

TRAILBLAZER

Fall 2017



Supporting Oregon Ridge
Nature Center for 35 years

(Tabitha Olsen is a 2017 ORNC Council Scholarship winner. Part of ORNCC's Scholarship process is to request candidates to submit an essay that expresses their personal thoughts/experiences that led to their interest in nature, and that explains why they feel nature education is important. Tabitha's essay is about how one single experience, an evening birding adventure, changed her life. We are publishing it in hopes it will encourage others to seek out similar experiences.)

SAVING OUR PLANET, ONE BIRD AT A TIME

by Tabitha Olsen



That first night of birding was not only exhilarating, but also a true test of what little I had learned thus far in my lifetime of observation. Nightfall had descended, stars dotted the sky, and the air was filled with a strong, persistent *whip-poor-will* cry, which made the exhausting trip up to that isolated woodlot worthwhile. This dark night, filled with Barred Owls, Chuck-will's-widows and Whip-poor-wills, was the moment that birding became a true reality for me. For that one hour, my life was intertwined with an entirely different species, both of us sharing the same earth, one of us dying.

I latch onto these memories with sincerity because there is a chance that I will never again hear the songs of species such as these: those in steady decline. That goes for the Northern Bobwhites, Greater Sage-Grouse, Whooping Cranes, and all of the other species that are currently climate threatened, endangered, declining in numbers, or that are slowly being pushed out of regions where populations once surged. Experiences such as mine, where primeval connections with nature are expressed in the simplest of forms, like that of listening to a basic bird song, should not be one that I fear won't occur for generations to come. I do wonder if I should be the one worrying about the state of our planet, about global warming, about habitat destruction, or about pollution; the Whip-poor-will doesn't worry, because he can't. Thus, my question is easily answered — I must.

This dilemma our world is facing is on a far greater scale than simply suffering birds, although this is where my journey started. Birds are one of the most insightful beacons of global warming, an issue that was produced solely by our own collective selfishness. We are regularly prized as being the most advanced species this planet has produced since its creation, yet we are often the most destructive. The problem lies with our conscious choice to remain ignorant and complacent toward the issues surrounding us, and we need to change that. Through proper education regarding our planet's ecosystems, we can show people the direct impact of our actions and undoubtedly disprove the countless myths about climate change. While a researcher can write up reports or conduct population surveys, it's essential that we encourage citizen science in order to raise awareness of the utmost importance of our planet's avian indicators and eventually lead people towards fighting the rapidly approaching dilemma that is environmental destruction. People want a quick solution; they want

Continued at the bottom of page 3



ORNC COUNCIL SPEAKER SERIES

SAVE THE BEES!

**By Stephen McDaniel
Photographer and Beekeeper**

**September 18, 7:30 PM
ORNC Auditorium**

Bees are in trouble, as are many pollinators, but the reasons are not always clear. There are hundreds of species of native bees, mostly small and solitary, but nobody knows exactly how many exist or how large their populations are. A few scientists and volunteers are surveying them now, and many appear to be in decline.

Honey bees, though non-native to North America, having been imported into Virginia from Europe in the early 1600s, have been in decline for twenty years, and their predicament, first described in 2006, is getting worse. What is the cause — pesticides, viruses, mites, or climate change? Steve McDaniel will have the latest research results to reveal scientists' findings on the real causes of the great decline in pollinators which became much more serious in 2012. One thing is certain — it's not cell phones!

A freelance photographer since 1975, Stephen McDaniel treasures nature in all its forms. In his photography, he attempts to convey emotions as well as information, whether his subject is the awesome power of a volcanic eruption or the delicate beauty of a tiny wildflower blossom. Thousands of Steve's pictures have been published in calendars, books, and magazines, including American Bee Journal, Newsweek, National Geographic Kids, Nature's Best, BBC Wildlife, Chesapeake Home, Harvard, Outdoor America, Bee Culture, Hawaii Magazine, and even Beekeeping for Dummies. Steve has won awards in major competitions, including Nature's Best and Wildlife Photographer of the Year.

Steve also raises honey bees, and as a Master Beekeeper, he teaches classes and workshops on various aspects of beekeeping, and of course, he photographs them. Many of those pictures appear in children's nature books and magazines. His honey and beeswax have won many awards at fairs and competitions throughout Maryland.

A selection of his fine art photography is displayed at the website: www.McDanielPhotography.com. You can find out more about his bees and honey at www.McDanielHoneyFarm.com.



WHAT'S COMING UP IN THE 2017-18 SPEAKER SCHEDULE

All presentations are free and begin at 7:30 at ORNC. If you would like to be a speaker or recommend a speaker, please contact the Center.

We are currently in transition between chairpersons for the Speaker Series committee. The October 16 and November 20 speakers will be announced via e-mail to our membership. Looking towards 2018: On January 15, Peter Groffman of the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies will give a talk on his studies of the streams here at Oregon Ridge. On March

19, Alice Christman of Chesapeake Bay Foundation will give a presentation *How is the Chesapeake Bay Doing?*, and on April 16, Dennis Whigham of the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center will give a talk on native orchids. Mark your calendars now and watch your e-mail for more updates on our 2017-18 Speaker Series.

HONEY HARVEST FESTIVAL

Saturday 10/7
Sunday 10/8
11 to 4

ENJOY...
Fun Crafts
Live Music

Free Admission!
*Some Activities
Require a fee.*

Puppet Shows
Hay Wagon Rides
Animal Encounters
Apple Cider Pressing
Civil War Reenactments
Haystack Treasure Hunts
S'mores around a Campfire
Food! Food! And More Food!
Blacksmithing Demonstrations
Wool Spinning Demonstrations
Honey Ice Cream Churning Demos

Honey Extraction and Open Hive Demos
by Ms. Maia Jaycox, the 2017 American Honey Queen

AMERICAN HONEY QUEEN TO ATTEND THIS YEAR'S HONEY HARVEST



We are lucky to have Maia Jaycox, the 2017 American Honey Queen, attend our festival this year. The American Honey Queen is the national spokesperson on behalf of the American Beekeeping Federation, a trade organization representing beekeepers and honey producers throughout the United States. Maia will speak about the importance of honey bees to our

daily lives and how the diverse flight path of honey bees extends from food to fiber. She will also share information on how honey can enhance one's natural beauty.

Maia is from Webster City, IA. She began beekeeping with her family four years ago and tends to seven hives of bees. She is a sophomore at Iowa State University, in the open option program with a strong interest in biology. She is a member of the Kappa Alpha Theta sorority.

**WELCOME, MAIA, TO OUR ANNUAL
HONEY HARVEST FESTIVAL!**

Saving The Planet, One Bird at a Time, continued

to be able to sit at home, comfortable and at peace, while simultaneously feeling accomplished for doing nothing. There are solutions, yes, but it starts with the systematic destruction of those mindsets that inhibit correction while promoting ignorance. It starts with *action*.

It is often easy to take what we have for granted. The bird songs we hear on our way to work, the autumnal sea of golden reddish hues, and the hint of salt in the air as you

draw near our ocean's shore are all experiences that are ending. There will be a time when those who underappreciate our planet won't have the same opportunity to do so. There will be a time when children will be born into a world without bird songs, without old-growth forests, without seas clean enough to wade in. Within each of our hands lies the answer as to when this harsh reality will occur. For if that lamenting Whip-poor-will could have spoken that night, it would have asked us for help. We need to ask it for forgiveness.

MORE GREAT ACTIVITIES TO ENJOY THIS FALL

TRAIL GUIDE TRAINING

September 5–8 from 10 AM –1 PM

We need people who love nature and love to share knowledge with children to join our Trail Guide team. These volunteers are essential to making field trips at the Nature Center an unforgettable adventure for school children! Trail Guides lead small groups of elementary students on explorations throughout the forest, meadows, and streams, in search of the critters that call Oregon Ridge home.

Join Fall Trail Guide Training on 9/5 to 9/8, from 10 AM to 1 PM at the Nature Center. Each day explores different training topics related to the school field trips being offered. This year's topics include: Habitats, Talking Bones, Native Americans, and Rocks at the Ridge. No experience is needed, only a willingness to learn and inspire others! There is a \$20 fee for first-time attendees. Advanced registration required.



TRAILBLAZER STAFF

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Articles/photos for Winter issue due 11/13/2017

NATURE QUEST

Enjoy Outdoor Fun and Win Prizes!

Nature Quest is an outdoor adventure for the family! You can bike, hike, or canoe in designated areas to complete your Quest and earn prizes. Trail markers can be found at Lake Roland, Oregon Ridge Nature Center, Benjamin Banneker Historical Park, Cromwell Valley Nature Center, Marshy Point Nature Center, Honeygo Regional Park, and the Center for Agriculture and Farm Park.

Start your adventure by picking up a Nature Quest Passport at one of the participating parks, your local Wegmans, or online. Questers who complete at least five trails during the year receive free admission to that year's **Quest Fest** and a chance to win great prizes. The **Quest Fest** celebration takes place on October 22. The **Quest Fest** features live animals, canoeing, archery, face painting, dam tours, live music, raffles and more.

For more details or to download a Passport, go to: <http://OregonRidgeNatureCenter.org/NatQuest.html>.

Complete Your Quest in Three Easy Steps

1. **Get your Quest Passport booklet.** Pick up a booklet from a local Wegmans store or at a participating parks.
2. **Start hiking.** Take your booklet and head out on the trails. Record your progress by making a rubbing, using a pencil or crayon, of the trail marker located on each of the thirteen trails in the booklet.
3. **Collect your prizes.** Prizes are awarded after accumulating rubbings from at least 5 of 13 trails and can be picked up at any of the participating parks. In addition to prizes, questers who complete five or more trails also receive free admission to **Nature Quest Fest on October 22, from 12– 2 PM, at Lake Roland**. Questers who complete nine or more trails will be entered into drawings for great prizes.



CONGRATULATIONS, 2017 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS!

By Polly Roberts, MD, Scholarship Chairperson

For the 23rd consecutive year, the ORNC Council has awarded scholarships to graduating seniors who demonstrate academic excellence and a commitment to environmental issues and who plan to pursue environmental studies in college. Six scholarships totaling \$17,000 have been awarded:

Samantha Cassell, who is in the final (fourth) year of the Getty Mullan scholarship, has been awarded \$1000 for her senior year at Towson University in environmental education. Samatha is an intern at ORNC. (Photo/Article on pg. 9)



Tabitha Olsen, a graduate of Overlea High School, has been awarded \$4500 to study wildlife and forest science at Purdue University. An avid “birder,” she is a member of the Youth Division of the Maryland Ornithological Society, where she has led groups and taught youngsters. Tabitha plans to become an ornithologist and is interested in fieldwork.



Benjamin Glaser a graduate of the Western School of Technology and Environmental Science, was awarded \$2000 for studies at Carnegie Mellon University, where he will undertake a dual major in material science and engineering and public policy. He attended two summer sessions of a U.S. Army program devoted to alternative and renewable energy and envisions a future developing sustainable materials and perhaps serving as an expert witness for an environmental firm.



Madison Plunkert, a Hereford graduate, has received \$4500 to pursue environmental studies at the University of Maryland (UMD), College Park, where she will major in biology, with an eventual career goal of field ecology research and teaching. She is a “birder” and is particularly interested in rainforest ecology. Madison served as a Ridge Runner at the ORNC this past year.



Craig Millin is a graduate of the Jemicy School and has been awarded \$2000 for his studies at Unity College. Craig plans to major in conservation law enforcement and minor in either forestry or outdoor education. He has received his school’s Diamond Award for completing over 1,000 hours of community service and is interested in a career devoted to conservation law in either the National Park Service or Coast Guard.



Shyla Davis-Cadigan, a graduate of the Western School of Technology & Environmental Science, has received \$3000 to study environmental science with a concentration in agriculture and natural resources at UMD, College Park. This past year, she was an intern at the Benjamin Banneker Historical Park and Museum. Shyla envisions a future career related to sustainability and global public health.

TO EACH OF OUR SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS,
WE WISH TO SAY . . .

Congratulations NICE GOING!
GREAT! Way to Go!
Yea! FELICITATIONS
CHEERS Take A BEST
BOW! WISHES!

VOLUNTEERS TAKE CARE OF OUR PARK AND LEAVE BEHIND GOOD WORKS

WHO TAKES CARE OF OUR PARK? VOLUNTEERS DO!

by Ralph Brown MD
Grounds Committee Chair

Oregon Ridge Park occupies slightly more than a thousand acres of land. I imagine that very few of you who read this are thinking, "Wow, a thousand acres — that's enough for a large shopping mall or a major housing development." More likely you're thinking, "Keep your hands off of Oregon Ridge. I love this park." More than 150 years ago, Frederick Law Olmstead, the designer of Central Park, the first large urban park in America, wrote:

It is a scientific fact that the occasional contemplation of natural scenes... is favorable to the health and vigor of men and especially to the health and vigor of their intellect beyond any other conditions which can be offered them, that it not only gives pleasure for the time being but increases the subsequent capacity for happiness and the means of securing happiness.

Over the ensuing 150 years, overwhelming scientific evidence has shown that parks truly do contribute to both the physical and mental well being of their visitors. Depression lessens, attention increases, pulse and blood pressure drop, cortisol levels (a hormonal indicator of stress) decrease, and immune system measures increase. That is in addition to the well-known, long-term positive effects of exercise. People of all ages, races, religions, and social-economic groups enjoy these rewards. Public parks are democracy in action.

Then there are the environmental benefits. Parks decrease runoff, remove particulate matter and CO2 from the air, cool their

surroundings, and provide habitat for hundreds of species of plants and animals. On a recent morning walking in Oregon Ridge, I saw an Indigo Bunting and a Scarlet Tanager sitting three feet apart on the same tree branch.

Before I took the Master Naturalist course and started to volunteer at Oregon Ridge, I shared a misconception with many users of the park. I believed that if a garden needed weeding, a trail needed fixing, stream or ravine crossings needed improving, or rotting benches needed replacing all one had to do was call the County Parks and Recreation hotline and a SWAT team of county employees would arrive instantaneously to fix the problem. In reality, no such county workers exist. With only two full-time naturalists at Oregon Ridge to run all the activities of the park, wish lists can be produced, but volunteers weed the gardens, repair the trails, improve the crossings, and install the new benches. Without volunteers, public parks could not function. The poet Mary Oliver once wrote, "Attention is the beginning of devotion." Thousands of people take advantage of the beauty and serenity of Oregon Ridge Park, so I know that the devotion already exists. What we need now is for you to give your attention to the maintenance of the park. If you use

the park, enjoy the park, love the park, and have a few hours a month to spare, please help us and call the park office at 410-887-1815 to volunteer. Thank you.

ADOPT A BENCH

What better place to plan your next career move, propose marriage, explain to your kids how a caterpillar becomes a butterfly, or read a good book than on a bench in a serene, natural setting? The present wooden, log benches at Oregon Ridge Park are slowly succumbing to the ravages of time and need to be replaced. Sponsoring a new bench through the Oregon Ridge *Adopt-A-Bench* program is a wonderful way to memorialize a family member or a dear friend, celebrate special occasions or milestones, or just say, "I love you." By providing a place to sit, rest, reflect and remember you are enhancing Oregon Ridge for the enjoyment of all.

You can adopt a 4-foot cedar bench for \$600 or a 6-foot cedar bench for \$800. Your bench, with an acknowledging plaque, will then be placed at an agreed upon site in the park. This contribution is tax deductible. If you would like more information about the Adopt-A-Bench program, please contact Dr. Ralph Brown at 410-375-4378 or by e-mail at ralphbrownmd@gmail.com.



A SUPER SUMMER CAMP TEAM AND SUMMER FUN FOR OUR CAMPERS

SUMMER CAMP 2017 ONE OF OUR BEST

Another fun filled summer has come to an end at Oregon Ridge. Ellen Reinecke, Maggie Popp, and Michelle Sachais, this year's Summer Seasonal Naturalists, led a fantastic season of six summer camps. They provided nature adventures for 192 campers, ages 4 to 13.

Ellen is a recent graduate from Virginia Tech, where she earned her B.S. in Wildlife Conservation. Michelle is a current student at York College, where she is working to obtain a degree in Recreation & Leisure Administration. Maggie recently transferred to Towson University from the University of Maryland, where she will continue pursuing a degree in Environmental Science. All three are new to Oregon Ridge this year, but have already had a number of other relevant experiences that were assets in making this year's summer camps the best yet! Their flexibility, friendliness, creativity and positive attitudes made them a dynamic team. We are excited for them to stay on as part-time naturalists to continue

to provide engaging programs at Oregon Ridge.

The *Little Discoverers*, our youngest campers, kicked off the summer with explorations in the park. Maggie especially enjoyed taking the *Little Discoverers* out on a stream search, where they looked for creek critters in Oregon Branch. *Wild Things* camp highlighted many close-up animal encounters with our resident animals. Even stumbling upon a nest of yellow jackets did not deter our *Wild Things* campers! *Outdoor Adventurers* loved learning survival skills. By far their favorite was shelter building in the woods, a fun time of learning to work together, with a little friendly competition thrown in! Our oldest campers, the *Wilderness Explorers* experienced the various parks throughout Baltimore County on explorations that highlighted a ropes course, river tubing, canoeing and camping.

New this year, we launched a Camp Extension program, which allowed campers to continue their adventures after the main camps ended in the afternoon. Camp Extension was led by Rachael Ginsburg,

ORNC's Summer Outreach Specialist, and assisted by Junior Counselors Christina Panousos and Sarah Lenhart. Camp Extension activities continued the camp themes of the day and included activities such as ice cream making, identifying edible plants, natural tie-dyeing, outdoor explorations, games, crafts and more.



Campers learn about the Monarch life cycle, above.
Campers learn to throw Native American atlatls, below



R-L: Camp Leaders Ellen Reinecke, Maggie Popp,
and Michelle Sachais



OREGON RIDGE NATURE CENTER COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017

By President Pat GINGER

August marks the close of the 2016 – 2017 fiscal year for the Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council, a time to reflect on the year's highlights and the Council's plans for the future.

The ORNC Council membership has held steady with approximately 600 members. We had a total of 152,432 visitors to the park as of July, with 5,165 people attending the special events. The programs and activities offered by the ORNC staff were attended by 15,135 people.

Donations have continued to increase, especially with a wonderful Bill Kidd Toyota donation of \$90,000. Part of this donation, along with the support of the Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks, provided the funding for a pavilion close to the Nature Center. The pavilion has been used for special events, programming and fundraising. The remaining part of the Bill Kidd Toyota donation will be used for two future projects: the Woodland Garden and the new Piedmont Exhibit in the Nature Center. Also, \$5000 was donated towards the Piedmont exhibit by the Hoblitzel family in honor of Joan Hoblitzel. The JIJI foundation has promised to help fund the library and auditorium renovations which should be completed by the end of this year. The Council is hoping that other community businesses will follow Bill Kidd Toyota and Joan Hoblitzel's family example and lend support to future projects at ORNC.

As always, our greatest attribute this year was the 214 ORNC volunteers who fulfilled many needs at the Nature Center. Volunteers helped as trail guides for school trips, they helped plan and organize the well-attended programs and camps, and helped design, create, and maintain the gardens. They organized and staffed the very popular special events: Honey

Harvest, Halloween Spooky Walks, Holiday Party and Wreath Making, Maple Sugar Weekends, Pancake Breakfast, and Music in the Woods. Volunteers worked on repairing trails, building fences, removing invasive species, building and installing new park benches, and installing new color-coded trail signs. The volunteers at ORNC come from many different groups, including Council members, Trail Guides, Ridge Runners, Eagle Scouts, local business organizations, Master Naturalists, and school groups. We can't thank them enough for all their time, effort, and amazing help.

I would like to give a special thanks to the Scouts who have completed Eagle Scout and Gold Award projects at ORNC. These projects are a great opportunity for both the Scouts and ORNC. This year, David Michaels from Troop #742 built and installed a new bridge over the ravine on the Orange trail, Kevin Barnes from Troop # 497 installed a new path to the hawk mew, Emma Waltz from Troop #1712 built a new roof over the stage at the Nature Play Space, Egan Jett-Parmer from Troop #143 built a Turtle Head plant enclosure, and Brian McCullough from Troop 340 replaced the Archery trail steps, cleared invasives and planted Sumac.

Members of the ORNCC Board are responsible for our Website, Newsletter, Speaker Series, and Scholarship Program. Managing the website is not only time consuming, but also requires a great deal of technical knowledge. It is constantly updated with current information and points of interest. Please take a moment to check it out. You can even download a trail map so you won't get lost while hiking! The *Trailblazer* newsletter was upgraded to **COLOR**, and it looks beautiful! It continues to

keep the ORNC community informed of events, current topics, and important information. The monthly Speaker Series at ORNC continued to provide outstanding presentations that regularly drew large numbers of attendees. The series continues this year on Monday nights and will include topics such as *Saving the Bees*, *Ongoing Stream Monitoring at ORNC*, *A Chesapeake Bay Health Report*, and *Native Orchids*. For the 23rd consecutive year, the Council awarded scholarships to area graduating seniors who demonstrated academic excellence, a commitment to environmental issues, and who plan to pursue environmental studies in college. Four scholarships totaling \$17,000 were awarded this year.

The ORNC Council provided six of the ORNC staff members with the opportunity to attend the Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Educators this year. The ORNC Council also sponsored the Tom Horton book presentation and the *Night Under the Stars* event in June.

This summer's children camps were very popular, with 192 children attending. In response to parent surveys, a number of new additions were implemented, such as a Camp Extension for the 6-10 year olds and buses that transported the *Wilderness Explorers* to a number of off-site experiences, which included canoeing, ropes courses, and tubing at Genesee Valley.

I want to thank the ORNCC Executive Board members for their dedication towards making all of this possible. Lastly, I want to thank all of the Council members, staff, volunteers, and donors who make 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 Oregon Ridge Nature Center.

STAFF AND INTERNS WORK TOGETHER AT ORNC

NEW STAFF JOIN OUR RANKS

Four additional staff members who were part of our team this summer will join our summer camp staff as part-time naturalists. We want to welcome them to the ORNC Family.

Rachael Ginsburg served as our Summer Outreach Specialist. She led over 30 engaging nature programs both on and off site, serving over 900 children and adults. Rachael is a senior at Towson University where she is on track to graduate this December with a Bachelor in Psychology and Animal Behavior and a minor in Biology. Since starting at Oregon Ridge this summer, she has most enjoyed inspiring kids and nurturing their excitement in being outside in nature. She loves working at a job where she continues to learn new things every day, and she doesn't even mind that the animals seem to "let loose" during all of her programs.

Emily Rissinger is a new part-time Naturalist. Emily recently moved to the area with her fiancé and is currently a classroom teacher in Pennsylvania. Emily brings her enthusiasm and expertise in teaching. She has already jumped in to lead a number of outreach and public programs for the Nature Center. We are excited to have her nearby to continue to work weekends throughout the school year.

Christina Panosous has been a familiar face around the Nature Center for the past five years. When she was 13, Christina joined the Ridge Runners and has now joined the staff as a Building Attendant. Over the summer, she helped as one of our Junior Counselors, assisting in leading our new Camp Extension program. Christina recently graduated from Dulaney High school and is excited to start her college career at Goucher this fall, where she will study English and Literature.

Sarah Lenhart is a Junior Attendant and is getting ready to start her senior year at Dulaney High School. This summer, Sarah served as a Junior Counselor, working alongside Christina to help provide campers with fun experiences during the Camp Extension program.

Next time you visit, please stop by the Nature Center to meet our friendly, new staff. They are excited to share their love of nature with you!

program *Bookworm Storytime*, where she created a fun experience for children, based on a short story book of her choice. Sam said, "ORNC was really great about making an internship that catered to my needs and interests." Her experience helped her gain new skills that will be beneficial for her career goals. She enjoys being outside, kayaking, swimming, and hiking.

Trenor Gould is a General Studies major at the Community College of Baltimore County, but plans to transfer to American University in Washington DC this spring. Following college, he would like to get a job with the government working for the State department. He applied to be an intern here to learn more about what's entailed in managing a nature center and park. He enjoyed caring for the animals, being outdoors, and the diverse experiences that each day brings. Trenor likes to explore parks across the country, play piano, and learn martial arts.

Ben Miller is a Towson University student, majoring in Organismal Biology & Ecology, as well as Graphic Design. Ben hopes to studying exotic wildlife and ecology after graduation. His internship at Oregon Ridge has helped him to gain experience working in the outdoors and knowledge of the local ecology. As an intern, he enjoyed the diversity of tasks that kept the job interesting, never boring! Ben likes drawing, painting, relaxing, hiking, and teaching hip-hop dance classes.

MEET OUR INTERNS

Samantha (Sam) Cassell attends Towson University, majoring in Environmental Education with a minor in Biology. Sam hopes to become a full time naturalist after graduating this spring. Sam's favorite intern activity was teaching others and helping with nature programs. Over the summer, Sam led ORNC's monthly



Rachel Ginsburg



Emily Rissinger



Christina Panosous



Sarah Lenhart



Samantha Cassell



Trenor Gould



Ben Miller

VOLUNTEERS MAKE THE WORLD TURN AT ORNC

GEMMA FEILD: A Born Naturalist



Volunteering as a Ridge Runner at ORNC has given Gemma Feild a chance to share her love of nature with others. She grew up in a nature-oriented family, where she had several unusual pets such as tarantulas, scorpions, snakes, and even a black widow spider. Gemma has always loved exploring nature, searching for wildlife, bird watching, and rock collecting. She says that the best thing about being a Ridge Runner is “the chance to work closely with nature and wildlife in a

relaxed environment, with friendly and knowledgeable people.” Gemma encourages other teens to consider joining the team because, “It’s a very fulfilling opportunity, which helps a person develop a sense of responsibility for nature and wildlife.”

Gemma says animal care has given her the rare opportunity to handle and observe wild animals close up. Gemma enjoys caring for all the critters in the Center, but when asked about her favorite, she said, “I honestly love all the animals at ORNC, so this is a difficult question...but I would have to say the gray tree frogs, since they are fascinating little creatures with a distinct personality.” Gemma shared a funny story about the unexpected things that can happen while taking care of the animals.

The starling had just gotten a new cage, so she was confused. When I opened the door, out she flew! I panicked, thinking she was loose in the Nature Center, but when I put her food down, she approached out of nowhere and flew right back in the cage. I realized she had been sitting on my head the whole time!

Gemma, a senior this year, is homeschooled. Her favorite subject is science, especially biology. Her hobbies are sketching, piano playing, gardening, cooking, needlework, and miniature clay modeling. She currently has three pets — two rabbits (Scruffy and Thumper) and her dog Duke. She enjoys reading historical books, classics, mysteries and science fiction. When Gemma graduates, she wants to go to medical school. We are lucky that Gemma is part of our Ridge Runner team.

MASTER NATURALIST TRAINING

Last spring the 8th Master Naturalist Class completed training at Oregon Ridge. This year’s class was the largest class to date! A total of 27 participants took the course, which is offered each spring in collaboration with Lake Roland. To become certified as an official Maryland Master Naturalist, trainees must participate in 60 hours of training, complete a project that benefits the park and serve at least 40 hours of community service within a year of completing the course. Oregon Ridge’s trainee class projects have included: the creation of Story Trail, repairing ORNC’s weather station, painting animal prints along driveway, invasive removal and habitat restoration work, updates to *The Changing Seasons* wildflower exhibit, and building a vestibule addition to the existing hawk mew.

We would like to recognize and welcome Jeanne Andrews, Maureen D’Angelo, Andrea Evelius, Tom Farrell, Lisa Franck, Jason Howard, Lauren Imbrahim, Debbie Sarantinos, Russ Schumann, Nancy Severns, Mike Waltz, Steve Wilson and Pat Yevics for joining this amazing group of volunteers.

After a year of service, the 2016 class completed all of their requirements and are officially “Master Naturalists.” Congratulations to Ralph Brown, Catherine Drees, Beth Keyser, David Livergood, Jeanne Pinto, Claudia Rosati, and Magan Ruthke. Thank you for your service!

Please join our next training in early Spring 2018. To find out more about the Maryland Master Naturalist program visit, the University of Maryland Extension Service web page (<https://extension.umd.edu/masternaturalist>). Applications for Oregon Ridge’s next class will be available this December, call the Nature Center or visit our website to inquire.



SUMMER SPECIAL EVENTS WERE DOUBLE THE FUN

MUSIC IN THE WOODS WAS IN PERFECT PITCH! 🎵

Music in the Woods 2017 was delightful and relaxing, with beautiful weather and great music. In addition to music, there was face painting, animal encounters, raffles, jam sessions, introductions to the dulcimer, vendors, and plenty of new crafts — tissue paper flowers, sand art, button making, wax-paper harmonica, soda can earrings, and egg shakers. Check out our website and facebook to see fun photos of *Music in the Woods* and other events. A great video is on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gBcJiVDoFr4>

The bands and performers who volunteer their talent are the *STARS* of this event. Our volunteers are the *POWER* behind the scenes, the engine that runs the show. We want to thank everyone who made *Music in the Woods* 2017 a great success.

🎵 **A ROUND OF APPLAUSE FOR OUR VOLUNTEERS!** 🎵

Irene Baker
Ken Bartholomew
Marsha Bartholomew
Nancy Berger
Anne Canoles
Noot Canoles
Jim Curtis
Jocelyn Curtis
Catherine Dreese
Marcia Dysart
Lilly Enderson
Tom Farrell
Gemma Feild
Georgette Frederick
Mark Gingerich
Sybil Hebb
Karen Jackson
Mark Kander
Beth Keyser
Melody Kraus

Bill LaBarre
Paula Mackey
Ellen Mering
Carol Mantagna
Cheryl Parrish
Alan Penczek
Ava Possidente
Kristi Possidente
Lucia Possidente
Maggie Possidente
Roscoe Possidente
Ned Renner
Marty Rosman
Claudia Rosati
Jonathan Rowe
Andi Rudai
Michelle Squiteri
Mel Tillery
Mike Waltz

Performers:

Barbershop Quartet
The Dulcimer Group
The Witt Family
Spice Kleinmann
Bread & Cheese
Miller and Quinn
Will Play for Fish
Gary Kenneth Bass
Percy Shaw
New Southern Cowtippers
Proper Sporks
In the Clear
Double Intrigue

Vendors:

Daughter's Choice Hairbows
The Glass Bee
Antietam Ice Cream.



EVEN A CLOUDY NIGHT UNDER THE STARS WAS FUN! ★

Our inaugural event at the newly completed Lake Pavilion was our first *Night Under the Stars*, a fundraiser for ORNCC that featured stargazing, a comet demonstration, and many other fun activities. Unfortunately, it turned out to be the a night under the clouds, but since it never rained, people had fun canoeing, entering the Amazing Race game run by Beth Keyser, participating in crafts, listening to music by *Will Play for Fish*, meeting some animals, having their faces painted, and enjoying hotdogs with chips, beer and wine. This lovely evening ended with roasting marshmallows around the campfire to make s'mores. We want to thank all the volunteers who made the night special.

THREE CHEERS FOR VOLUNTEERS!

Alisa Anania
Jeanne Andrews
Chris Carpenter
Catherine Dreese
Andrea Evelius
Tom Farrell
Gemma Feild
Fred Frey

Beth Keyser, Event Coordinator
Paula Mackey
Ellen Mering
Cheryl Parrish
Alan Penczek
Jeanne Pinto
Ned Renner
Claudia Rosati

Sadie Rozics
Andi Rudai
Debbie Sarantinos
Nancy Severns
Russ Schumann
Mel Tillery
Mike Waltz



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

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DEPARTMENT OF
RECREATION AND PARKS



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____ \$ 250 Sustaining
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