

TRAILBLAZER

WINTER 2020

Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council Supporting Oregon Ridge Nature Center since 1982



FLOWING THROUGH THE COLD

BY DIRECTOR JESSICA JEANNETTA

As you read this article, you may be sitting in front of a nice warm fire, or perhaps you are looking out the window at freshly falling snow. Winter started with a frigid November, bringing on many obvious changes to the environment, such as bare-limbed trees, snow, and a thick covering of fallen leaves. But, have you ever stopped to wonder what is going on underwater in our streams during the dead of winter? You may be surprised to know that for the most part, life continues despite the cold.

In comparison to other parts of the country, winters in Maryland are somewhat mild, making life a little easier for our local aquatic life compared to their northern relatives. For this area, ice does not normally form in the fast moving parts of the stream known as *runs* and *riffles*, which allows a stream to continue flowing with little to no freeze. However, in the slower parts of streams called *pools*, ice can form over top of the water, creating a layer that protects animals that burrow in the mud and for those that stay active all winter long.

As temperatures fall outside, life in and around a stream continues unchanged for the most part as the plant and animal organisms adapt to the frigid temperatures. These strategies, also called *adaptations*, vary from species to species, but are all designed to help stream inhabitants survive in winter. Some animals are designed to do absolutely nothing and stay just as active as they are in the middle of summer. Others slow way down, becoming dormant or hibernating. Still others may freeze completely solid, and surprisingly, for others their best strategy is to die altogether. This may seem counter intuitive, but it is true – many organisms do in fact die before winter begins as part of their life cycle, simply leaving behind their eggs or seeds to overwinter as their method of survival.

Larger fish may move downstream to pools or larger streams, but many fish and invertebrates remain year-round in smaller streams, like Oregon Branch or Baisman Run. Fish

(Continued on page 6)

OREGON RIDGE NATURE CENTER SPEAKER SERIES 2020

OLD GROWTH FORESTS: A Journey to Preserve and Protect

By Dr. Joan Maloof, Author and Forest Preservation Activist

Monday, March 16, 7 PM



Trees are one of our most valuable assets in maintaining the health of the environment and ensuring the survival of the planet. Dr. Joan Maloof will discuss the history of this nation's forests and where they stand today. She will discuss obstacles of forest preservation, including here in Oregon Ridge Park. Dr. Maloof is the author of *Teaching the Trees*, *Among the Ancients*, *Nature's Temples: The Complex World of Old-Growth Forests*, and *The Living Forest: A Visual Journey into the Heart of the Woods*. Books will be available for sale and signing.

Dr. Maloof is also a public speaker, an ecologist, and a conservationist with a unique voice that is relevant today. She is the Founder and Director of the Old-Growth Forest Network, a nonprofit organization that is creating a network of forests across the US that will remain unlogged and open to the public. The network now has over 100 forests in 23 states. Dr. Maloof earned a bachelor's degree in Plant Science, a Masters in Environmental Science, and a Doctorate in Ecology. She is the professor emeritus at Salisbury University where she taught Biological Sciences and Environmental Studies. She has also authored numerous research articles in publications such as *Ecology*, *American Journal of Botany*, and the *International Journal of Environmental Studies*.

THE SECRET LIFE OF CLAMS

By Dr. Anthony D. Fredericks, Emeritus Professor of Education
York College of Pennsylvania

Monday, April 20, 7 PM



Of all the creatures in the ocean, it could be argued that none is more plentiful, versatile or varied than the clam. First appearing 510 million years ago, the modern day clam can be as small as the period at the end of a sentence or as large as Pacific Ocean behemoths weighing 700 pounds. With both humor and passion, Dr. Anthony Fredericks will offer a presentation that combines literary adventure, hands-on discoveries, and first-person accounts in a style that is both engaging and informative.

Dr. Fredericks grew up on the beaches of southern California where he spent his youth exploring tidepools, gathering clams, and snorkeling along the Pacific coast. He obtained his doctorate at Lehigh University and was a professional educator for 50 years, teaching elementary, secondary and college levels. Dr. Fredericks has authored nearly 400 magazine and journal articles. In addition to *The Secret Life of Clams*, he has authored a number of books including *Horseshoe Crab: Biography of a Survivor*, *Desert Dinosaurs: Discovering Sites Across the American Southwest*, and his newest book *Fizzle: The Hidden Forces Crushing your Creativity* to be released in June 2020. He is an award-winning author of 50 best-selling children's books, including: *Desert Night*, *Desert Day*; *Tall Tall Tree*; *A is for Anaconda*; *The Tsunami Quilt*; and *In One Tidepool*. Books will be available for sale and signing.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT OREGON RIDGE

TRAIL GUIDE TRAINING

**Tuesday – Thursday, February 4–6
10 AM to 1 PM**

**\$20 Donation for 1st Time Attendees
Reservations Required**

The Nature Center is in need of volunteers to lead school field trips. During training, volunteers learn how to give small groups of elementary students a fun and educational nature experience in the park through hands-on activities! This season's topics include Maple Sugaring, Insects and the Chesapeake Bay. If you love nature and enjoy sharing your enthusiasm with children, please join the Trail Guide team.

MASTER NATURALIST TRAINING

**Mondays, March 16 through May 18
9 AM to 3:30 PM**

\$250 Per Person

Become a Maryland Master Naturalist volunteer this spring! The University of Maryland Extension created this program and Oregon Ridge Nature Center is a host site for the Piedmont Region Program. Participants complete 60 hours of hands-on learning in natural history, environmental interpretation, and conservation stewardship with expert instructors. Final certification is awarded following 40 hours of volunteer service at Oregon Ridge. To apply, stop by the Nature Center for an application or visit the Maryland Master Naturalist website at www.MasterNaturalist.umd.edu.



MAPLE SUGAR SEASON 2020 IS FAST APPROACHING

MAPLE SUGAR WEEKENDS

February 22, 23, 29 & March 1
11 AM to 4 PM
Oregon Ridge Nature Center

Hikes on the hour, Maple Sugaring Movie,
Syrup/candy for sale, *Sugar on the Snow*
demos at 12:30 and 3:45 PM each day.

Groups of 10 or more must register in advance.
No pets, please.



ANNUAL PANCAKE BREAKFAST

March 7 and 8 at the Lodge
8 AM to Noon
\$8 adults and \$4 children ages 2-8
Syrup and candy will be available to buy.

**VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED DURING
MAPLE SUGAR WEEKENDS
AND THE PANCAKE BREAKFAST.**

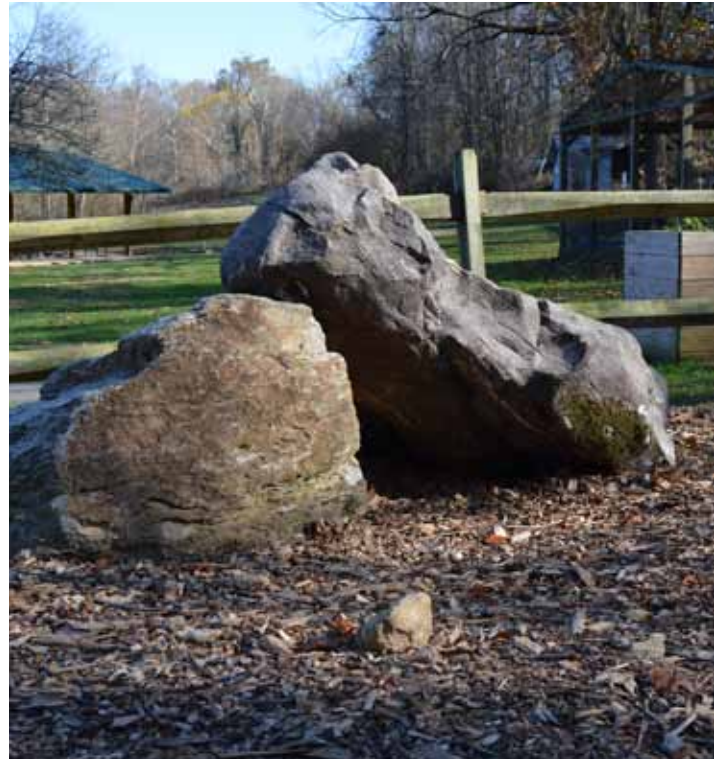
WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE NATURE CENTER

NATURE PLAY AREA RENOVATIONS

This past fall, staff, interns and volunteer groups worked together to improve the nature play space. Old rotting features were removed or repurposed and new features were added: A new boulder climbing area, a birds nest built by ORNC interns, and a log balance beam.

We are grateful for the help and support of volunteers and local businesses. Badolato Stone Supply and Lehnhoff's Landscape Supply and Design generously donated boulders for the new climbing feature. Bernie Kadow donated his time and equipment to help place the boulders and remove old pieces in the area. Howard Bank employees cleaned up the area, removed old features, and placed the balance beams.

This spring we hope to continue to add new features to the area to improve nature play for our visitors.



AROUND THE NATURE CENTER

Oregon Ridge Nature Center is now fully staffed and able to work towards adding new exhibits, animals, and special features to the Nature Center.

Animals, Animals and more Animals! This fall we were excited to welcome some new additions to our live animal exhibits. Thanks to Betsy Kadow and our team of hardworking interns, visitors may now meet some of our new animal ambassadors and exhibit animals. In early November, we welcomed a young, unreleasable opossum named Oscar that came to us from Tamarack Wildlife Rehab in Pennsylvania. He is still adjusting to his new home and will soon be out on permanent exhibit in the opossum palace. We also are excited to have a new Starling named Mozart, who came from the Phoenix Wildlife Center as an imprint. He is currently on display in the lobby. There are also five lined skinks in the animal room.



In the auditorium, visitors can now view the new Chesapeake Bay tank. New part-time Naturalist Michael Eversmier and Betsy spent a lot of time getting the tank set up for our brackish water friends that include different types of fish species such as perch, rockfish, silversides and killifish. The tank also has crabs, oysters, grass shrimp and bay grasses, too.

Outside with the poultry flock, look for Elvis, an imprinted Canada goose. Elvis was brought to Phoenix Wildlife Center after being found knocking on store doors at the Avenue in White Marsh.

VOLUNTEERS LEARN AND CONTRIBUTE AT ORNC

EAGLE SCOUTS DO GOOD DEEDS

We recently had the opportunity to work with numerous Eagle Scouts who are improving the park. Visitors may have noticed that our picnic tables are looking new and fresh, thanks to three hardworking scouts. Ethan Mann (Troop 497) and Grayson Sokoloski (Troop 1000) both renovated picnic tables around the lake, and Brian Anderson (Troop 143) renovated the tables in the picnic area near the Nature Center.

Composting has been made easy in the park thanks to Eagle Scout candidates, Jeffery Bowerman (Troop 742) and Thomas Sunday (Troop 497), who built three-bin composting systems for their projects. Jeffery's project was built near the community gardens, allowing gardeners to have a convenient place to toss their unwanted plant waste. Thomas's project was built near the demonstration gardens and will be used as an educational display to show how easy it is to compost at home.

Nathan Jones (Troop 92) built a replica wigwam that is less accessible to visitors, but still a wonderful asset. It is tucked away at the Native American teaching site and will be used by many school children as part of their Eastern Woodland Native American field trip.

Finally, it is hard to miss the hard work of Anthony Garcia (Troop 497) who took on renovating the trailhead steps. A new railing was installed and each step was rebuilt and filled with gravel to make the area safer for hikers and more sustainable for long-term use.

The Nature Center staff is incredibly grateful for the time and dedication of these scouts and appreciates the improvements they have made. Without the efforts of these hardworking scouts and their leaders, families and fellow scouts, many of these improvements would not take place. If you are a scout looking to complete a service project, please contact the Nature Center for more details about available projects.



RIDGE RUNNER SHAY SENGAL



Shay Sengal joined the Ridge Runner team in fall 2018 because she loves animals. As a Ridge Runner, she has learned about different kinds of animals and how to care for them. Teens on the Ridge Runner team have the opportunity to work as a naturalist in training. They assist with animal care, special events, and other needs of the park. With our evergrowing animal collection, Ridge Runners are essential in making sure our animals get the best possible care.

Shay's favorite animals to feed are the large aquatic turtles because they are dripping with personality. As soon as they think food is coming, they excitedly paddle their feet to get as high in the water as possible. She also enjoys working with the gray tree frogs because they are fun to watch as they jump around their habitat.

Shay is a sophomore at Dulaney High School. There, she enjoys biology and computer science. Upon graduation, Shay hopes to pursue a career as a veterinarian or something related to computer science. In her free time, she enjoys listening to music or playing with her five cats – Checkers, Angel, Coco, Jasper, and Crinkle!

Interested in joining the Ridge Runner team? Take it from Shay, "The best thing about being a Ridge Runner is being able to learn about new animals. It has really helped me become more comfortable with animals I usually wouldn't really like to be near, like the snakes! It is a really great experience."

INTERNS LEARN AND CONTRIBUTE

FOUR PROUD INTERNS

The care and dedication shown by our fall interns is unsurpassed. Each displayed enthusiasm and determination for the projects they were tasked to complete. And each were proud of their accomplishments and gratified to see children and adults enjoy the fruits of their labor.

Towson University senior Andrew Psoras (*photo left*) set the groundwork for the human-sized birds nest in the Nature Play Area. Andrew was helped by our Loch Raven High School intern, Audrey Azzam (*photo right*). Molly Sutter (*center photo*), a senior at Goucher College, revamped the plantings in the sensory garden with non-toxic plants that also helped children explore their senses of sight, smell and

touch. She also fostered relationships between ORNC and local organizations by composing donation requests for the large boulders in the Nature Play area. Arianna Sindelar, a Millersville University graduate, helped build the new owl enclosure and update the rabbit hutch to prevent predators from snagging an easy meal. Arianna is now a member of the ORNC staff.

All the interns enjoyed working with the animals and each had favorites. Arianna and Andrew favored the Canada goose because of his personality, his unique honk to greet visitors, and his leadership in the poultry pen. (The chickens loved Andrew and excitedly surrounded him at their morning feeding.) Molly's favorite was the black rat snake because of his gentle nature and the feel of his sleek scales. Audrey, whose internship continues until May, most enjoys the terrapins because, "...they enjoy sitting in sunny spots and eating lunch, like me."

If you're interested in a cool intern experience, send a cover letter and resume to info@OregonRidgeNatureCenter.org. Intern Molly summed up the experience well – "No two days are the same, which means that you are always learning as an intern at Oregon Ridge."



(FLOWING THROUGH THE COLD, continued from front page)

and other ectothermic (*or cold blooded*) animals adjust their body temperature to their environment. Many fish and invertebrates remain protected through the winter by living under and among the gravel and rocks on the stream bed. Some fish, like trout, have adapted to dealing with the cold. As the water temperature drops, their bodies allow them to swim easily, though they do often take shelter in the deeper and warmer stream pools. Other species of fish, like sunfish, are less tolerant of winter and become dormant; they move to the edges of the stream and bury themselves in mud or leaves. Fish like the Bullhead catfish amazingly adapt to winter by freezing, without harm, until the spring thaw.

Fish are not the only aquatic organisms that have adapted to living in the streams during the winter. Many insects and other invertebrate species, like snails and leeches, become inactive in winter by burrowing into mud and plant debris for the winter months. While not many insects are active in the winter, sow bugs, beetles and the nymphs of dragonflies, mayflies and stoneflies live in streams, often beneath ice. These larval stages of insects will actively feed and grow all winter to emerge as adults in early spring. Water boatman

and backswimmers may be seen massing together in air pockets under the ice in pools. Mussels also become dormant, stopping growth altogether in the winter (this can be depicted by the growth rings on their shells). However, crayfish activity continues, but at a slower rate, during extreme cold as they burrow into the banks of the stream.

Still more native wildlife make streams their home. Many salamander species will hibernate under logs and stones along stream banks. Red Spotted Newts can remain active all winter long. Some frogs can hibernate in the mud below the ice. Others, like the Wood Frog, will freeze completely solid (similar to the bullhead catfish). Other frog species, like the green frog and bullfrog, survive the winter in their tadpole stage. Depending on the winter conditions, turtles (like the painted turtle and snapping turtle) remain active under the water, while others burrow into the mud and become inactive all winter.

Put out the fire and hit the trails to see and hear the water flow and look for signs of life in a winter stream!

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS WORK TOGETHER AT HONEY HARVEST 2019



Our hovering honeybee reporter returns to give a brief overview of Honey Harvest 2019:

Honey Harvest Festival 2019 took place on a cool and bee-utiful October weekend. Floating in on a breeze, I first spied our lovely human representative Nicole Medina, the 2019 American Honey Princess. Then, the smell of sweet apples drew me to the folks pressing apple cider. Around the corner, mead was fermenting and samples of honey wine were available. Music by Oregon Ridge Dulcimer Group, Bittersweet, Sirens on the Rock and Will Play for Fish made me burst into a waggle dance. While they played, people visited the blacksmith, sat to have their faces painted, ate honey ice cream, and watched children play fall games and dress up like bees. McDaniel Honey Farm, Bees by the Bay and Snyder's Apiary sold different varieties of fresh honey inside the Nature Center. Bob Stanhope, ORNC's first director, worked with Nicole to extract honey for the crowds of visitors. Central Maryland Beekeepers Association also helped with hive demos and honey extraction. Everyone got a taste of honey right from the comb. Wow! It doesn't get any better than that!

Special thanks goes to Nancy Berger, the Honey Harvest Event Chair, and ORNC Director Jessica Jeannetta. Helping them tend to all the details to make this event run smoothly were Betsy Kadow, Pam Ward, Winny Tan and Kathy Kadow. It was one of the best Honey Harvests, EVER, thanks to each and every one of our staff, volunteers, and over 4000 visitors!



Volunteers:

Judy Breitenbach	Molly Glassman	Carol Mantegna	Ellen Schneider	Chloe Tan
Alisa Anania	Chris Hart	Ron Mantegna	Mary Scholl	Winny Tan
Jesse Anderson	Lee Hart	Ellen Mering	Russ Schumann	Pat Thomas
Audrey Azzam	Sybil Hebb	Nan Neely	Arianna Sindelar	Paul Waldman
Bryan Bender	Karen Jackson	Cheryl Parrish	Patty Smith	Mike Waltz
Lark Anderson	Carol Johnston	Ned Renner	Bob Stanhope	Steve Wilson
Irene Baker	Will Jones	Sadie Rozics	Barb Stevenson	Sara Yosua
Nancy Berger	Bernie Kadow	Andi Rudai	Bob Stevenson	Michele Zahorchak
Jody Blatt	Beth Keyser	Ging Shamberger	Avery Tan	Barbara Zea
Ann & Noot Canoles	Chris Carpenter			
Jim Curtis	Maureen D'Angelo			
Lillian Enderson	Lynn Faulkner			
Pat Ghingher	Mark Gingerich			

Musicians:

Oregon Ridge Dulcimer Group
Bittersweet
Will Play for Fish
Sirens on the Rocks

Students Groups:

Hereford High School Key Club
Towson High School Key Club
Towson University Alpha Phi
Omega National Service Fraternity



Demonstrators and Vendors

Nicole Medina, Honey Princess	McDaniel Honey Farm
The Bad Rabbit	Missions of Hope
Baltimore Crab Cake Company	Nancy Wakefield
Baltimore Co. Bureau of Solid Waste	PD Jewelry
Bees by the Bay	Phoenix Wildlife Center
Central Maryland Beekeepers Assoc.	Rockcross Glass Studio
Charm City Meadworks	Simply Whimsical
Daughter's Choice Bows	Snyders Apiary
DEM Bowls	Treadway Fine Art
The Glass Bee	
Gracefully Coffee Roasters	
Greene's Lambs	
Homestead Forge Blacksmiths	
Kora Lee's Gourmet Dessert Café	
Klaus Meyer-Bothling	
Master Gardeners of Baltimore Co.	





Oregon Ridge Nature
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DEPARTMENT OF
RECREATION AND PARKS



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