

TRAILBLAZER

Fall 2016



*Supporting Oregon Ridge
Nature Center for 34 years*

TOM HORTON TO SPEAK AT FUNDRAISER FOR OREGON RIDGE NATURE CENTER

Cheers to 50 Years of Saving the Bay

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2016
Oregon Ridge Lodge**

**\$50 lecture with lite fare reception at 6 PM
\$20 lecture only (\$25 at door) at 7:30 PM**

The Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council is delighted to announce that Tom Horton, well-known Delmarva author and expert on the Chesapeake Bay, will speak at the Oregon Ridge Lodge on November 17. Prior to the 7:30 lecture, there is a reception to meet Tom Horton from 6 to 7 PM, with lite fare, along with wine and beer. Books will be available to purchase. Mr. Horton will speak on the 50-year effort to save the Chesapeake Bay, the current environmental status of the Bay, and what actions we need to take going forward. The proceeds of the fundraiser will go towards remodeling the Piedmont Educational Exhibit at the Nature Center.

The relationship between the Piedmont region and the Bay is direct. The Chesapeake Bay Watershed covers approximately 64,000 square miles. The Bay's land to water ratio is 14:1, the largest of any coastal body in the world. It encompasses parts of Delaware, Maryland, DC, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia. This is why our actions on land, including here in the Piedmont plateau, have such a dramatic impact on the health of the Bay. Mr. Horton's lecture will include discussion of the relationship between the Piedmont region, which we call home, and a healthy Chesapeake Bay.

Tom Horton has written about the Chesapeake Bay and the environment for more than 40 years, much of that time for the *Baltimore Sun* and national publications, and more recently for *Chesapeake Bay Magazine* and the *Bay Journal*. A native of the Eastern Shore and a graduate of Johns Hopkins University, he is the author of four books:



Turning the Tide: Saving the Chesapeake Bay, Swanfall: Journey of the Tundra Swans, An Island Out of Time: A Memoir of Smith Island in the Chesapeake, and Bay Country. Mr. Horton has also collaborated on several books with photographer David Harp, including *The Great Marsh: An Intimate Journey into a Chesapeake Wetland* and *Choctank Odyssey: A Great Chesapeake River*. He recently completed a movie, *Beautiful Swimmers Revisited*, about blue crabs and the Bay. Mr. Horton currently teaches environmental studies at Salisbury University.

Tickets can be obtained now by mail: ORNC, 13555 Beaver Dam Road, Cockeysville, MD 21030. Tickets will be available online starting September 16: www.oregonridgenaturecenter.org.



ORNC COUNCIL SPEAKER SERIES

NATURE'S NEIGHBORS: NAUGHTY OR NICE?

Fascinating Tales of our Local Ecology

By Robert Mardiney

Director of Education Irvine Natural Science Center

Monday, September 19, 7:30 PM, Free at ORNC



A close examination of the forests, meadows, wetlands, and even our own backyards, reveals numerous intriguing interrelationships among the inhabitants. You can easily discover evidence of competition, cooperation, parasitism and predation between our native birds, mammals, insects, trees, wildflowers, ferns and more. Ecologists continue to uncover surprising and complex ways that plants and animals interact with their neighbors. Rob Mardiney will discuss some of his favorite instances of ecological rivalry and collaboration: Learn the benefits of a bumblebee's buzz, how to "read" a wildflower, the reason young cowbirds sneak out at night, how maple trees disarm caterpillars and oak trees outwit squirrels, plus many other stories of your neighborhood ecology.

As Director of Education, Robert Mardiney oversees Irvine's school and public programs and is responsible for program development and evaluation. He has an MS degree in Environmental Education from Cornell University and a BS in Biology from Vassar College. Mr. Mardiney regularly teaches natural history and ecology courses at Irvine, the Hopkins Odyssey and Towson Osher programs, as well as for Maryland's Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists. He is a past-president of MAEOE (Maryland Association of Environmental and Outdoor Education), has served on the Board of the Maryland Native Plant Society, and won the 2012 Garden Club of America's Elizabeth Ebernathy Hull Award for excellence in Environmental Education.

HOW BUGS MAKE THE WORLD GO ROUND

By Michael J. Raupp, PhD

Professor of Entomology University of Maryland College Park

Monday, October 17, 7:30 PM, Free at ORNC



Your garden can be a refuge of biodiversity. It houses a huge diversity of living things. Michael Raupp's presentation will explain how insects and their relatives help make the world go around by providing important ecosystem services, linking members of food webs, pollinating plants, and providing biological control. Listeners will leave with a new appreciation for the important roles insects play in the ecology of their gardens.

Dr. Raupp is also an extension specialist at UMD. As an internationally recognized expert, Mike has more than 250 publications and has made more than 1200 presentations on the ecology and management of insects and mites. He has been featured on The Science Channel, PBS, National Geographic, Dr. Oz and Jay Leno. He has received several awards including the Secretary of Agriculture's Award for Environmental

Protection, The President's Award from Tree Care Industry, and the Richard Harris Authors Citation Award from ISA. His book *Managing Insect and Mite Pests of Woody Landscape Plants* is an authoritative guide for arborists and landscapers. His most recent book *26 Things that Bug Me* introduces youngsters to the wonders of insects and natural history using pictures and rhymes.

HONEY HARVEST FESTIVAL



Saturday 10/1
Sunday 10/2
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 Making Demos

Honey Extraction and Open Hive Demos
by Ms. Tabitha Mansker, 2016 Honey Princess

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR HONEY HARVEST

We need volunteers to serve food, churn apple cider, and more at the upcoming Honey Harvest Festival on October 1 and 2.

If interested, please contact Volunteer Chairperson Georgette Frederick by emailing:

info@OregonRidgeNatureCenter.org

HONEY PRINCESS 2016

Come and meet Tabitha Mansker from Nevada, TX. She is pursuing studies in business and marketing and hopes to become a teacher. Tabitha helps manage her family's 16 hives of bees and extracts honey for many commercial beekeeping operations. As Honey Princess, she serves as a national spokesperson on behalf of the American Beekeeping Federation.



WHAT'S COMING UP IN THE 2016-2017 SPEAKER SCHEDULE

All presentations below are free and begin at 7:30 at ORNC. There are no speakers in December, February, and the summer months. If you would like to be a speaker or recommend a speaker for 2017-2018, please contact the Nature Center.

January 16

Maryland's Freshwater Fishes
Stanley Kemp

Director of Environmental Sustainability and Human Ecology, University of Baltimore

March 20

Maryland's Marvelous Mammals
Kerry Wixted

Wildlife Education and Outreach Specialist
Project WILD Coordinator, Maryland DNR

April 17

Baltimore County's Single Stream Recycling: Where does Everything Go?
Heather Wirtanen

Public Information Specialist, Baltimore County Recycling Maryland Department of the Environment

May 15

From a Wild Life to Wildlife Photography
Michael Oberman

Nature and Wildlife Photographer and Teacher

MORE GREAT ACTIVITIES TO ENJOY THIS FALL

TRAIL GUIDE TRAINING

September 6 to 9 from 10 AM–1 PM



Trail Guiding is for those who like to share their enthusiasm for nature with school children. Training topics include: Habitats, Wildlife, Activities for Field Trips, Native Americans, and Plant ID. Volunteers learn to lead groups of elementary students through the forest, meadows, and streams to observe seasonal occurrences and explore habitats that some children never encounter. No experience needed, only willingness to learn and teach! The \$20 fee is for materials.

WALK IN THE PARK BEGINS 9/17

This countywide event kicks off the season by exploring the great outdoors in your neighborhood parks. Naturalists led guided tours take place at 10 and 11 AM. Hikes feature seasonal topics or historical tours, depending on the location. Oregon Ridge is offering tours in English and Spanish at both times. Walkers can also participate at Benjamin Banneker Park, Cromwell Valley Park, Fort Howard Park, Lake Roland, and Marshy Point Nature Center. Please wear appropriate clothing and footwear and bring water. Contact your site of choice for more information and any specific concerns or details.

TRAILBLAZER STAFF

Editor/Design/Layout: Mary Jane Shanks

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

Writers: Deborah Bacharach, Jim Curtis, Jessica Jeannetta, Polly Roberts, MJ Shanks, Michele Steinitz, Winny Tan

Photographers: Jim Curtis, ORNC staff, Karen Jackson, David Harp Photography, front page from *The Great Marsh: An Intimate Journey into a Chesapeake Wetland*.

OREGON RIDGE NATURE CENTER
13555 Beaver Dam Road, Cockeysville 21030
410-887-1815

info@OregonRidgeNatureCenter.org
www.oregonridgenaturecenter.org

Articles/photos for Winter issue due 11/12/2016

NATURE QUEST

Enjoy Outdoor Fun and Win Prizes!

Nature Quest is a great opportunity to gather friends and families together for an outdoor adventure! You can bike, hike, or canoe in designated areas to complete your Quest and earn fun 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, the Center for Agriculture and Farm Park, and soon two new parks will be added to the Quest.

Start your adventure by picking up a Nature Quest Passport at one of the participating parks, your local Wegmans grocery store, or online. Nature Quest is ongoing, but questers who complete at least five trails each year receive free admission to that year's **Quest Fest** and are entered into raffles for great prizes. The **Quest Fest** celebration takes place on 10/16/16 at Lake Roland. 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 participating parks.
2. **Start hiking.** Take your booklet and a pencil or crayon and head out on the trails. Record your progress by making a rubbing, using the 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 five of the thirteen trails and can be picked up at any of the participating parks. In addition to the prizes, questers who complete five or more trails also receive free admission to Nature Quest Fest on October 16th from 12– 2 PM. Questers who complete nine or more trails will be entered into drawings for great prizes.



THREE CHEERS FOR OUR 2016 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS!

By Polly Roberts, MD, Scholarship Chairperson

For twenty-two consecutive years, the Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council has awarded scholarships to graduating seniors who have demonstrated academic excellence and a commitment to environmental issues, and who plan to pursue environmental studies in college. This year, four scholarships totaling \$17,000 have been awarded, along with the continuance of the Getty Dutrow Mullan four-year scholarship. To all who give so generously to our scholarship program — *THANK YOU!*



Maura Neely, a graduate of Maryvale Preparatory School, has received \$5,000 to pursue studies in marine and environmental science at the SUNY Maritime College. She has logged more than 1000 volunteer service hours working with environmental programs, including serving as an exhibit guide at the National Aquarium in Baltimore and as a Ranger with the Marshy Point Nature Center.

Additionally, as a two-year recipient of the Getty Dutrow Mullan four-year scholarship, Samantha Cassell has been awarded \$1000 again this year. She is entering her junior year at Towson University to continue her studies in environmental education. During the past year, Sam had the opportunity to study abroad in Costa Rica, exploring the rainforest.



Paige Lind, a graduate of Patapsco High School, has been awarded \$4000 to pursue a 5-year program in environmental studies at Hood College that will result in a Master's degree. Her major will be environmental science/policy with a minor in coastal studies. She has worked as a Ranger at the Marshy Point Nature Center and has a special interest in environmental photography.

Scholarship Chair Dr. Polly Roberts recently received the following letter from a past scholarship recipient, which speaks for itself as a tribute to ORNCC's Scholarship Program:

Dear Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council,

Two years ago I was awarded the ORNCC Environmental Scholarship for high school seniors. With that boost, I was able to go to Boston University where I'll be returning in the fall as a Junior in the Department of Earth & Environment. Every summer Harvard University and the National Science Foundation host an REU at Harvard Forest, a long term ecological research site. Thanks to opportunities that came from my educational community, I've spent the past 8 weeks (and will spend the next 3 weeks) in Harvard Forest studying carbon storage dynamics of dead wood and contributing to long term data records. As our summer program draws to a close and I work on my final presentation I guess I've been reflective and I just wanted to thank the ORNC Council again for helping me get on the path that brought me here.

*Thanks again,
Rebecca Sparks,
A happy field ecologist for the summer!*



Lexie Ava, who graduated from Western School of Technology and Environmental Science, has received \$4000 to pursue environmental studies at Stevenson College. She envisions a career as a marine biologist, carrying out field research related to sharks and rays. Lexie volunteers as an intern at the Lake Roland Park and has participated in efforts to band saw-whet owls and to protect/conservate sea turtle eggs.



Alexis Hudes, a graduate of Park School, has been awarded \$4000 to study environmental science at Bates College. She is a leader in a student-led international program, which carries out arctic monitoring and research, and was a cofounder of her school's Environmental Action Coalition for Everyone. Alex is especially interested in outdoor education.

**TO EACH OF OUR PRESENT AND PAST
SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS . . .**

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

VOLUNTEERS COME TO LEARN AND LEAVE BEHIND GOOD WORKS

INTERNS BEGIN THEIR CAREER JOURNEY

This past school year, Oregon Ridge had the privilege of working with two high school students looking to fulfill internship experiences by helping with animal care, garden work, trail work and other odd jobs.

Brandon Miller (*photo left*) graduated from Western School of Technology and Environmental Science. This fall he is attending University of Maryland Baltimore County where he plans to major in Biology. Brandon heartily believes that offering his knowledge and assistance to the environmental community is one of his purposes in life. When Brandon started at ORNC, he was very shy and quiet. By the end of the school year, he came out of his shell, sort of like Brandon's favorite animal, the pre-historic looking snapping turtle. Brandon feels "...the experience here was priceless...being able to do what I love while having fun and gaining a learning experience is one of the greatest satisfactions of life!"

Chris Blume (*photo right*) graduated from Towson High School and is attending CCBC this fall. Because of his love for the water and aquatic life, Chris wants to pursue a degree in Marine Biology. For Chris, an internship at ORNC was a great way to gain experience working with animals, particularly aquatic ones. Surprisingly though, Chris' favorite job was taking the resident rabbit, Licorice, for walks on a leash around the park! Chris was ever ready to help in any situation, staying late to finish tasks, lending a hand at special events, and readily working in any type of weather. Chris describes his internship as "a great learning opportunity with lots of wonderful animals!"

Please contact Jessica Jeannetta (410-887-1815) if you are interested in an internship at Oregon Ridge.



SOARING WITH EAGLE SCOUTS

As you walk around the Park, you may notice some new improvements, thanks to the help of a several dedicated Eagle Scouts and their volunteers.

Tucked in the woods off the Miner's Trail near the meadow, you will find a brand new wildlife blind. Rami Knio worked hard during the winter and early spring to design and build the structure that has already been a hit with birders, school children and others who enjoy watching wildlife in action!

On your next visit to the Kids' Play Area, you are sure to notice the improvements made to the stone walkway. Alex Meyers and his troop spent a few days working hard laying gravel, fixing the edging, and repositioning the stones to make the walkway more secure and accessible for families with strollers, who frequently use the area.

When you hike along the Red Trail near the parking lot, you will be surprised to see the addition of 15 newly planted sumac trees. Louis Witt and his crew spent the day removing stubborn invasive plants from the area and planting the native sumac trees. The new trees will not only be a great benefit to our local wildlife, but will also be used for educational programs about pile making

(wood pegs used for tapping sap in maple trees) during our Maple Sugar season.

Finally, as you stroll through the meadow, you will notice something isn't quite the same — the fence surrounding the wildlife management pond is gone. Lorenzo Panoni and his team of dedicated volunteers removed invasive vines, disassembled the fence, and built two benches and two small garden beds reusing some of the old fencing materials. Because the fence was rapidly deteriorating and being taken over by many invasive vines, it had become aesthetically unpleasing and a safety concern for visitors.

Without the efforts of these hard working scouts, their leaders and troops, many of these projects would not be a reality. The ORNC staff greatly appreciates the time, funding and planning that went into completing these projects. Many areas of the Park have been improved for visitor safety and enjoyment, and to benefit the local wildlife and their habitats.

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to work with our local scout troops. 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.

SUPER COOL SUMMER STAFF, FUN SUMMER CAMPS, MORE GREAT VOLUNTEERS!

Sarah Duffy (*left in top photo*) and Mary Genovese (*right in top photo*) led our 2016 summer season. Sarah is new to our staff, but had been volunteering at Marshy Point Nature Center as a Marsh Ranger since high school. She is now studying Animal Behavior with a minor in Psychology at Towson University. Mary has volunteered since age 13 as a teen Ridge Runner and is now on staff, adding to her repertoire as a naturalist while studying Biology at Towson University. Sarah and Mary formed a great partnership, creating fun and diverse camp activities for 200 campers ranging from age 4 to 13. Campers explored streams, learned archery, visited other parks, canoed Lake Roland, tubed the Gunpowder, camped out overnight, and hopefully left feeling more knowledgeable about nature and the environment.

It takes a team to ensure our campers are safe while having fun outdoors. Staff members Pam

Ward (*teaching archery below*) and Lorien Covelly led several camp sessions, and our summer interns, Hope Duke and Andrew Prinn, were also integral to the success of summer camps. Thank you, everyone!



TEENS LEARN COUNSELING SKILLS AT SUMMER CAMP

This summer eight teenagers spent two days learning to be a Counselor-In-Training (CIT) for our camps. After becoming familiar with the Center, camp staff, and one another, they had a great time team building and challenging themselves on the ropes course at Genesee Valley Outdoor Learning Center. Each

committed to at least a week assisting with daily camp activities, being a role model to campers and learning from camp staff. Thank you to our wonderful CITs: Sofia Bennett, Lilly Enderson, Wuyti Khaing, Christina Panousos, Maggie Possidente, Andi Rudai, Emilio Wanis, and Ben Wetzel. (*Photo on Left*)



MASTER NATURALISTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Master Naturalist Class 7 completed training in May in combination training with Lake Roland. During their 60-hour training time, the class completed an indoor exhibit about deer, painted bird-in-flight silhouettes in the hallway, carved and painted signs for two outdoor exhibits, an animal bingo game, and a 3-Sisters Garden. To become certified as an official Maryland Master Naturalist, these nine trainees must complete at least 40 hours of community service within a year. We would like to recognize Ralph Brown, Gabrielle Cantor, Catherine Dreese, Susan Galusha-Bobango, Beth Keyser, David Livergood, Jeanne Pinto, Claudia Rosati, and Magan Ruthke for joining this amazing group of volunteers.

Our 2015 class has completed all of their requirements and these are the new officially titled "Master Naturalists": Alisa Anania, Anna Beard, Lyn Brooks, Gail Burns, George Cummings, Carol Johnston, Julius Patellis, Alan Penczek, Ned Renner, Anne Walker, and Sara Yosua! These incredibly passionate, talented, and committed citizens are impacting change for the betterment of our world! To be part of this unique community, please join our next training in early Spring 2017.

Inquiries about the application process should be made in December by calling the Nature Center. (*Photo on Right*)



THAT'S BATTY!

By Naturalist Jessica Jeannetta

Bats are one of the more misunderstood animals living in our area. Thanks to media, they are often portrayed with a negative reputation of being dirty, scary, disease ridden, and nuisances. In reality this creature is graceful, unique, and incredibly helpful to humans. There are 1200 species of bats worldwide, accounting for one-fifth of the world's mammals. The United States is home to 40 species of bats, 10 of which breed or migrate in Maryland. Sadly though, over half of the bat species found in North America are considered threatened or endangered due to severe population declines. Not surprisingly, humans are the largest threat to bats. Human action causes habitat loss, lack of roosting and hibernation sites, the spread of white nose syndrome, and the use of insecticide, all factors that are playing a role in the severe decline of our native bat populations.

Bats are the only mammals that can fly. Their wings consist of stretch skin that connects their forelegs, hind legs and tail. Bat species that are found in Maryland are all of the taxonomic family Chiroptera, which means *hand-winged*. Bats have large ears and small eyes. Despite the saying "blind as a bat," they are not actually blind and can see almost as well as a person! However, they use echolocation by making high frequency calls to help them hunt in the dark. Based on the amount of time it takes for the call to bounce back to them, they can determine their surroundings, and distance and location of insects, all while flying in the darkness.

Bats are nocturnal, primarily active just after sunset and just before sunrise. They are often found hunting for insects over local water bodies or in large open fields. All species found in our area are solely insectivores. The infamous misnomer that bats are thirsty for blood only applies to three species of bats



found in South America. Even there, the bats that drink blood are not known to attack humans. The popular myth associating bats to drinking human blood and vampires dates back to 1897, when Bram Stoker wrote *Dracula*. While technically not blood thirsty, they are quite voracious. During the course of a night, it is not uncommon for them to eat their weight in insects! This is why the ecological and economical value of bats for humans is significant.

As an insectivore, they keep populations of insects that are perceived as *pests* under control, such as mosquitoes, flies, beetles and moths. In fact, a bat can eat up to 1200 mosquitoes in one hour! Their ecological service also greatly benefits our local farmers, by eating insects that could damage crops. Annually, it is estimated that bats are valued to save U. S. farmers upwards of \$50 billion dollars a year!

Since bats are so widespread, it is common to see them anywhere — suburban backyards, farms, parks, and

even in very urban habitats. The agile flight maneuvers of bats can be difficult to see at night, but can be observed clearly downtown at an Orioles night game this time of year. The stadium lights attract thousands of insects, providing an easy meal for our native insect eaters. So while most people go to see a different kind of bat, the flying kind can put on quite a show, swooping and flying in front of thousands of people.

Bats spend their summer days roosting by hanging upside down in caves, mines, along rock faces, hollow trees, vacant buildings and even attics. The number of bats that roost together depends on their species and size of the roosting site. Since they are keen on finding dark quiet places to spend their days, attics can be ideal for them. Because of this unwanted intrusion into people's homes, many interactions with bats are negative.

Growing up, I can remember a time or two when we would find bats in our house. My mom would have a fit about

it, while my dad would calmly jump into action opening all the windows and doors so the bat could escape. When an illness in 2008 rendered my dad unable to perform bat removals from the house, I became the go-to-bat-rescue person for the family. Usually the calls would come late at night when I was just getting ready to go to bed. I would jump in my car and drive the short distance to my parents' house, with my leather gloves and small net in hand. The last time it happened was a few years ago, before my parents took steps to exclude bats from their home. By the time I arrived, my mom and sister had sequestered the little brown bat into my childhood room, but it had not been sighted since the door was tightly closed. I recruited my younger sister to help locate



the bat. We looked over and under and through the small room, but could not find the bat anywhere! As I moved the curtains to open the window, the terrified bat came swooping out from hiding. You would have thought a pterodactyl came flying out at us by the way my sister dropped to the floor! As quickly as I opened the window and removed the screen, the bat made its great escape and flew out into the night.

As the crisp cool days of fall arrive, our native bats will take this cue to get ready for winter. For some species, this will mean migration to other parts of the country where insects are still plentiful during winter months. But for most, this will mean returning to their winter roosting site to begin hibernation. Bats are true hibernators, meaning that during winter when insects are sparse, bats will find a hibernacula or hibernation site in a cave, rock crevice, or mine. During hibernation, their body temperature, heart rate and respiratory rate drop significantly. Multiple species of bats will hibernate together and colonies can vary in size from 10 to 100,000, depending on the species of bat and hibernacula size.

In Maryland, most bats breed late in the summer or in early fall. In most cases, the females will have delayed fertilization until spring and give birth to one pup in early summer. The low number of births each year makes bat population recovery incredibly difficult compared to animals that give birth to

multiple young each year. On average, a bat will live between 5-10 years, but they can live upwards of 30 years! Aside from human imposed threats, bats are particularly susceptible to being preyed upon while roosting during the day. They can be preyed upon by house cats, raccoons, foxes, owls, hawks and even black rat snakes. Flooding and high winds have also been known to cause greater mortality in bat populations.

Currently, an invasive fungus from Europe is killing more than a million bats each year. Though this fungus is not deadly, it rapidly spreads through caves and mines, growing on bat legs, faces and the overall presence on the bats, which disturbs their hibernation by waking them up frequently and causing them to use up winter fat reserves. This ultimately leads to starvation, as insects are not readily available during the winter. Since first being documented in the US in 2006, infected bat populations have dropped 80-90%, and the presence of the fungus has been confirmed in 28 states, including three counties in Maryland. Researchers believe that humans are spreading the syndrome as they explore caves throughout the country. If you explore caves, it is recommended to always decontaminate gear, clothing and shoes before and after, and to observe any posted advisories or closures while visiting caves that may or may not be infected.

While, yes, bats can carry diseases like rabies (note: no more than any other mammal), and they can be unwanted visitors in our home, bats play a critical role in the ecosystem. Their ecological services and economical value to agriculture is significant, and their population decline is directly tied to human activities. We can help by installing bat boxes, creating pollinator gardens that attract beneficial insects, refraining from using pesticides or insecticides, and by educating others on the importance of this uniquely beautiful creature.



(Pg. 8 - Evening Bat,
Top Pg. 9 - Red Bat hanging in tree,
Below Pg. 9 - Northern Long-Eared Bat)

*If my Hallowe'en Wish
Could but come True,
I'd wish I might fly
With the Bats, To You!*

Unknown

UPDATES ON WHAT'S GOIN' ON AROUND OREGON RIDGE PARK

BALTIMORE COUNTY BOARD OF APPEALS REVERSES DECISION ON HUNT VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

On July 7, 2016, the Baltimore County Board of Appeals reversed the original decision of the County's Office of Administrative Hearings, which had granted the church an exception to build on property zoned RC4 (watershed protection) at 821 Shawan Road. After 14 months of hearings and public meetings, the Board agreed with the Valleys Planning Council and surrounding community that the size and scope of the proposed church was not in keeping with the rural/historic nature of the area and that valid environmental concerns had been raised. The planned church was to cover an area of more than 30,000 square feet, with a parking lot for almost 250 cars, a gymnasium, and a lighted spire more than 100 feet high.

The ORNC Council shared some of the concerns of the general community, and was especially apprehensive about the environmental impact on Oregon Branch stream, overall water quality, and the natural surroundings in the Park.



ORP PIPELINE AND LOGGING UPDATES

by Jim Curtis, Environmental Issues Chairman

It was a noisy spring in the forest in Oregon Ridge Park. After the Columbia Pipeline Company set up their construction yard in our meadows, they proceeded to cut down about 18 acres of our forest to widen the pipeline. After the stumps were removed and the area graded, the pipeline was installed. By the end of June, the disturbed areas were seeded and mulched, but additional planting and final stabilization of the disturbed pipeline areas will take another few months. Unfortunately, the construction yard along Shawan Road is to remain until sometime in 2017.

Before the pipeline was completed, the logging operation in the Park resumed and forest-thinning operations restarted. While hiking and park activities were only minimally impacted, the aesthetics of the Park have been significantly reduced. The logging will probably continue through early fall.

If you were wondering whether the large oak tree displayed on the front page of the February-March Trailblazer was cut down, fear not! It survived the logging. While this tree is located in Stand 3 of the 2007 Forest Management Plan, which was one of the forest stands to be left alone, the County decided to thin the area anyway. Fortunately, as the photo shows, they spared our tree.

During this spring, observations of the pipeline installation revealed that the

project was generally well organized and that environmental controls were in use. However, observations of the pipeline in late June and July revealed erosion in several areas, and sediment deposition in the vernal pond just east of the lake. Apparently, heavy rains and runoff topped the silt fence above the vernal pond. Thankfully, the grass was beginning to grow in early July, and we assume that Columbia Pipeline will repair the eroded areas. We will continue to monitor the area and insist that any damage is repaired.

We also will be monitoring the logged and thinned forest stands for invasive plants and soil erosion. As mentioned in the February-March *Trailblazer*, we are concerned about the proliferation of Japanese stilt grass in the logged areas. A recent observation of the forest area (Stand #1) thinned in 2013 revealed that Japanese Stiltgrass has overtaken much of this stand. We can only hope that the same thing does not happen in the forest stands thinned this year.

Hopefully, by this time next year, the sounds of chainsaws, bulldozers, and falling trees will be a thing of the past, and our parkland will begin to heal.

Note: To read/review the Oregon Ridge Pipeline Mitigation Report, the Pipeline Forest Conservation Plan and Oregon Ridge Park Forest Health Assessment and Management Plan, visit our Web page at <http://oregonridgenaturecenter.org>.



(Left: Tree still standing in Stand 3. Center: Soil erosion above vernal pond. Right: Stand #1 - Jim Curtis shows invasive Stiltgrass.)

"FIRST TIMES" AT 2016 MUSIC IN THE WOODS

There were many "firsts" at this year's *Music in the Woods* — first time the festival was held in June, first time the fun extended into the evening, and the first time 2500 visitors showed up, all to enjoy the beautiful weather and folk music, blues, pop, bluegrass and rock played by these musicians: ORNC Dulcimer Group, The Witts, Proper Sporks, The Miranda Trio, In the Clear, Will Play for Fish, Painted Trillium, Bread and Cheese, Tool Shed, Organic Felix, Spice Kleinmann and Percy Shaw. Most amazing were performances by kids, whose talents ranged from playing mandolins to singing, especially Ridgely Middle School Honors Chorus and Mando for Kids. Musicians performed at own their pleasure and to the pleasure of listeners who could freely share in their passion for music.

Under beautiful skies, festivalgoers of all ages spread out on picnic blankets and lawn chairs across the meadow in front of the stage and behind it. Little ones danced and hula-hooped, and kids had an opportunity to share riddles and jokes in between musical acts.

Throughout the day, teen volunteers showed live animals and helped with kids' crafts and face painting. Visitors shopped at vendor stalls, which included: J. Murray Tribal Drums, The Glass Bee, Willowbee Studio, Zinzuedo, Amazing Photo Letters, Klaus Meyer-Bothing Carvings, Bees by the Bay, Creative Designs by Jill, Shea Brothers Skin Care and Carbery Morrow Pottery. "First-time" food vendors, like Curley's BBQ and the Good Humor ice cream truck, provided welcomed variety to our traditional hotdogs. The night ended around a blazing campfire, roasting tasty marshmallows for s'mores — another *first* for this event.

Many thanks to the Council, staff and 50 plus volunteers who coordinated, set up, cleaned up and assisted during the event. Dulaney High School's Key Club did an amazing job with parking. A big shout-out to our MC Rommel Miranda, who not only introduced our musicians, but jammed on stage with his guitar. We especially thank Carol Mantegna, our MITW Chair, who makes this event better every year.

A ROUND OF APPLAUSE FOR OUR VOLUNTEERS!

Nancy Berger
Lindsay Bull
Ann & Noot Canoles
Jim Curtis
Marcia Dysart
Lilly Enderson
Lucilla Facchin
Ken Farmer
Gemma Field
Maureen Flynn
Georgette Frederick
Matthew Friesner
Pat Ghingher

Mark Gingerich
Sybil Hebb
Karen Jackson
Mark Kander
Jerry Kirkwood
Bill LaBarre
Carol & Ronnie Mantegna
Rommel Miranda
Kevin O'Neill
Christina Panousos
Cheryl Parrish
Alan Penczek
David Power

Laurie Psoras
Ned Renner
Zi Smith
Vimal Vinod
Mike Waltz
Dave, Meghan, Katie,
& Josh Ward
Ben Wetzel

Dulaney Key Club
Performers and Vendors
(previously mentioned)



Top: In the Clear - Cindy & Jeff Swiss
Center: The Witts - Louie, Jenny, Emily
Bottom: Ridgely Middle Sch. Honors Chorus



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

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
TIMONIUM, MD
PERMIT NO. 296



DEPARTMENT OF
RECREATION AND PARKS



RENEW NOW AND SIGN UP A FRIEND, TOO!

Many branches make a strong tree. Many members make a strong Council. Use this membership form to renew and give a copy to a friend. **You can now join or renew online. Please visit:**

<http://OregonRidgeNatureCenter.org/membership.html>

Name _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Address _____ State _____ Zip _____

____ \$ 15 Individual
____ \$ 30 Family
____ \$ 75 Supporting

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



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