

TRAILBLAZER

WINTER 2017



*Supporting Oregon Ridge Park
and Nature Center for 34 years*

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Annual Report 2015-16

Honey Harvest 2016
a Big Success!
Thank you Volunteers!



MARYLAND'S FRESHWATER FISHES

Speaker: Dr. Stanley J. Kemp
Director of Environmental
Sustainability & Human Ecology
University of Baltimore

Monday, January 16, 2017, 7:30 PM
Free at ORNC

Outside of trout, bass, perch and other fish we like to catch for sport, there is a wide variety of species about which very little is known by most people. Most surprising is that these mysterious swimmers that populate Maryland's rivers and streams are also relatively unknown to science at large. This lack of knowledge is detrimental to the efforts to protect and restore native fish communities. Without knowing the needs of different species, we cannot maintain healthy fish communities. These communities serve as a sign of healthy ecosystems, which provide quality ecosystem service such as clean drinking water, commercial and recreational fisheries, and aesthetic qualities. Stanley Kemp will introduce us to some of these *other* fish from our streams and discuss their interrelationships and vulnerabilities, using photos and video to illustrate his talk.

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HOLIDAY AND WINTER SPECIAL EVENTS

HOLIDAY HOUSES AND TWEETY TREATS
DECEMBER 17 AND 18, FROM 1 – 3 PM
\$6 OR \$4/MEMBERS
FOR AGES 5+

Bring the Family to Create
a Candy-Coated Graham Cracker Masterpiece.
Then Make Some Yummy Outdoor Treats
for the Birds!

WINTER TREE ID WORKSHOP
JANUARY 24, FROM 10 AM to 12 PM
\$10 or \$5/MEMBERS

DECORATIVE GOURD WORKSHOP
MARCH 11, 1 TO 3 PM
\$20 OR \$15/MEMBERS

MORNING BIRD WALKS
RESUME ON THE SECOND FRIDAYS
STARTING MARCH 10 AT 8:30 AM



(Kemp speaks in January, continued from Front Page)

Stanley Kemp is an Assistant Professor at the University of Baltimore and Director of the Environmental Sustainability and Human Ecology program. His courses include Science of the Environment, Human Ecology, and Greater Baltimore Urban Ecosystems. Dr. Kemp graduated from Drexel with a Masters in 1992, and in 2004 he earned a PhD in Ecology and Evolution from the University of Pennsylvania. Although his interest in aquatic ecosystems has led him as far away as South Africa and Costa Rica, he has always returned to research within our local rivers and streams. His main interest lies in impacts from urbanization on stream communities, and how adverse impacts can be reduced through stream and watershed restoration. Recently he has focused on fish communities, and in particular, the River Chub (*Photo Front Page*), an interesting and important local species. He has conducted studies on the fish communities of the urban Jones Falls, and the less urbanized Little Gunpowder Falls, Winters Run, and Big Elk Creek.

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

December 25 and 26
January 2 and 16
February 20

January 1 open modified hours
from 12 to 5 PM

WINTER HOURS (November – February)

Gates to the Nature Center/Parking Lot
will be open from 8 AM to 5 PM

Cars parked in lot after 5 PM
will be LOCKED in!

SPECIAL EVENTS AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

TRAIL GUIDE TRAINING

February 7 to 10

10 AM to 1 PM

TOPICS:

**Maple Sugaring, Wetlands,
Animals, and Plants**

Sharing the wonder of animals and nature with children through the seasons is a priceless experience. Oregon Ridge Nature Center's naturalists train volunteers to lead small groups of elementary students through the forest, meadows and streams to observe seasonal occurrences and explore habitats that some children have never before seen.

In addition to leading hikes for children, our Trail Guides share in a monthly field trip of their own, led by one of our naturalists to other local nature centers, gardens, science centers, and even on canoe adventures.

No experience is needed! All you need bring is your enthusiasm, love of the outdoors, and a willingness to learn and teach!

There is a \$20 non-refundable fee for materials for "first-time" attendees.

Please call the Nature Center to register: 410-887-1815.

MASTER NATURALIST SPRING DATES ANNOUNCED

Mondays, March 27 to May 22

(no class on April 10)

**Includes two Saturdays,
April 29 and May 20**

Time: 9 AM to 3:30 PM

After completing this course and volunteering 40 hours at Oregon Ridge, you will become a Master Naturalist! This is an educational opportunity unique among all others. You gain valuable knowledge from local naturalists and environmental leaders. Then you volunteer 40 hours a year by sharing your expertise and talents in a myriad of ways at Oregon Ridge or other Baltimore County parks. It's fun and you can be proud to say you are one of Maryland's Master Naturalists.

This session's training is partnered with Lake Roland, so classes will be held either at Oregon Ridge Nature Center or the Lake Roland site, depending on the topics and instructors. The schedule will have pre-determined meeting spots and topics and will be given to selected candidates after acceptance into program. The course is \$250. For more information, visit:

<http://www.oregonridgenaturecenter.org/imgs/mastnat2016>



MAPLE SUGAR SEASON 2017 IS FAST APPROACHING

MAPLE SUGAR WEEKENDS

February 18, 19, 25, and 26

10 AM to 4 PM

Oregon Ridge Nature Center

Syrup and candy will be available to buy.

Sugar on the Snow demos at
12:30 and 3:45 PM each day

ANNUAL PANCAKE BREAKFAST

March 4 and 5 at the Lodge

8 AM to Noon

\$8 adults and \$4 children ages 2-8

Syrup and candy will be available to buy.

THE NATURE CENTER SAYS “HELLO” TO NEW STAFF AND BIDS FAREWELL TO ANOTHER

WELCOME, SUSAN SCHEPERS

We are a bit late announcing that Oregon Ridge Nature Center has a new building custodian! Susan Schepers has been with Baltimore County since 1996. She has done desk work with Animal Licenses and Miscellaneous Permits, Building/Plumbing/Electric Inspections, and the Code Enforcement office. She was a shop clerk with Highways, custodian with Building Services, and most recently a maintenance technician with Property Management before transferring to Oregon Ridge Nature Center.

Originally from Tally Ho farm near the Maryland Line, Susan grew up in Baltimore City from age 7. She raised two children in Baltimore County and now has two grandsons to enjoy. She loves arts & crafts and cleaning, but her favorite pastime is selling items at flea markets. She is proud that the items she sells will have a new home and help people who otherwise couldn't afford them at retail stores.

Susan began working with us in August and has enjoyed the “controlled chaos” that happens at the Nature Center! She likes the sense of family and positivity from staff and visitors. She enjoys the teamwork, where everyone works in sync at ORNC and with other County nature centers. It did not take Susan long to adjust and jump in with many projects to keep the Center looking good and serviceable for all. Beside the daily upkeep of the building, she has patched and painted walls, routed trail signs, organized the many tools and supplies,



spruced up the lobby with plants, repaired floor tiles inside and outside the building, put up repurposed shelves in the auditorium to display taxidermy mounts, and more. The list is long, considering the few months she has been at the Center. We are happy to have Susan join our team and our Nature Center family!

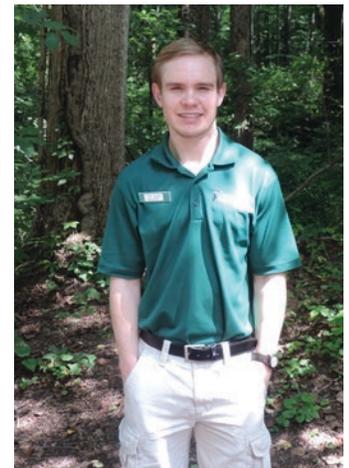
NEW WEEKEND NATURALISTS AND A NEW AA JOIN THE TEAM

We are happy to add four new staff to our team. We introduced you to Weekend Naturalist Sarah Duffy in our last newsletter. Joining her are James (Jimmy) Francis (left photo), Tom Jones (right photo), and Kathy Kadow.

Jimmy Francis started as an intern in January 2016 and now is a Weekend Naturalist. As a child Jimmy and his brothers enjoyed the freedoms of the outdoors. His experiences influenced his goal to seek a career related to the environment and its preservation, so others can experience and enjoy a healthy and safer environment. This past spring, he earned a BS in Environmental Science with a minor in Geography. Jimmy currently works full-time at *ER-M*, an ecological restoration and management firm that also conducts contract landscaping, where he focuses on soil stability, erosion, and water quality by planting natives. While interning here, Jimmy especially enjoyed the maple sugar weekends, where he learned firsthand the arduous process of collecting sap and curating it into delicious sugary syrup while sharing it with others.

Tom Jones began at Oregon Ridge at age 13 as a Ridge Runner. Tom's grandfather took him as a child on many nature walks or visits to the Nature Center, enriching

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experiences that drew Tom to nature like a magnet as he progressed through school. He later interned at Marshy Point Nature Center and worked at the Oregon Ridge Lodge during his summers off from Shepherd University, where he earned a B.S. in Environmental Studies. He is now a Weekend Naturalist while he pursues a Masters in Public Policy with a specialization in Environmental Policy at University of Maryland at College Park. Like Jimmy, Tom's favorite ORNC memory is when he was a Ridge Runner volunteering for Maple Sugar Weekends. He learned quickly

how to lead hikes on his own and especially loved that the weekends ended with the Oregon Ridge Pancake Breakfast!

Betsy Kadow recently was promoted from being the AA at Oregon Ridge to being a Ranger at Lake Roland Park (see article below). We are pleased to announce that Betsy's mother, Kathy Kadow, is following in her daughter's footsteps as ORNC's new AA. Kathy is transferring from Banneker Historical Park and Museum, another Baltimore County Recreation and Parks facility, where she worked as an AA. Kathy will be at the desk on some weekdays in December, then permanently starting January 3. The staff and Council welcome Kathy, as well as the naturalist and graphic design skills she brings with her.

FAREWELL TO BETSY, BUT NOT GOOD-BYE!

In October, Betsy Kadow left our team to join Lake Roland as a Park Ranger. She has been ORNC's Administrative Assistant (AA) and a part-time (PT) naturalist since June 2013. Becoming an environmental educator has always been Betsy's goal, and she has worked hard since college to get there. She has been a summer counselor/director at Cromwell Valley Park and was a PT naturalist at Cromwell and at Irvine Nature Center. One of the perks at her new job is being outside where she now gets *lots* of exercise. She says, "On a normal day at the park (Lake Roland), I walk about 5-8 miles and get to mountain bike as well! My goal for the future is to build experience and knowledge to one day become a Park Manager."

Betsy was integral in updating our new membership database and coming up with innovative ideas and solutions to improve ORNC and its programs. In addition to answering phones and taking program reservations, she honed her skills to be a better naturalist by creating informational signs for exhibits and animals. She also built up her management skills by overseeing the community garden. She says she is most proud of designing the new Oregon Ridge logo and the road signs "that will be part of Oregon Ridge for many years."

Besides excelling in her assigned duties, Betsy went beyond to help staff, volunteers, visitors, and the wildlife. On a rare occasion when both the director and community supervisor were off for the day, a hiker fell and needed emergency care. Betsy coordinated with emergency personnel and the Lodge staff, and transported the hiker with park



vehicles off the trail and safely to a waiting ambulance. One thing Betsy most enjoyed was raising different caterpillars so visitors could see and watch all the stages of their life cycle. Betsy always adapted to the ever-changing circumstances and jumped in to work on many projects and efforts to better ORNC and the park.

We are excited for Betsy, and though we are sad to see her go, we will be able to partner with her at Lake Roland on many programs. There will be lots of opportunities for her to share her passion for nature at ORNC and work with the staff and volunteers who have become her friends. Betsy says she "...learned so much at Oregon Ridge... [and felt] very fortunate to work with so many talented people..." BUT, we are the ones so very fortunate to have had such a talented and hard-working person who helped propel Oregon Ridge towards some needed changes and new ideas!

VOLUNTEERS MAKE THE WORLD GO ROUND AT OREGON RIDGE

BOY AND GIRL SCOUTS' HARD WORK PAYS OFF

Six Boy Scouts pursuing Eagle Scout status and two Girl Scouts seeking Gold Awards have been busy this fall working to improve Oregon Ridge Park.

Two habitat restoration projects were completed along the driveway coming up to the Center. On the left hand side of the driveway as you walk to the Center, you will see where Dylan Orr cleared out many invasive species that were overtaking the beneficial native plants and trees that should be growing in the area and replaced them with a number of native plants. At the top of the driveway, you will see the results of Burke Garrison and his troop's hard work installing a wire fence with a gate and beautifying the area closest to the Center by planting a beneficial wildlife garden with a walking path for staff to use as they refill the newly added birdfeeders.

Inside the Wildlife Management Area near the meadow, Eagle Scout Sam Owens added a wildlife blind, which he designed himself. Sam and his crew spent multiple days building the blind, which overlooks the vernal pond. We can't wait until spring to sit and listen to the spring peepers call and watch for birds migrating through the area! Walk around the pond to discover the work of Eagle Scout Egan Jett-Palmer. Egan and his troop planted white turtlehead plants, the Baltimore Checkerspot butterfly's host plant, as well as other nectar sources. They also built a fence around the new plants to ensure their survival, all as part of the Park's initiative to restore the Baltimore Checkerspot population in the area.

Continue down to the Miner's Trail to see the hard work of Brian McCullough and his troop. Late this fall, they removed over 200 square feet of invasive plants along the meadow to clear the way to plant six native sumac trees. The new trees will help to keep invasive plants from reestablishing and will provide a great benefit to our local wildlife. Next, visit the

Marble Quarry pit where the Archery Trail begins. Brian and his troop repaired and replaced 16 steps and added a handrail, helping to make the climb down to the start of the Archery Trail much safer for archers using the range.

A hike on the Ivy Hill (Yellow) Trail is much safer and enjoyable now due to the repairs made by Griffin Breidenbaugh and his troop. Early this fall, they hauled all the materials out to the back end of the Park to repair existing rain bars, and they also added new ones that will help minimize erosion along the trail. Their efforts will help the Park stay more pristine and sustainable by keeping unwanted sediment from washing into Baisman's Run.

Two motivated, young girl scouts chose Oregon Ridge Park to complete their Gold Award projects. Oregon Ridge's very own Christina Panousos has been volunteering in the Park since she was 13. She recognized that the rabbit needed a bigger space and began fundraising to build a new rabbit enclosure. Christina then helped to design and build the new space for the rabbit from start to finish. The rabbit has been enjoying her larger space, and visitors can now see Licorice the Rabbit in her new enclosure next to the chickens. Last and far from least, the next time you visit the Kid's Nature Play Area, you'll notice a new shelter structure covering the existing stage, which was designed and built by Emma Walz and her family this fall. Be on the lookout for the addition of handcrafted backdrops to which Emma is applying the final touches before she installs them later this year!

The Nature Center staff is incredibly grateful for the time and dedication of each of these scouts and appreciates the improvements they have made to the Park and Center. Without the efforts of these hard-working scouts, their leaders, families and fellow scouts, many improvements would not take place. We are always looking for opportunities to work with scouts in the community. If you are a scout looking to complete a service project in the Park, please contact the Nature Center for more details about available projects.



Sam Owen's Wildlife Blind



Egan Jett-Palmer's Checkerspot garden/fence



Emma Walz's Shelter in Play Area

ANNA JENSEN: Destined to be a Ridge Runner



Anna Jensen has lived around the corner from Oregon Ridge all of her life. She has been coming to the festivals, hiking on the trails, and visiting the animals in the Nature Center for as long as she can remember. When Anna turned 13, she wanted to give back to her community. She thought the best way to do that was to join our Ridge Runner team, which seemed the perfect fit for her love of the outdoors and animals, her desire to help others, and her lifelong love of our Park.

Anna joined the Ridge Runner team in 2014 and quickly revealed that she is an extraordinary young lady. She is responsible, dependable and self-motivated. Anna's love for the Center and the animals in her care is obvious. Her favorites are Leo the Wood Turtle and Licorice the Rabbit because of their unique, fun personalities. Anna enjoys showing off the animals and interacting with the visitors to teach them about the environment. Aside from helping with the animals each week, Anna has served as a CIT (Counselor in Training) during summer camps and has helped at many special events. She is always willing to lend a hand and teach new Ridge Runners all about the animals at the Center.

Now a sophomore at Dulaney High School with a 3.9 GPA, Anna has a strong desire to go on to study medicine and one day become a pediatrician. Her favorite subject is science, but she also enjoys foreign languages. She is currently learning to speak Spanish & German. Anna also enjoys playing the piano, cooking, fashion, exercising, and reading classic books, like *Pride & Prejudice*. We are lucky to have Anna Jensen as part of the Ridge Runner team.

VOLUNTEERS PROVIDE AN EVENING OF STRAIGHT TALK WITH TOM HORTON ABOUT THE CHESAPEAKE BAY

About 80 people came to hear Tom Horton speak about his 50 years working to save the Chesapeake Bay and his projections of what the future may hold. Despite progress over the years, Horton did not mince words about the arduous task still ahead. He urged listeners to be diligent in their personal efforts to support the Bay and to ask the same of their politicians and lawmakers.

Rouge Fine Catering delighted participants with great food during the "meet and greet." Boordy Vineyards gave the Council a super deal on cases of Chardonnay and Petit Cab from their Chesapeake Collection. The Ivy Bookshop was available to sell Tom's newest book *Choptank Odyssey: Celebrating a Great Chesapeake River*. We also wish to thank Nancy Berger for her generous donation to this program. The event resulted in a profit of \$3300!

The committee headed by Debbie Bacharach planned a well-received evening that went off seamlessly. Proceeds will benefit the Council's future exhibit expansion project. Many thanks to Tom Horton and these volunteers: Debbie Bacharach, Beth Keyser, Alisa Anania, Ellen Mering, Pat Ghingher, Lynn Faulkner, Ned Renner, Anna Beard, Melody Krause, Erin McCleary, Andrea Barnett, and Sara Yousa.



Tom Horton chats with Sue Leslie and others at the Meet and Greet. Mr. Horton also signed copies of his new book, "Choptank Odyssey: Celebrating a Great Chesapeake River."

PLASTIC: Here Today, Where Tomorrow?

By Ralph Brown



On September 13, 1848, when an accidental experiment of nature sent a long metal rod through the frontal cortex of Phineas Gage, the study of neuroscience was forever changed. On January 10, 1992, a metal container fell off the ship *Ever Laurel* in the North Pacific, spilling 28,800 plastic bath toys into the ocean, forever changing the understanding of ocean currents. A cadre of

beachcombers — not the type that collect sea shells and driftwood, but amateur scientists who lay in wait to map the dispersal patterns of flotsam and jetsam — were ready. By compiling the data on the beaches where these toy experiments of nature washed up (some extremely remote), they were able to better elucidate the paths of the ocean currents. (See map below.) Unlike tides that are caused by the pull of the moon's gravity, currents are the result of winds and the earth's rotation. Imagine a bowl of soup being stirred while resting on a rotating lazy Susan. These currents form large eddies, called ocean gyres, and like eddies, have an outer ring of moving water and a large calm center.

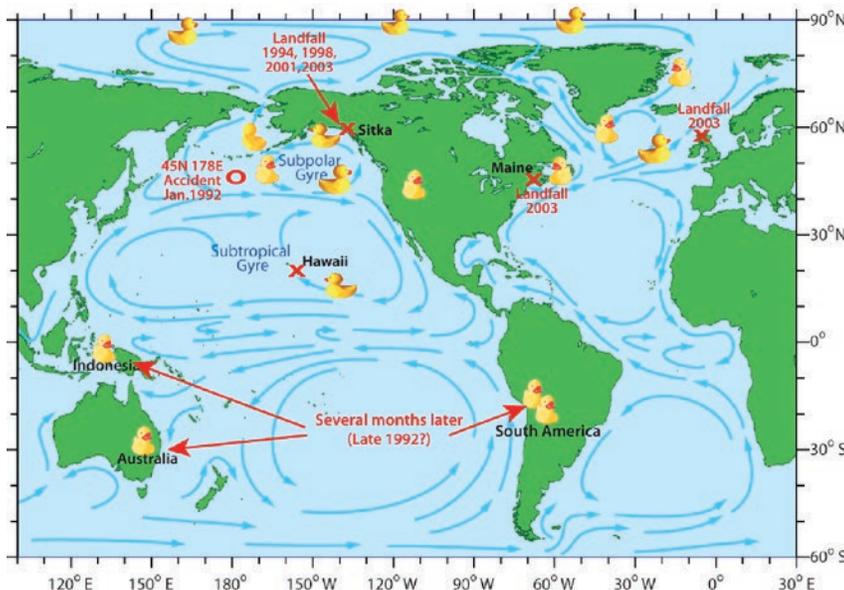
If the story ended there, we could all feel good about this addition to our scientific knowledge. However, in 1997 a sailor named Charles Moore decided to collect samples of ocean water while sailing from Hawaii to San Francisco. What he discovered is now known as the *Great Pacific Garbage Patch*. This garbage dump, mostly composed of very small pieces of plastic (less than 1 mm.), is twice the size of Texas and up to 100 feet deep. The amount of plastic outnumbers the amount of plankton six to one. These “garbage patches,”

which form in the calm center of these gyres, exist in each of the earth's oceans.

Plastic is mostly made from oil and natural gas. Carbon and hydrogen molecules are linked together into long chains called *polymers*. Many other chemicals are added to effect the properties of these chains, producing thousands of different types of plastics. The first plastics were actually made in the 1800's from cellulose, a plant material, as a substitute for two expensive commodities — tortoise shell used for combs and ivory used for billiard balls. However, it wasn't until after World War II that we started transforming ourselves into the kingdom of plastic. Our cars went from steel to plastic, our lighters from Zippo to Bic, our pens from Parker to Pentel, and our Coke bottles went from 6 1/2 oz. glass to 64 oz. polyethylene terephthalate (or PET #1 plastic).

Rather than a long-term relationship, our interaction with plastic is more like a brief communiqué, more twitter than Shakespeare. Over 50% of the plastic we use is meant for quick, one time use. Disposable and indestructible is not a good combination. So what happens to the billions and billions of plastic cups, bottles and bags that are produced yearly in this country? About 7% is recycled, about 7% is burned for energy, and the rest either ends up in landfills or in our oceans, because trash, like water, flows downhill. After a few years of exposure to waves and sunlight, these plastics break down into the small particles that comprise 80% to 90% of the oceans' garbage pits.

We already have so many environmental issues that keep us up at night — global warming, stink bugs, acidification of the oceans, extinction of plant and animal life, Japanese stilt grass, deer. Do we really have to add another? You decide. Plastics are mostly made from nonrenewable resources — natural gas and oil. Presently about 8% of the world's total gas and oil production goes into the making of plastics. When asked how much plastic is recycled, Charles Moore, the discoverer of the *Great Pacific Garbage Patch*, replied, “Diddly point squat.” (Continued on page 11)



So what happens when this estimated 10 million tons a year of plastic ends up in our oceans? Birds, fish and reptiles eat some of it. The Internet is replete with images of these dead animals' stomachs containing shocking amounts of plastic pieces, from barely visible bits up to bags, bottle caps and lighters. Sometimes these objects block the digestive tract or fill the stomach so that the animal starves to death. Other times, the carcinogens and endocrine disrupters that plastics contain, such as bisphenol, (BPA), phthalates, and fire retardant polymers, work their way up the food chain. Plastic is also an excellent absorber of toxins. Waterborne chemicals, such as polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB), DDT, and dioxin, concentrate in plastic and also go up the food chain. As the amount of plastic in the oceans increases, more and more of the sunlight that algae and plankton need to grow is blocked. Adding to these effects is the aesthetic jolt of seeing remote beaches despoiled with tons of plastic refuse.

Reduce. Reuse. Recycle. These are the new 3 R's. As a society, we have accepted that the answer to a throw away culture is the last of the 3 R's. Nature wastes nothing, but how well do humans perform? Among the materials recycled by us in the US, plastic comes in lowest at 7%. Glass is 23%, metal is 34%, and paper is 55%. Baltimore County has a goal of recycling 50% of all refuse. Last year

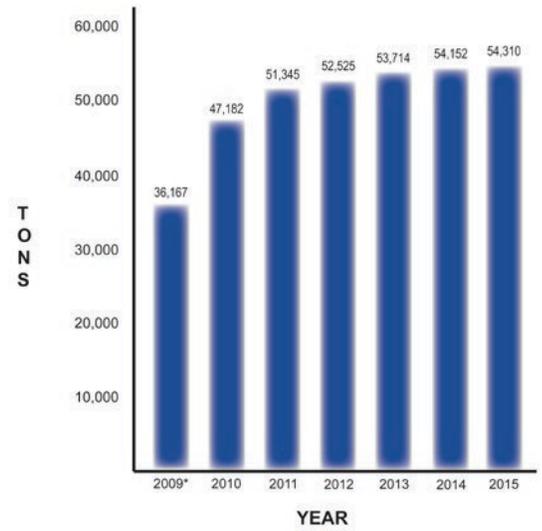
that percentage in Baltimore County was 16%. The tonnage of materials recycled greatly increased after the county went to a "single stream" system (all recyclables in one container) in 2010, but has leveled off the last three years. Presently, at the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) in Cockeysville, styrofoam, plastic clamshells, and plastic bags cannot be recycled. Plastic bags can be returned to most Supermarkets and is commonly made into plastic lumber such as Trex. The numbers on the bottom of plastic containers refer to the type of plastic. The most valuable plastic is #1 (beverage bottles) and #2 (detergent containers). Most other types of plastic can be recycled, but if you are uncertain, just put it in the bin and it can be removed at the MRF.

How about the other 2 R's? John Tierney writing in the *New York Times* in 1996 defined recycling as "a rite of atonement for the sin of excess." Can we reduce and reuse? Do we need to buy 4 cents worth of water in billions of plastic bottles a year when we have perfectly safe water coming out of our own faucets? Do we need to bring home five plastic bags with a usable life span of minutes whenever we go to the grocery store, when we could bring our own heavy duty shopping bags that can be reused

over and over? Do children in America need 80% of their toys to be made in China out of plastic?

We often think science and technology will save us. Perhaps they will. Perhaps in the future all plastic will be made from renewable carbon sources, and bacteria and fungus will be genetically engineered to easily digest them. Until that Golden Age arrives, the best we can do is to try to do better at reducing, reusing, and recycling.

RESIDENTIAL "SINGLE STREAM" RECYCLING COLLECTED IN BALTIMORE COUNTY



*Baltimore County switched to "Single Stream" recycling collection in February 2010.

NEW EXHIBIT UNDERWAY

The Exhibit Committee is working on a master plan that will revitalize our Main Exhibit Hall space to include more interactive exhibits and realistic displays incorporating our taxidermy and live animal collections. The goal is for visitors to increase their knowledge about human impact on the natural environment, specifically the Piedmont ecosystem of Central Maryland. As visitors engage with new exhibits and read more about what's happening with our habitats, they may be inspired by the challenge to become a more committed citizen scientist or activist to conserve our local natural resources.

This will be our most ambitious exhibits project, requiring a huge fundraising effort. Stay tuned for more updates in the months to come.

TRAILBLAZER STAFF

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Articles/graphics for Spring issue due 1/5/17.

ORNC COUNCIL 2015-16 ANNUAL REPORT

By President Pat Ghinger

As the Council's current fiscal year progresses, there are many highlights to report from last year, as well as a quick view of what's coming up in 2016-17.

Thanks to a generous donation by Bill Kidd Toyota on York Road in Cockeysville, funding from Baltimore County Recreation and Park, and money raised by the ORNC Council, the long awaited outdoor pavilion was completed this fall. The pavilion is now well in use as a place for programming, special events, camps, and birthday parties. We are very excited to have the structure, which will provide shade and protection from inclement weather.

Next on the *2016 -2017 To Do List* is the library renovation, followed by the establishment of the Woodland Garden. We will also start updating the exhibits in the Nature Center in 2016-2017. Looking down the road are renovations and updates to the auditorium.

Updating the indoor and outdoor exhibits at ORNC is always top priority. The woodpecker display was upgraded this year and an interactive Conservation Kiosk was installed in the Nature Center lobby. Outdoor informational trail panels were installed and more are planned for the coming year.

We appreciate the ORNC Council membership, which now has 613 members, for their continuing support of the many activities and demands of the Nature Center. Members help in many ways, including financial support, volunteering at special events, serving on the Council Board, and trail guiding for the many school programs. Additionally, the Ridge Runners did a great job this year helping maintain the Nature Center, the animals, and volunteering for the special events. Our summer staff and interns were exceptional this year, making possible the wonderful summer camps offered at ORNC.

We also want to especially recognize the Eagle Scouts who donated their time and worked hard to complete many projects at the Park this year. Among the scout projects are the creation of a new wildlife blind in the meadow, improvements to the playground, tree plantings, invasive removal, and removal of the deteriorating fence that surrounded the wildlife management pond. Their contributions to the ORNC community are invaluable.

Throughout the year, the ORNC staff added many new programs for all ages. The dedication and creativity shown by the staff continues to amaze. It's because of their hard work that the programs, special events, and the Nature Center itself attract so many people. We are extremely lucky to have them. We were saddened by Pat Bedgar's retirement from the ORNC staff this year. Her devotion to maintaining the Nature Center and willingness to always help with whatever needed to be done will be sorely missed.

For the 22nd consecutive year, the Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council awarded scholarships to graduating seniors who demonstrated academic excellence and a commitment to the environment. The Scholarship Committee devotes a great deal of time interviewing and selecting perspective students for the scholarships. A graduate from Patapsco High School, Western School of Technology, and Park School were each awarded \$4,000 for their freshman year of college, and a student from Maryvale was awarded a \$5,000 scholarship. The Council extends its gratitude to all who donate so generously to our Scholarship Fund.

Once again this year, the monthly Speaker Series was very well attended and presented diverse and interesting speakers. The new series began this fall on September 19, 2016. Please see the

oregonridgenaturecenter.org website for a list of upcoming presenters. We hosted a special speaker event on November 15. This fundraiser featured Tom Horton, Maryland's well-known author and environmentalist, speaking about the past 50 year effort to save the Chesapeake Bay.

The ORNC website is our lifeline to the public and includes everything one needs to know about ORNC. You can even download your own personal trail map. The website is an excellent source of information and requires constant revision. We are very lucky to have a webmaster on our Board who keeps us up to date.

As always, the *Trailblazer* newsletter keeps the ORNC Council well informed about what is happening at Oregon Ridge Park and the Nature Center. The wonderful articles keep us updated on environmental issues that affect the Nature Center and inform us about the nature that surrounds us. Many thanks go to all those who regularly contribute to the success of the *Trailblazer*. This year the *Trailblazer* will be printed in color.

This past year also brought some changes to the ORNC landscape. Columbia Pipeline Company removed 18 acres of woodland to lay down a new gas line. The area has been seeded and mulched. Additional planting and final stabilization of the disturbed pipeline areas are scheduled. Areas of the Park were also logged to establish a healthy oak canopy. More tree thinning/logging is scheduled for the upcoming year.

Lastly, I want to thank again all of the Council members, the Council Board, staff, volunteers, and donors for making our activities at Oregon Ridge possible. It is your commitment to and interest in the events and programs that ensures the continued level of quality that is demonstrated at the Oregon Ridge Nature Center.

HONEY HARVEST 2016: A Bee's Perspective

Bee Charmer, Nancy Berger



I, Bee Charmer, flew over two miles from my hive to attend Oregon Ridge Nature Center's Honey Harvest this year. The American Honey Princess Tabitha Mansker, a human friend, also flew many miles to give extraction talks, perform live hive demos, and tell people how important honeybees are. She certainly knows her bee facts and spoke articulately about beekeeping and the tough challenges that bees and other pollinators must face. Honeybees produce every third forkful of food that you eat, so it is important for humans to help us survive.

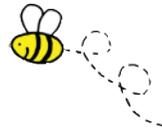
Honeybees have many human friends and they swarmed to support us at Oregon Ridge this year, even on a rainy Saturday. As I buzzed overhead here and there, I could see people walking around wearing antennas they made in the craft building and carrying bottles of free maple syrup, a perk for joining the ORNC Council. I saw Union troops from the 26th Regiment of PA playing cards, the 4th North Carolina infantry *Tar Heels* (named thus, I hear, because they stick to the job) firing their weapons, and three beekeepers sharing their expertise and selling their wares. Volunteers were making honey ice cream under the new pavilion, pressing apples for cider (*You know, without honeybees there would be no apples!*), and people were roasting marshmallows for s-mores around a campfire. I couldn't help but do a bee jig or three to the singing and fiddle music that drifted from the stage. The following volunteers, demonstrators, and vendors deserve a honey of a hand for making Honey Harvest 2016 a success.

Alisa Anania
Gary Anderson
Andrea Barnett
Anna Beard
Nancy Berger
Ralph Brown
Ann Canoles
Noot Canoles
Christine Carpenter
Kate Carpenter
Jim Curtis
Emma Danz
Lucilla Facchin
Lynn Faulkner
Gemma Field
Georgette Frederick
Katie Georgantas
Susan Genovese
Jay Ghingher
Pat Ghingher
Mark Gingerich
Sybil Hebb
Jamie Hewes
Joan Hoblitzell
Carol Johnston
Mark Kander
Monica Kander
Ann Kerns

Beth Keyser
Bill LaBarre
Sue Leslie
Ryan Lightfoot-Johnson
Paula Mackey
Nancy Mattingly
Ellen Mering
Erin McCleary
Kevin O'Neill
Christina Panousos
Kristin Panousos
Cheryl Parrish
Alan Penczek
Jeanne Pinto
Dave Power
Andi Rudai
Magen Ruthke
Mary Jane Shanks
Bob Stanhope
Melissa Tillery
Paul Waldman
Mike Waltz
Meghan Ward
Lou Witt
Sarah Yosua
Dulaney Key Club Members
(Parking Geniuses)

Demonstrators:

MD Forest Service/Smokey the Bear
Homestead Forge
Gettysburg College
Gunpowder Conservancy
Maryland Master Gardeners
Phoenix Wildlife Center
26th Regiment of Pennsylvania
Brian Brauer and the 4th Carolina Company



Vendors:

Antietam Dairy
Bees by the Bay
Farm to Charm
The Glass Bee
Greene's Lamb
Kommie Pig BBQ
McDaniel's Apiary
Rachel's Hair Accessories
Snyder's Apiary





**Oregon Ridge Nature
Center Council**
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Cockeysville, MD 21030

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Email _____ Phone _____

Address _____ State _____ Zip _____

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___ \$ 30 Family
___ \$ 75 Supporting

___ \$ 250 Sustaining
___ \$ 500 Lifetime
___ \$ Extra Donation



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