to the job site!



OREGON RIDGE NATURE CENTER COUNCIL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

College bound high school seniors from Baltimore County and City, who are committed to the health of the environment and plan to earn degrees in environmental science and nature education, can start on the path to success with a scholarship awarded by the ORNC Council.

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This year we will support at least two scholarships up to \$3000 each.

YOU can help by giving generously to the 2015 Scholarship Fund.

Your tax-deductible donations should be made payable to the **ORNC Council, Inc.** (specify *Scholarship Fund* on the note line) and sent to:

Donor's names will be published. If you would like to make a gift in another's name, please specify the name as it should appear on the list.

If you know a high school senior who may be eligible for a scholarship, information and application forms are available on our new Web site: www.oregonridgenaturecenter.org. Applications should be postmarked no later than Friday, March 27, 2015.

Thank You for Helping Us Put Our Future Environmental Leaders on the Path to Success.

TREE REFLECTIONS OF THE PARK

By Cole Snyder

Taking my dog on hikes through the woods is one of my favorite things to do. I am blessed to live directly behind the Park. I wake up every morning next to Ted, my cockapoo. All I need to say is the simple word “walk,” and he immediately perks up in anticipation and jumps off my bed. He will explore every smell, and given the chance, will chase any animal that crosses his path, no matter the size. It brings me bliss to see him have the time of his life every day. On our daily walks, with Ted leading the way on his leash, I’m able to examine the trees around me. I’ve come to know the American beech, white oak, pine and many other trees that I see along the trails.

The American beech is one of my favorites. Its smooth, silver grey to bluish bark stands out among forest trees of rough brown. Like other deciduous trees, its leaves turn yellow. However, many of its leaves manage to stay on the tree all winter, often bleaching-out and giving the tree a ghostly aura that adds to its winter allure. Its nuts attract and feed many animals, including the squirrels that Ted loves to chase as far as his leash allows. Three incredibly old and large beech trees exist in the Park off the *Blue Trail*. On one is a carving on the tree from the late 1920s, most likely from a hunter marking his time in the woods.

Some specimens of the endangered American chestnut still exist in the Park today. This once prolific tree was nearly wiped out by a fungus brought from Japan in the early 1900s. The Park has set a recovery effort in place. Along the *Tan Trail*, hundreds of chestnuts were planted in an effort to bring the tree and its nutritious nuts back to the Park. Ted and I once visited the gazebo explaining the sad, but hopeful, story of the American chestnut.

Currently, two of the most abundant trees in the Park are the northern red oak and the white oak. Their large, winter

silhouettes are like intricate works of art against the horizon. Like the beech, their leaves decay slowly and linger on the tree far into winter. The bark of the red oak is very hard and reddish on young trees, darkening as it matures. The white oak is distinguished by branches that stretch wide and far and its bark is light gray, fissured and scaly. The red oak is used commonly for construction, and both are widely used to make furniture. Turkeys, deer, and birds rely on the acorns from both trees, while insects munch on their leaves.

The mountain laurel is another one of my favorites. Though it is really a shrub, it can grow as large as a small tree — up to nine meters tall. Its thin, twisting branches are incredibly interesting to look at. Winter can be hard on mountain laurels, burning the leaves. In the spring, its blossoming flowers are absolutely stunning. However, do not think to eat it! All parts of the plant are extremely toxic to humans and other animals.

Walking through the Park everyday is like walking through history. Some of the trees have survived from being cut down hundreds of years before when the Park was a quarry. They have seen mountain lions, bears, and early settlers of Maryland. Many of the trees are newcomers that have grown here more recently. They represent the return of the forests and our course towards a green future.



This winter’s topics include: Maple Sugaring, Plants in the Park, Reptiles and Amphibians, and Baltimore Birds. The \$20 training fee is refunded after leading your first hike. Training lasts 4 days, February 3 to 6, from 10 AM to 1 PM. Reservations are appreciated; payment is due upon arrival. Come early for light refreshments. If you cannot attend training, but are interested in becoming a Trail Guide, please call the Nature Center for information about alternative training methods.

SOARING TO SUCCESS WITH EAGLE SCOUTS

Each year, thousands of people visit Oregon Ridge Park to hike the trails, participate in programs, and attend special events. Volunteers, such as Eagle Scouts, are integral to the success of the Park. Without them, many projects that improve the Park would never be accomplished. To become an Eagle Scout, a boy scout must plan, develop, lead and complete a service project in their community. Last year, a total of nine Eagle Scout projects took place in the Park. These projects took hours of dedication, organizing and fundraising to accomplish. The next time you are in the Park, please stop by and see the latest additions! If you know any scouts who may be interested in completing an Eagle Scout project in the Park, please have them contact the Nature Center.

The Oregon Ridge Nature Center staff would like to thank the following Eagle Scouts who chose our Park as the site for their project.

Daniel Bailey	Orienteering Course
Jacob Ebrite	Repairs to <i>Orange Trail</i> (8 steps & 24 trail bumpers)
Peter de Guzman	New Aviary **
Alex Liu	Baltimore Checkerspot Enclosure
John Morenkas	New Community Garden Section **
Matthew Seidenman	Wildlife Blind **
Dylan Orlando	New Raised Beds in Children’s Garden
Farrell Strueber	Replaced Community Garden Fence
Joe Thompson	Children’s Garden Fence

** Photos: *Aviary top, Garden center, Blind bottom*



HELP SAVE THE BAY AT TAX TIME: Check Line 35



If you are like most Marylanders, you love your blue crabs and you love the Chesapeake Bay. So it should be an easy decision for you to check Line 35 on your 502 tax form to help save the Bay by voluntarily contributing to the *Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund*. (If you are filing out of State, check line 39 on Form 505.)

The proceeds from this check-off are split evenly between Bay restoration grants provided by the Chesapeake Bay Trust and rare species programs run by the Wildlife and Heritage Division of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. With fully 90% of the Trust’s expenditures directed to Chesapeake Bay restoration and education programs, Maryland residents can be confident that their donations are leveraged appropriately. Whatever amount you donate this year is tax deductible next year.

