

TRAILBLAZER

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

Fall 2022

In This Issue:

- 2 — ORNCC Annual Report 2021-22
- 3 — ORNCC Member Spotlight:
Bob Stanhope
- 4 — The Beauty of Fall-Blooming
Natives
- 6 — Ecotherapy at Oregon Ridge Park
- 7 — Good Dogs Get a Treat
- 8 — 2022 Scholarship Recipients
- 10 — ORNCC Speaker Series
- 12 — Summer Camp 2022
- 13 — Music in the Woods
- 14 — Astronomy at Oregon Ridge Park
- 15 — Kids' Corner – Barred Owl Nature
Craft

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Cover Photo by Ellie Burgin

ORNCC Annual Report 2021–2022

By Ralph Brown, M.D., President, Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council

My first year as president of the Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council has concluded and I will be remaining for another year. If this year was eventful, the coming year should be even more so. This winter, the landscape architect firm of Lardner/Klein, which was contracted by the Department of Recreation and Parks to create a Master Plan for the future of Oregon Ridge, will be presenting their recommendations for improvements to our Park and Nature Center.



Contrary to the advice given to Orpheus when leaving the underworld, I do first want to look back at all that was accomplished this past year:

A new, modernized, easier-to-negotiate website thanks to Jim Curtis, Kathy Kadow, and the donated webpage design services of My Content Co.

Online registration for all events. Once again, Kathy Kadow, the nature center's administrative aide/naturalist, deserves the credit.

New educational signage for our Bluebird Trail designed by Shannon Davis, Martha Johnston, and Karen Jackson.

A full slate of presenters for our monthly speaker series arranged by Jeanne Pinto, with the help of Cole Snyder and Tina Beneman. Jeanne is hard at work coordinating the 2022-2023 series. This year's theme will be climate change and what we as individuals can do.

An expanded 16-page quarterly newsletter with a new editor, Pat Clagett, and a new graphic designer, Eszter Sápi.

Two-and-a-half miles of new trails on the south side of the park that replace a badly eroded and dangerous section of the yellow trail. This is almost entirely due to the inexhaustible energy of Keith Rosenstiel, aided by our trails committee, Boy Scouts, and students from Boys' Latin.

An expanding membership base thanks in great part to Debbie Bacharach's efforts.

The establishment of a "zero waste" policy for all events held at the nature center's three pavilions. Almost all waste that is generated by these rentals is either recycled or picked up and turned into compost by the company Veteran Compost.

A large increase in the amount of aid that the Council's Scholarship Committee, led by Dr. Polly Roberts, presented to college-bound students. This year we awarded a total of \$29,000 to seven future biologists, ecologists, and environmentalists. And this year we were able to include several Baltimore City students in our winners.

A \$100,000 grant from the state of Maryland was awarded to the county to be used for trail improvements and a woodland garden restoration at Oregon Ridge. This bill was sponsored by State Senator Chris West and Delegate Michele Guyton. Corey Johns, Delegate Guyton's administrative assistant, and a staunch park advocate, was instrumental in shepherding us through this process.

ORNC Annual Report 2021-2022, continues on page 7.

ORNCC Member Spotlight: Bob Stanhope

By Ralph Brown, M.D., President, Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council



Photo courtesy of Bob Stanhope

Wouldn't it be great if James Madison were still around to offer advice about the Constitution, or Thomas Edison were available to consult about the electrical grid, or Henry Ford could help out with supply chain issues? Unfortunately, these innovators are no longer around, but Bob Stanhope is. Back in 1980 when Baltimore County was looking to hire a naturalist for Oregon Ridge, they interviewed a young man named Bob Stanhope.

Bob had lived his entire life up until then in Massachusetts. He grew up in a small town near Boston, went to college in Boston, and worked his first several jobs in and around Boston. Although he majored in sociology in college, his first love was biology. This was reflected in his early work history: interning at the Boston Museum of Science, teaching nature in the Boston public schools, and then directing the Blue Hills Trailside Nature Museum.

At a convention for nature center directors, he learned that Baltimore County was looking for a director for its initial nature park, Oregon

Ridge. He interviewed for the job and was offered the position. A professor friend of Bob's recommended that he call a naturalist he knew in Baltimore named Jean Worthley. Ms. Jean had been the host of the PBS syndicated show, "Hodgepodge Lodge," a nature show for children. Bob was a regular viewer. Each week on the show, Ms. Jean would introduce elementary school kids to a different "wonder of nature." To a lover of the outdoors like Bob, calling Ms. Jean was like asking a teenager to call Taylor Swift. So, he built up his courage and made the call. He told Ms. Jean that he was hesitant about taking the job because he and his wife had just planted a raspberry patch — but when Ms. Jean told him that he could have some of her crop, he was hooked.

I guess the raspberries in Maryland must taste pretty sweet because Bob has never left. From 1980 until his retirement in 2006, Bob was a full-time naturalist for Baltimore County. After many years at Oregon Ridge, he later moved over to Cromwell Valley when that area first became a county property. They brought him on because of his expertise and skills at getting a nature park up and running. He then went on to help Marshy Point get established, before finally ending his career.

Bob was a familiar face to me at Oregon Ridge, so when I became president of the Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council I built up my courage and asked him if he would consider joining the executive committee. I am honored to report that one of Oregon Ridge's founding fathers has accepted. At this critical junction in the park's future course, Bob will be there to remind us of the principles that motivated him and many like him in the past, and will be there to help us preserve the park as a place to teach future generations the "wonder of nature".

The Beauty of Fall-Blooming Natives

By Elaine Kasmer, Maryland Master Naturalist and Master Gardener



Photo of New York Asters by Marjatta Caján from Pixabay

After the heat of summer, we tend to forget that another season of flowers is just around the corner. Fall blooming natives are beautiful, and very important to our native bees, butterflies and other pollinators. Later, their seedheads will provide food to both year-round and migrating songbirds.

Two large groups of fall-blooming natives are the goldenrods (*Solidago spp.*) and asters (recently reclassified into several genera). Both exhibit a wide range of habitats and sizes, are adapted to both sun and shade, and can be found in wild meadows, woodlands, and tidy gardens. Native plants or “straight” species are always best for native pollinators, but good cultivars can be found for more controlled spaces.

A reminder! Goldenrod does not cause hay fever! Instead, plants like ragweed, that produce wind-blown pollen, do not need showy flowers to attract bees and butterflies. That tiny and copious wind-blown pollen is what makes you sneeze. Goldenrod blooms have a high sugar concentration in their nectar that is a great fuel source for migrating monarchs and overwintering bees.

On roadsides and meadows you might see tall and rangy Canadian goldenrod (*S. canadensis*) but in the garden tidier species (*S. odorata*, *S. rigida*, *S. bicolor*, etc.) and their cultivars will do the job. Some that live up to their names are ‘Fireworks’ (*S. rugosa*) at 3-4 feet, and ‘Golden Fleece’ (*S. sphacelata*) only 18” tall.

Two woodland goldenrod species bloom well in partial shade. Zig-zag Goldenrod (*S. flexicaulis*), with atypical broad leaves, will spread by runners to form a spring ground-cover carpet. Bluestemmed Goldenrod (*S. caesia*) is a clump-grower with similar flowers but narrower darker leaves. I was delighted last October to look out my window to see Red-crowned Kinglets feeding on the tiny seedheads on their way from Canada to Mexico!

Asters come in all shapes and sizes, covered with daisy-like flowers in purples, pinks, blues, and white. New York Aster (*Symphylotrichum novi-belgii*) and New England Aster (*S. novae-angliae*) are two that are commonly available, both as a straight species (3-6’) and as many varied cultivars, which are usually shorter with flowers that range from pinks to deep purples.

The Mt. Cuba Center is a native plant garden and research center located in Delaware. You can visit them online for a list of best cultivars for the Mid-Atlantic region, or visit in person for a stunning fall show!

Two shade-loving asters are Blue Wood Aster (*S. cordifolium*), a clump-former with heart-shaped leaves and a multitude of small blue flowers; and White Wood Aster, (*Eurybia divaricata*) which spreads by both roots and seeds, and is best reserved for wilder spaces. Rabbits have a fondness for Blue Wood Aster, so protect the plants when they're small.

Some other favorite fall bloomers are the Joe-Pye weeds (*Eutrochium purpureum*, *E. maculatum*, *E. dubium*, and *E. fistulosum*), with fluffy pink blooms, and the Ironweeds (*Vernonia spp.*), which have clusters of similar purple blooms—all butterfly magnets. Some species get quite tall, but shorter cultivars are available ('Little Joe' and 'Baby Joe'). These are good "back of the border" plants, as they come up later but grow quickly.

They can also be cut back mid-summer to encourage branching and shorter stature, and to stagger bloom times by cutting just those in front. I love looking out my second-floor window at my 10-foot-tall purple ironweed covered with yellow and black tiger swallowtails!

A final caveat—it is best to buy these species from native plant specialists. Some nurseries carry plants that are grown elsewhere, which may mean they've been treated with long-lasting systemic pesticides ("neo-nics"). These can inadvertently poison the very pollinators we want to attract. Some large growers are realizing this problem, and are now avoiding these pesticides, so find a knowledgeable person at your nursery and ask! (Or visit xerces.org for more information.)

Enjoy these fall bloomers and their insect and bird guests, both here at the park, and in your own private Eden.



Photo of Zig-zag Goldenrod by Olli Kilpi on Unsplash

Ecotherapy

By Cole Snyder



Photo by Jonathan Petersson from Pexels

Ecotherapy (or nature therapy) is the practice of using nature to heal past traumas and to grow mentally. There is a connection between nature and reduction in stress, depressive symptoms, and anxiety.¹ Only a few minutes outside can improve a person's mood.

Using nature to heal has been around for thousands of years. As far back as forty-thousand years ago, shamans were using herbs and nature to ward off evils (or anxieties).² The term "ecotherapy" began to be used in the 1990's, when there was a realization of how separated from nature people were becoming. Mental health professionals began identifying themselves as nature therapists, and using nature clinically to treat mental health.

The Center for Nature Informed Therapy is located in Towson, not far from Oregon Ridge Park. They use classic therapeutic techniques like cognitive behavioral therapy, but they do therapy outside, instead of in a room. The therapist can walk through the woods with the patient or simply sit in nature and conduct their sessions. For more in-depth information, Zoe Jack from the Center for Nature Informed Therapy will be speaking at ORNC in October.

Please check our calendar of events for details: www.OregonRidgeNatureCenter.WildApricot.org

Mental health issues became significantly worse during the pandemic. People have been isolated inside their homes, away from other people and away from nature. It is estimated that depressive and anxiety symptoms in children has doubled since the pandemic began.³ Bringing more people out into nature has the potential to help this rising problem.

Oregon Ridge is a beautiful park to hike and explore. If someone is struggling with mental health a small time exploring the park can improve their symptoms.

¹ Laguaite, M. (n.d.). Nature therapy: Types and benefits. WebMD. Retrieved June 22, 2022, from <https://www.webmd.com/balance/features/nature-therapy-ecotherapy>

² What is EcoTherapy? explore the history and benefits of the practice. EcoTherapy Heals. (2021, September 24). Retrieved June 22, 2022, from <https://www.ecotherapyheals.com/what-is-ecotherapy/>

³ Nicole Racine, P. D. (2021, November 1). Global prevalence of depressive and anxiety symptoms in children and adolescents during COVID-19. JAMA Pediatrics. Retrieved June 22, 2022, from <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2782796>

Good Dogs Get a Treat

By Cole Snyder

Dog owners—get out your doggie brushes and nail clippers—your dog’s picture could end up being featured on our Facebook page!

We know how much you love to take hikes with your Fido at Oregon Ridge. Despite signs everywhere asking people to leash their dogs at all times and to pick up their dog’s waste, some owners forget to observe these rules. The Oregon Ridge Council wants to thank dog owners who do follow our park rules.

If our trail ambassadors spot you with your dog on a leash or properly disposing of your dog’s

waste, they will give you a 10% off gift certificate from the locally owned **My Pet Store and More**. With your permission, they will collect contact information. At the end of each month, a "good dog" drawing will be held and the lucky dog and its owner will get a prize. If the owner is agreeable, they can send us a picture of their dog to be posted on our Facebook page. We are also planning to install two new dog waste stations at trail entrances.

We want you and your dog to feel welcome at Oregon Ridge. So come and take a walk in our beautiful park. Be a “good owner” and you and your dog might even get a treat.

ORNC Annual Report 2021-2022, continued from p.2

Planning for a deer-fenced woodland restoration garden is underway that will memorialize past members of the Oregon Ridge community who have made major contributions to the preservation of our park and forest. Winny Tan and Elaine Kasmer are leading this project.

Festivals, camps, nature events, master naturalist training, educational experiences for school children and their teachers—I have a 37-page printout in front of me that lists all the activities that have occurred at Oregon Ridge over this past year. Unbelievably, all this is this carried out by a full-time staff of two naturalists—Jessica Jeannetta and Elizabeth Kadow; one part-time administrative aide/naturalist—Kathy Kadow; and hundreds of volunteers and thousands of volunteer hours. I’m still trying to figure out how they do it, but if this group had been in charge of building the I-83/Padonia Road intersection, it would have been done years ago.

This past year, the possibility of adding a commercial ropes and zip line adventure course at Oregon Ridge was presented to

the wider community. The users of the park overwhelmingly rejected this idea. The Department of Recreation and Parks listened and decided not to pursue this project. This is a pivotal time for Oregon Ridge. Information and citizen input are still being gathered and the County’s completed Master Plan will be presented in January 2023. We will hear from the landscape architects what their vision is for the park. But it’s important we remember—their ideas are only recommendations. The Department of Recreation and Parks has demonstrated a willingness to hear the community. So please stay involved in the process—let Rec and Parks know, let Johnny O. know, let your county council person know—what you want the future of Oregon Ridge Park to be.

Finally, **“FREE ANN!”** Ann Canoles has been the council’s treasurer for over two decades. She is eagerly awaiting the start of her next life adventures, but she has promised she won’t leave until we have found a replacement. If you or someone you know might be interested in serving as our treasurer, please contact the Nature Center.

Scholarships

By Polly Roberts, M.D., Chair, Scholarship Committee

For the 28th consecutive year, the Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council has awarded scholarships to graduating seniors who have demonstrated academic excellence and a commitment to the environment. Seven graduates from Baltimore City and Baltimore County have been awarded a total of \$27,000.



Kayla Casey,

a graduate of Sparrows Point High School's environmental science magnet program (SPECIES), will pursue a major in wildlife and fisheries biology at Frostburg University, with a minor in parks/recreation and animal behavior. She envisions a career as a wildlife biologist or park ranger, teaching others to understand, respect and conserve the natural world. Kayla has been awarded \$5000 for her freshman year as well as the dedicated Getty Dutrow Mullan scholarship, which will contribute an additional \$2000 during each of her four college years, for a total of \$13,000.

Mia Dyer,

who graduated from the Baltimore School for the Arts, has received \$6000 to study environmental science, history, and anthropology at St. Mary's College. Her career goal is to provide nature education to the public, ideally employed as an "interpretive park ranger" within the National Park Service.



Macy Simons,

a graduate of the environmental science magnet program at the Western School of Technology and Environmental Science, will major in environmental science and sustainability at Allegheny College. She is planning a career as an environmental scientist and educator, working at a nature center or a national park. Macy has been awarded \$6000.





Nayeve Pumphrey,

a Baltimore City College graduate, has received \$3000 to study marine biology and environmental science at St. Mary's College. She is interested in a career as a marine mammalogist or coral reef engineer.

Tyberious Brooks,

a graduate of Woodlawn High School, will pursue environmental engineering at Elon University. He has received \$2000. His ideal career would involve working to improve water treatment facilities, specifically in Baltimore City.



Sydney Bayne,

who is a graduate of Eastern Technical High School, has been awarded \$1500 to study marine/animal science at Eckerd College. Her career goals include marine mammal rehabilitation and research.



Hannah Hopkins

graduated from the Jemicy School and has volunteered as an Oregon Ridge Nature Center Ridge Runner for more than two years. She has received \$1500 to study zoo science at West Liberty University. Hannah's career plans include the rehabilitation of exotic/endangered animals and their habitats.



The Council extends its best wishes to the 2022 scholarship recipients and sincerely thanks all who donate so generously to our scholarship program.

ORNCC Speaker Series

By Jeanne Pinto, Chair of the Speaker Series Standing Committee

Our Speakers Series takes a break in the summer months and will return in September with an exciting kick-off to a season of presentations focusing on Climate Change. We are grateful to have many experts in their fields sharing their knowledge on climate change and nature-related subjects.

As a reminder, the speaker series remains free of charge for all Oregon Ridge Nature Center members. There is a \$10 fee for each session for non-members. Registration is required for all those planning to attend. **Please register online at OregonRidgeNatureCenter.WildApricot.org.**

Please join us at 7:00pm on the dates listed below for these upcoming sessions.



Dr. Sara Via

Professor and Climate Extension Specialist, UMD College Park. Dr. Via, a biologist and frequent speaker on climate change and its impacts on ecosystems, biodiversity, suburban landscapes, gardens, health, and agriculture, will join us

on **September 19, 2022** via Zoom to present "Climate change: Already in your neighborhood." In this presentation Dr. Via will address why climate change is happening and how we know it's real, and will give an overview of impacts and available solutions. For more information about Dr. Via's Climate and Sustainability webinars for 2022, videos of previous webinars, and other climate-related resources, please visit her website at www.ClimateCorner.org.

To register for this event, please go to OregonRidgeNatureCenter.WildApricot.org/event-4915403



Zoe Jack is the Manager of Program and Partnership Development for the Center for Nature Informed Therapy based out of Towson, MD. She is also a licensed psychotherapist at Chesapeake Mental Health Collaborative, where she specializes in nature informed and client-centered work with children, adolescents, and adults. Ms. Jack will join us on **October 17, 2022** to present an Introduction to Nature Informed Therapy. Weather permitting this session will be held in the Lake Pavilion. Are you curious

about how a person's relationship to nature is now being used in mental health therapy? This presentation will provide an introduction to the quickly growing field of nature informed/ ecotherapy, covering an overview of what nature informed therapy is and the current research backing up nature informed mental health. Participants will leave the presentation with increased knowledge of how a relationship with nature impacts their mental health and with a few tools for integrating nature-informed therapy practices into their day-to-day lives.

To register for this event, please go to OregonRidgeNatureCenter.WildApricot.org/event-4915409



David M. Saunders is a Climate Change Professional (CC-P), certified by the Association of Climate Change Officers (ACCO) and the State of Maryland. Now retired, he was the Senior Director of Quality for ResCare, a human services company with 45,000 employees. Before ResCare, David was a consultant at ARBOR specializing in research and training on gathering, understanding, and deploying the voice of the customer. Mr. Saunders will join us on **November 21, 2022** to present, "Coming Climate Crisis and What You Can Do." How might climate change impact your life? What

can you do to prepare? What can be done to prevent catastrophic outcomes? This workshop will provide scientific evidence of climate change; discuss legal, social, and political issues; and suggest actions for prevention. You will learn the requirements for becoming a certified Climate Change Professional (CC-P®). Also, you will learn how to calculate and lower your carbon footprint by switching to 100% wind (easily done for Maryland residents).

To register for this event, please go to OregonRidgeNatureCenter.WildApricot.org/event-4915417

We hope you will be able to join us for these information-packed sessions! Please remember to register online.



You can view our upcoming programs and events by opening your camera app and pointing it at the QR code above. Click on the link that pops up to browse and register at OregonRidgeNatureCenter.WildApricot.org.

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Summer Camp 2022

By Jessica Jeannetta, Director/Naturalist



Summer Camp 2022 is underway and by the time this newsletter hits mailboxes it will be over! Most don't realize that summer camp planning begins before snow has even melted from the ground. Camps are planned starting in January, and registration is opened for families to sign-up. By March, most if not all of our camps are full, with eager kids looking forward to a week of fun in nature.

With the help of counselor-in-training volunteers, this year's camp staff — Meghan Junis & Josh Ward — led eight weeks of camp for 160 campers. This year we had five different camp themes offered for children ages 4-12 years old. Each week campers were outside exploring the park, experiencing nature up close and of course, getting wet and dirty — all while having a blast.

Our youngest campers, **Little Acorns**, once again kicked off the summer camp season, spending the week discovering nature through animals that live in the park. New this year was the addition of the **Young Naturalist** camp — our first full day camp for 5-year olds — who spent their time learning what it takes to be a Naturalist.

Our most popular camps for ages 6-9 year-olds were also given a new theme this year: **Wild in Nature**. Campers spent their week learning all about how animals survive in the wild, and **Oregon Ridge Expedition** campers learned all about how people survive in the wild.



Finally, our oldest campers, the **Aquatic Explorers** camp, got the chance to spend the week discovering the watery worlds inside the park, and outside of the park, with two offsite field trips.



A lot of fun memories were made and we are looking forward to next year already.

Photos on this page by Camp Staff

Music In The Woods

By Jessica Jeannetta, Director/Naturalist



Photo by Jessica Jeannetta

After a two-year hiatus due to restrictions associated with COVID-19, the Nature Center was excited for the return of Music in the Woods. And we could not have asked for better weather!

Festival attendees set up picnic blankets and chairs in the meadow, and sat in the shade of the pavilion to enjoy the sweet sounds of eight different local musical acts that performed throughout the day, sharing their talents with us.

This year, we made updates to our crafts and games area that included a make your own tambourine, dancing ribbon and bubble station for kids. The addition of the hammocks and musical pots & pans wall in the Nature Play Space kept many kids busy. Even our Raptors on the Ridge Volunteers were on hand, showing off our amazing birds throughout the event.

When not enjoying the music, attendees could have s'mores around the campfire, visit the

tenant house, play on the new musical wall in the Kid's Play Area, or browse the many products from all of our demonstrators and vendors. There was even an Italian ice stand and the Council sold hotdogs and snacks to help support the Nature Center.

A Special Thank You to all of our event volunteers, who gave their time to help make the event a super fun time for all!

Music in the Woods 2022 Performers:

Oregon Ridge Dulcimers
Three-4-All
Quiet the Mountain
Will Play for Fish
In the Clear
Ridge Runners
Proper Sporks
Keeve Greene

Astronomy at Oregon Ridge Park

By Michael Eversmier



Oregon Ridge Park has many trails to hike and lots of critters to encounter but our park also has another highlight that is out of this world — a good view of the night sky.

A dark celestial view is hard to come by around the lights of a big city like Baltimore. Even residential lighting around many homes in the county can limit our view of the sky to a handful of stars. To be clear, the skies over our park are not as dark as the famous Cherry Springs State Park in PA, known as the darkest spot east of the Mississippi. But with a clear night, some binoculars or small telescope and a park naturalist, our overhead view puts on a show of some surprising night skies wonders.

So, what out-of-this-world views can you see at the Ridge? Past Oregon Ridge programs have covered blue moons, the Winter Solstice,

twinkling stars, and our solar system. This Fall we have timed some more dazzling night events.

In October, we will view some gas giants in our solar system. Jupiter and its largest moons and Saturn and its rings will put on a show over the lake and through our telescope. In November, we will relax under a blanket of stars and constellations and learn what fascinated our ancestors and excites astronomers. Finally, in December, The Geminid Meteor shower steals the show as we learn about meteors and hope to catch a few as they streak across the sky.

For further information or to register, visit our online registration at OregonRidgeNatureCenter.WildApricot.org

Photo by Michael Eversmier

Kids' Corner

Barred Owl Nature Craft

By Eszter Sápi, Graphic Designer

Fall is a great time to go on nature walks and explore the different trails at Oregon Ridge. This time of year, you can find all sorts of exciting-looking pebbles, twigs, leaves, pieces of bark, acorns, and much more on the forest floor. **Only collect things from the ground – never cut or tear leaves or branches off living plants.**

While walking, you might hear a loud bird call that you can identify as the call of barred owls. They sound like they ask “*Who cooks for you?*” Barred owls will often call back and forth between pairs. If you look carefully, you might even see one in a large hollow in a tree. They are brown and white, with dark eyes, a yellow beak, and powerful talons. Their plumage features vertical brown bars on a white background throughout their body. However, their upper breast has horizontal brown bars.

So let’s make a barred owl! Start by gathering the bark, sticks, leaves, and whatever else you collected on your last nature walk. You may need some scissors to cut materials into the shape you want, or you can use your fingers to pinch pieces off.

You can be as detailed as you like! Add lots of pieces for details, or use only a few elements to make your owl.

Make your own barred owl just in time for Halloween! Or, you can create another animal you encountered on your walks at Oregon Ridge.

Sources used:

Audubon

www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/barred-owl

American Bird Conservancy tinyurl.com/567ktshj



Photos by Eszter Sápi



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<https://www.OregonRidgeNatureCenter.org/Join-Donate-Volunteer/>

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