

TRAILBLAZER

Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council

Supporting Oregon Ridge Nature Center since 1982

Fall 2024

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Contributors to this issue: Winny Tan, Ralph Brown, Judy Breitenbach, Don Callihan,
Michelle Boyle, Polly Roberts, Sindhu Moon

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President's Column

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

"Initium est dimidium facto." The beginning is half of the deed.

My three-year tenure as president of the Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council ended in September. I am no closer to understanding cryptocurrency but I have come to realize the critical role of our nature council. I do not hold Baltimore County government responsible for the price of eggs but I do hold them accountable for the protection and preservation of the public's park land. The poorly maintained, deteriorating trails and the dying forest at Oregon Ridge attest to the County's failure in this role. Governments don't intrinsically care about nature. You can't depend on government to understand science, or regard future generational benefits. There is much more land given over to parking than to parks. It is a primary role of our Council to bring nature into the gravitational field of government.

Do you think that Richard Nixon truly cared about the environment? We only have the Clean Air and Water Act and the Environmental Protection Agency because the public demanded it. We don't have Go Ape and mountain biking at Oregon Ridge because the public demanded it. We have a Master Plan for Oregon Ridge that prioritizes the restoration and preservation of the natural areas of the park because the public demanded it. Oregon Ridge will only be viewed as a common treasure worthy of the government's TLC if we demand it.

The revered naturalist Aldo Leopoldo wrote, "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community." Baltimore County government is starting to acknowledge this in their speech. They have hired a consultant to design a new,

expanded trail system. They have recognized the need for a plan to save our decaying forest. They have promised to install a deer fence around our long planned for native woodland garden. They are talking about protecting and expanding our meadows, the keystone for much of the park's biodiversity. It is now up to our council, our members and our park users to demand that Baltimore County government translates speech into action.

Maybe some of us dream of being "Tank Man," the person who bravely stood in front of the tanks in Tiananmen Square. In reality, it's much more realistic to just want to do something small. I'm glad that I had my chance to do something small over the last three years.

There is a famous poem by W. H. Auden describing his thoughts on a painting by Pieter Bruegel of Icarus falling into the sea. This is the last stanza:

*"In Breughel's Icarus, for instance: how everything
turns away
Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman may
Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
But for him it was not an important failure; the sun shone
As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green
Water; and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on."*

My term is up as president, but I will remain an active participant in advocating for Oregon Ridge. I will not be sailing "calmly on".

Ralph Brown MD
President, Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council

ON THE COVER

Stella is home!!! Stella, the Red-tailed Hawk who escaped on April 21st when a tree fell and destroyed her enclosure, was found in Perry Hall on June 9th. We can't thank our friends in Perry Hall enough for taking the time to find the story behind the hawk who had been in their yards for the past 4 days. Stella who is blind in one eye, was placed at Oregon Ridge by the Avian Conservation Center of Appalachia in West Virginia because of her inability to hunt. The Conservation Center was right-on with their determination that Stella was not a releasable bird as that was evident when we found that she had lost 40% of her body weight during the 7 weeks she was missing. After over two months of rehab at Phoenix Wildlife Center, Stella is healthy and was returned to Oregon Ridge and her new enclosure on August 21st.



Meadow and Trail Update

By Winny Wong Tan, Incoming President, Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council

In early June, the meadows close to Shawan Road were mistakenly mowed by contractors. The original request was made for early spring before the bird nesting and pollinator season to take down last year's growth and small trees to maintain the meadow habitat. The late mow affects many wildlife species who depend on the meadow for food and cover, such as birds, butterflies and mammals.

The Council has been in communication through the summer with the nature center staff and the Rec and Parks department to work out future meadow management plans, so this doesn't happen again. The park will be installing "No Mow" signs and working with volunteers to reseed the meadows with native seed mixes in the fall and spring. This increase in plant diversity will support more wildlife. There will be an interpretive exhibit sign in the future that will explain what a meadow is and its role as a habitat. We will continue to work with the park to ensure that the meadow habitat will have a long-term sustainability plan.

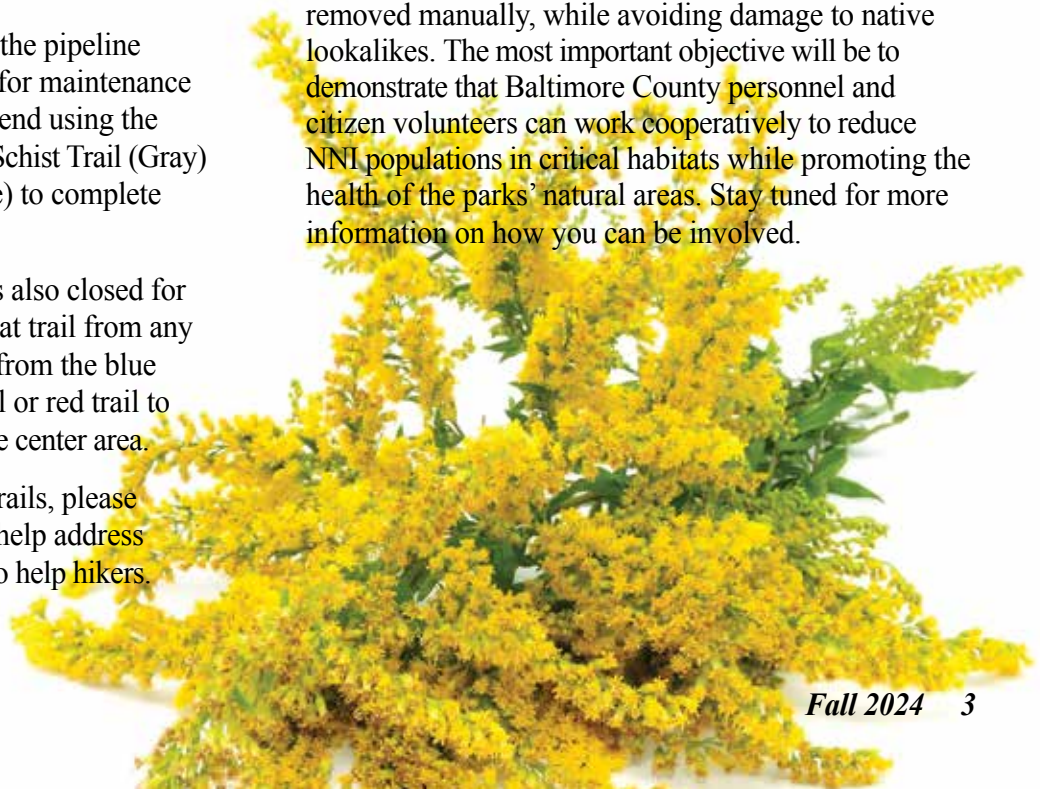
There are still a couple of trail closures that visitors will need to be aware of and to know how to detour to the next available trail to continue or return to their destinations. The Council is following up with the Rec and Parks department to not delay on the repairs and have these trails reopen.

- The steps on the Red Trail (between the pipeline and the lake) are temporarily closed for maintenance to address safety issues. We recommend using the pipeline (northeast) aka Loch Raven Schist Trail (Gray) to the Baltimore Gneiss Trail (Purple) to complete the loop.
- The Orange Trail (behind the lake) is also closed for safety issues. Please do not access that trail from any point. Connect to the various points from the blue trail and the gas line to the green trail or red trail to continue or to come back to the nature center area.
- If there are any questions about the trails, please let the park staff know and they can help address the concerns or add additional signs to help hikers.

The Woodland Garden Committee will restart its effort on removing invasive plant species from the project area this fall. If you are interested in this effort, please email info@OregonRidgeNatureCenter.org to be added to our email list for volunteer dates. The next phase is to have deer fencing installed. The proposal design was cleared this summer to hopefully go to bid through the County for installation by late fall. Our goal is to be able to restore native plants to the area in the spring of 2025 without deer grazing.

Don Callihan, Sustainability Committee Chair will be working with volunteers from several organizations in Baltimore County to develop a weed warrior-like program that will train volunteers to remove non-native invasive species (NNI) in the county parks with nature centers: Cromwell Valley, Lake Roland, Marshy Point, Oregon Ridge, as well as Benjamin Banneker Historical Park and Museum. This is a joint program of the Departments of Rec and Parks and Environmental Protection and Sustainability, under Jess Jeannetta's leadership.

The goal is to train volunteer leaders on identification of NNI that can be removed manually so they can work under supervision of park staff on seasonal removal efforts. Target species will include such pests as wavy-leaf basketgrass, Japanese stiltgrass, wineberry, garlic mustard and multiflora rose that can effectively be removed manually, while avoiding damage to native lookalikes. The most important objective will be to demonstrate that Baltimore County personnel and citizen volunteers can work cooperatively to reduce NNI populations in critical habitats while promoting the health of the parks' natural areas. Stay tuned for more information on how you can be involved.



Did You Hear What I Heard? – Music in the Woods 2024

By Judy Breitenbach, Maryland Master Naturalist

The Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council held its annual Music in the Woods event on Saturday, June 1st. It was a well-attended event where community members enjoyed musical performances by local artist, children created crafts, played games and ran around the natural playspace and others enjoyed listening to our Oregon Ridge Dulcimers demonstrating their talents. Our Raptors on the Ridge volunteers engaged the public as they interspersed the crowd with our Birds of Prey animal ambassadors.

Even though this is a one-time event each year did you know you could listen to music in the woods year-round? In 1955, Reginald Vincent Homes wrote the poem – The Magic of Sound. His words reflect the beauty of sound that proliferate the earth... “The earth has its music for those who will listen; its bright variation forever abound. With all of the wonders that God has bequeathed us, there’s nothing that thrills like the magic of sound.” www.cottage-corner.com/post/the-earth-has-music-for-those-who-will-listen-poem

Holmes encourages us to take time and just listen to the sounds around us, a simple exercise that we dismiss every day because of our busy schedules and daily routines. Vanessa Eleonor Vale Mendoza proposed that Holmes words “suggest that nature has its own music, its own language that can be understood by those who truly listen... nature is not silent, but full of sounds that can enchant, soothe, or inspire us.” www.cottage-corner.com/post/earth-music-those-listen

No matter what time of year a quiet mind can zoom in on the sounds throughout Oregon Ridge Park from buzzing insects, chirping birds, croaking frogs, bubbling stream ripples, honking geese and leaves rustling in the wind. The list of possibilities is endless. Mendoza recommends to soothe your soul find a quiet place, close your eyes and take a few deep breaths, and listen to the sounds closest to you and then expand your listening to sounds further away. Your body will respond to this calming endeavor in a beneficial way.

We were blessed that June 1st was a beautiful weather day allowing for blankets on the lawn for a picnic lunch yielding to sounds of song and laughter throughout the park. As the crowd was leaving the park you could sense their delight with the day’s activities (with the exception of some tired little ones). Volunteers and Nature Center staff worked diligently together to ensure the success of this event for which the Council is very grateful and thank them immensely.



Photos by Karen Jackson

Be on the Lookout for Wavyleaf Basketgrass!

By Don Callihan, Stewardship Committee Chair

A new non-native invasive species has entered Oregon Ridge Park. It's called Wavyleaf basketgrass, otherwise known as *Oplismenus undulatifolius*. It has heavily invaded parts of nearby Gunpowder Falls State Park's Hereford Area, especially along trails.

"Wavyleaf basketgrass is an invasive perennial grass, native to southeastern Europe. It was first documented in Patapsco Valley State Park in Maryland in 1996 and has now widely spread across Maryland and northern Virginia. It was first found in southeastern Pennsylvania in 2016. *Source: Wavyleaf Basketgrass - Penn State Extension (psu.edu)*

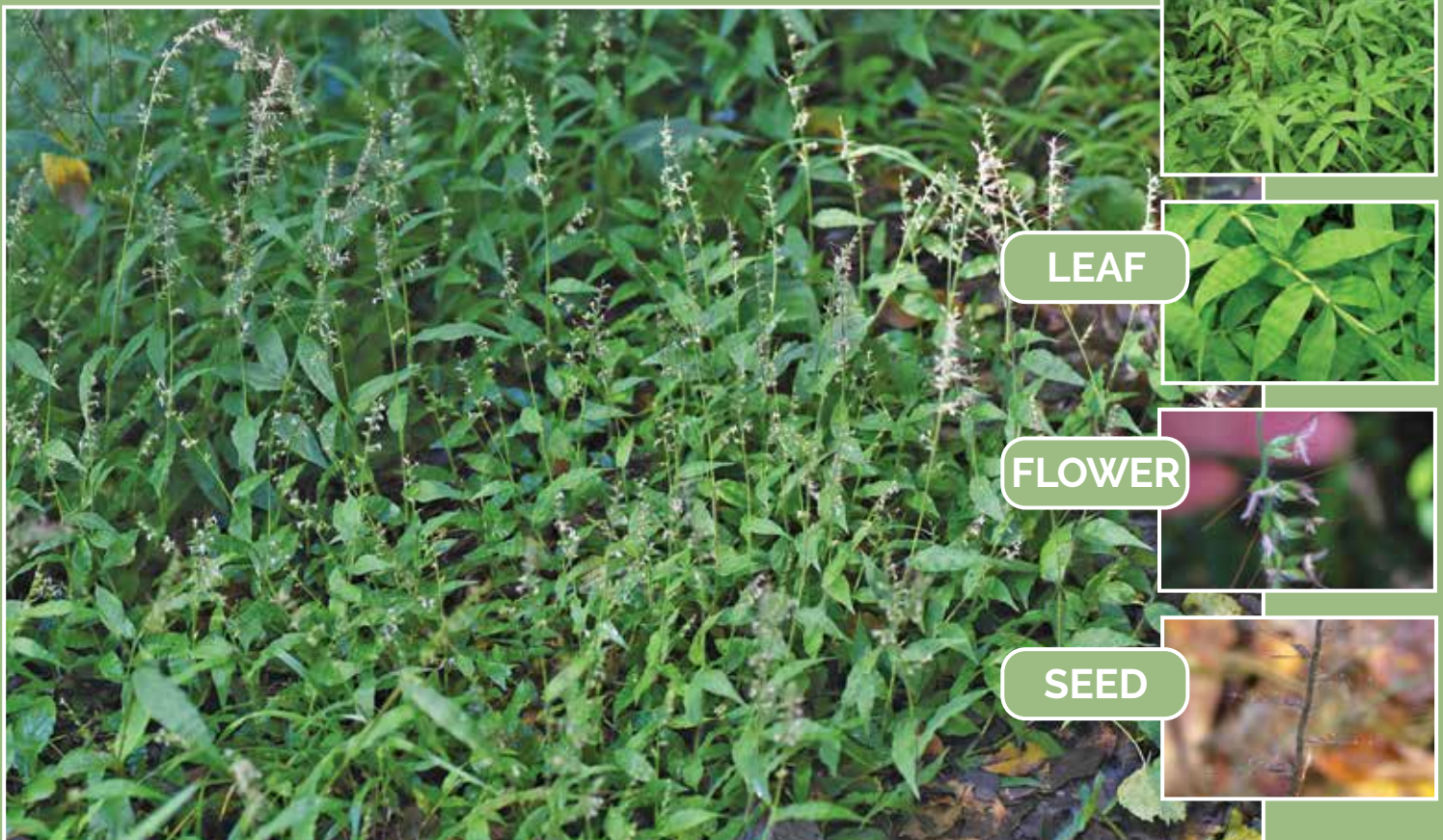
"Ecologists believe that wavyleaf basketgrass could become even more widespread and damaging than Japanese stiltgrass, which shares habitats. Wavyleaf basketgrass and Japanese stiltgrass often grow together in the same moist mixed hardwood forests. They can be told apart easily if you look closely." *Source: Wavyleaf Basketgrass (maryland.gov)*

How Can You Help?

Use the guides from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources or Penn State Extension. These will help you learn to recognize this grass and grass-lookalikes and help others identify it.

Remove it from your property. It has weak roots and can easily be pulled out by hand. Dispose of it in household trash. Never compost or put it with garden weeds because the seeds will sprout and grow next year. DO NOT walk through patches of the grass during the Fall. Fall is when the awns (seeds) are sticky and you can unknowingly carry the seeds with you and spread the grass. Your dog can also pick up the seeds. This is one reason why it's important to keep your dog on a leash and for all canines and humans to stay on the trails.

Did you find it in Oregon Ridge Park? Please snap a photo and note its location (name of trail or other landmark), and send it to jkane2@baltimorecountymd.gov.



Photos courtesy of Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources

A Banner Year for Scholarships!

By Polly Roberts, M.D.

This is the 30th consecutive year that the ORNCC has awarded scholarships to deserving high school seniors from Baltimore City and County. To be eligible, an applicant must have a GPA of 3.0 or better, have demonstrated a commitment to the environment, and be planning a college major in environmental science or nature education. In addition to these requirements, the Scholarship Committee looks for young people who, we believe, will truly have an impact on our environment and the natural world. To date, 93 students have been awarded a total of \$247,000!

For this year a total of \$34,500 has been awarded, divided among 9 extremely deserving graduating seniors, who represent 2 Baltimore City schools and 5 Baltimore County schools:

Evan Beauvois-Ransome \$5,500

Evan is a graduate of Baltimore City's Polytechnic Institute, where he was the president of his school's aquaponics club. He participated in the research-oriented Henry Hall Summer Scholar's Program sponsored by the National Aquarium in Baltimore, where he learned about marine conservation and local ecosystems. He will be attending St. Mary's College of Maryland and will pursue a double major in marine and environmental science. His career goal is to become a researcher and educator in the field of aquaponics and sustainable agriculture.



Lauren Hamilton \$4,000

Lauren is a graduate of the Western School of Technology and Environmental Science, where she completed the environmental science magnet program. She has completed an internship at the University of Maryland's Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology. Lauren will attend Salisbury University with a major in environmental biology and a minor in marine science. She envisions a career as a marine biologist and would like to carry out research on the impact of climate change on sharks.



Reuben Danyali \$2,000

A graduate of the Carver Center for Arts and Technology, Reuben served as the president of his school's Environmental Club for 3 years. He is a leader in the Jewish Youth Climate Movement at both the national and local levels and will be attending an honors program in environmental architectural design at Boston University. He envisions a career aligning human activities with the needs of the natural world by utilizing environmental law and urban planning.



Owen Koser \$3,000

Owen is a graduate of Baltimore City College. He has a particular interest in horticulture; specifically, in the endangered miniature orchids of the cloud forests of the Andean Mountains, some of which he successfully cultivates. He is a volunteer with the Rawlings Conservatory and the Friends of Herring Run and a member of the Philadelphia Horticultural Society. Owen will attend the University of Maryland, College Park, majoring in environmental science with an emphasis on conservation biology. His career goal is to be involved with the conservation of fragile ecosystems.



Kevin Ramos \$4,000

Kevin graduated from Sparrows Point High School, where he completed the SPECIES environmental magnet program. He was senior class president and completed 20 college credits at the Community College of Baltimore County, where he was on the dean's list for academic achievement. Kevin will attend Loyola University (Maryland) and plans a major, as well as a career, in environmental engineering.



Evelyn Sangree \$2,000

Evelyn is a graduate of the Western School of Technology and Environmental Science's environmental science magnet program and a member of the school's Green Club, where she was instrumental in establishing recycling in the cafeteria and developing a plan for implementing composting as well. She has completed her first year as a beekeeper and is a member of her church's environmental stewardship committee. Evelyn will be attending Cornell University for environmental engineering. Eventually she would like to design sustainable buildings to combat habitat damage.



Sabeera Rehman \$4,000

Sabeera is a graduate of the Western School of Technology and Environmental Science's environmental technology magnet program. She is interested in hydrology and water quality and has earned certification in Erosion and Sediment Control. She has completed an internship with BGE in their Environmental Operations Dept. Sabeera will attend the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, where she will major in environmental science and geography. After college, she plans to obtain a master's degree in environmental science.



Jesse Van Doren \$6,000

A graduate of Towson High School, Jesse volunteered with the local Citizens' Climate Lobby and co-founded a student team that advocated for the Baltimore County Public Schools to switch to all-electric buses and appliances. Additionally, as a research intern at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, he conducted a study to determine the effects of extreme heat events on the Baltimore area. Jesse will attend the University of Pennsylvania, majoring in environmental policy and application and intends to pursue a career developing policy to protect the environment.



Morgan Robb \$4,000

Morgan is a graduate of Pikesville High School, where she was an active member of the school's environmental club for 3 years. She served as an intern with the Irvine Nature Center's Preschool program and is a national board member of the Jewish Youth Climate Movement, where she has assumed leadership roles in educating others about climate change. Morgan will attend Lehigh University with an interdisciplinary major in earth and environmental science. She is interested in a career making urban sites greener and in nature education.



Additionally, Kayla Casey, who is the recipient of the four-year (dedicated) Getty Dutrow Mullan scholarship, will receive \$2000 for her third year at Frostburg University.

*Congratulations to all
our 2024 Scholarship Recipients!*

Programs

Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council Sponsored Programs

All programs require advanced registration unless otherwise noted.

ORNC Council Speaker Series Maryland's Marvelous Black Bears

Wednesday, November 20

7 - 8:30 p.m.

Maryland is home to over 2,000 black bears. Learn about their fascinating world, exploring biology, behavior and the unique ecological role they play in the state's forests. We'll discuss the history of black bear populations in Maryland, current management strategies and ongoing conservation efforts to ensure their survival in a rapidly changing landscape.

Kerry Wixted is a project-driven ecologist and self-proclaimed nature nerd with a penchant for education and outreach, Kerry is a dynamic and popular speaker, educator and trainer.

Adults \$10 per person (FREE for ORNCC Members)



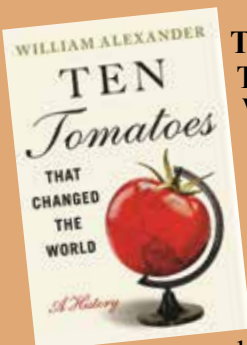
ORNC Council Speaker Series Studying Maryland's Ice Age Peoples in Baltimore County and Beyond

Tuesday, January 21;

7 - 8:30 p.m.

Recent discoveries at a site in Reisterstown suggest that Ice Age hunter-gatherers inhabited what is now Baltimore County, crafting tools from local stone. This presentation will provide an overview of the Paleoindian Period (13,000-10,000 years ago) in Maryland based on data from the statewide Maryland Fluted Point Survey and recent excavations organized by the Maryland Historical Trust. Attendees will have the opportunity to view 13,000-year-old artifacts.

Zachary Singer, Ph.D. State Terrestrial Archeologist at the Maryland Historical Trust. Zac received his BA in anthropology at University of Maryland and his MA and Ph.D. in anthropology at University of Connecticut. **Adults \$10 per person (FREE for ORNCC Members)**



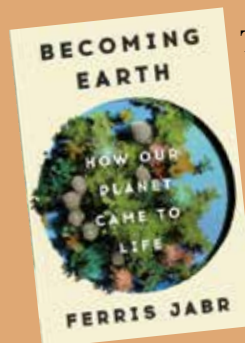
The Natural Science Book Club – Ten Tomatoes that Changed the World: A History

Monday, December 9; 7 - 8 p.m.

William Alexander seamlessly weaves travel, history, humor and a little adventure (and misadventure) to follow the tomato's trail through history. A fascinating story this

book is a mouth-watering, informative and entertaining guide to the food that has captured our hearts for generations.

Adults FREE (donations appreciated)



The Natural Science Book Club – Becoming Earth:

How our Planet came to Life

Monday, January 27; 7 - 8 p.m.

Acclaimed science writer **Ferris Jabr** reveals a radical new vision of Earth. *Becoming Earth* is an exhilarating journey through the hidden workings of our planetary symphony – its players, its instruments, and the music of life that emerges – and an invitation to reexamine our place in it. How well we play our part will determine what kind of Earth our descendants inherit for millennia to come.

Adults FREE (donations appreciated)

Oregon Ridge Dulcimers – Winter Session

**Thursdays; 6:30 - 8 p.m.; December 12, 19;
January 9, 16, 23, 30; February 6, 13, 20 and 27**

An old-fashioned dulcimer meet-up. Beginners welcome, no musical experience necessary. Loaner dulcimers are available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

(Performances at the Oregon Ridge Winter Solstice Celebration and Pancake Breakfast)

Adults and children 16+

\$35 per person (\$25 for ORNCC Members)

**All Programs can be found at
OregonRidgeNatureCenter.WildApricot.org**

Calendar

Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks Sponsored Programs

All programs require advanced registration unless otherwise noted.

Recurring Programs

Nurture with Nature

The third Wednesday of the Month 11:00 - 11:30 a.m.

November 20 – Pinecones and Acorns

December 18 – Snow and Ice

Nature Buds

Thursdays 10 – 11 a.m.

October 31 – Pumpkins and Gourds

November 7 – Foxes

November 14 – Opossums

November 21 – Native Americans

December 5 – Squirrels

December 12 – Animals in Winter

December 19 – Snow

December 26 – New Years!

Bookworm Story Time

The first Friday of the month 11:00 - 11:45 a.m.

Astronomy Programs

Astronomy in the Park: Is Saturn Losing its Rings

Friday, November 1; 7:30 - 9 p.m.

Astronomy in the Park: The Galilean Moons

Friday, December 6; 7:30 - 9 p.m.

Evening Programs

Full Moon Owl Hike

Saturday, November 16;
5 - 7 p.m.

Public Programs

Lunch for the Animals

Sunday, November 3; 12 - 1 p.m.

Create your own Terrarium

Saturday, November 9; 1 - 3 p.m.

Sunday, November 10; 1 - 3 p.m.

National take a Hike Day

Sunday, November 17; 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Turkey Tails

Saturday, November 23; 1 - 2 p.m.

Sunday, November 24; 1 - 2 p.m.

Black Friday – Opt Outside Hike

Friday, November 29; 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Owl Pellet Dissection

Saturday, November 30th; 1 - 2 p.m.

Winter Bird Hike

Sunday, December 1; 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Holiday Wreath Making

Saturday, December 7; 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Sunday, December 8; 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Natural Ornaments

Saturday, December 14th; 1 - 2 p.m.

Sunday, December 15th; 1 - 2 p.m.

Winter Solstice Celebration

with Luminary Hike and Campfire

Friday, December 20th; 6 - 8 p.m.

Trim a Tree for Wildlife

Saturday, December 21; 1 - 2:30 p.m.

Sunday, December 22; 1 - 2:30 p.m.

Winter Walk in the Woods

Saturday, December 28; 10 - 11 a.m.

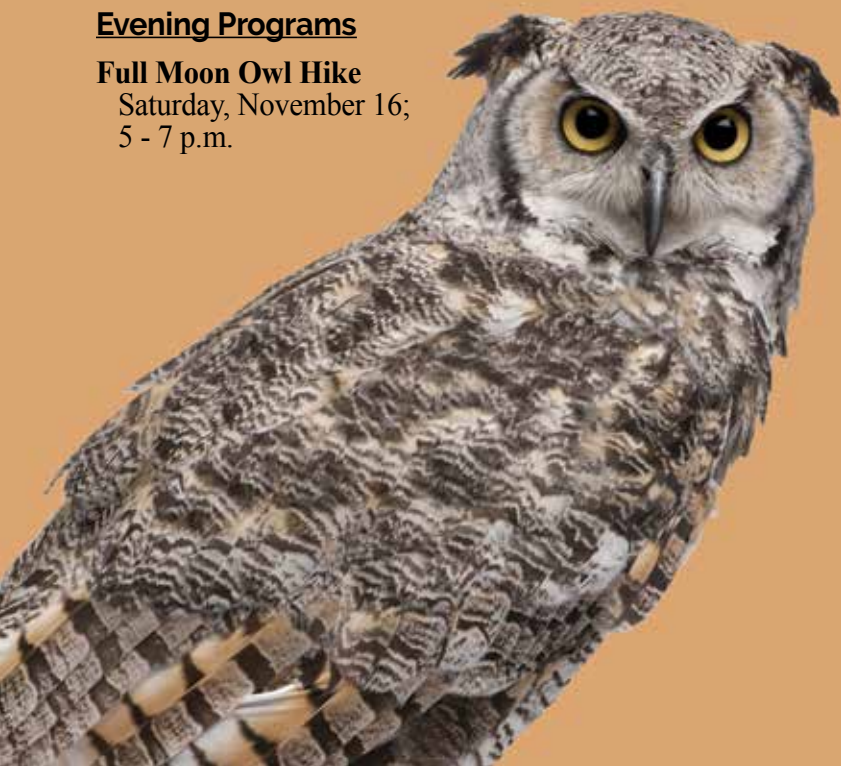
Sunday, December 29; 10 - 11 a.m.

Noon Year's Eve

Tuesday, December 31; 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.

*All Programs can be found on
Baltimore County's CivicRec Site!*

[https://recandparks.baltimorecountymd.gov/
MD/baltimore-co-md/catalog](https://recandparks.baltimorecountymd.gov/MD/baltimore-co-md/catalog)



New Staff!



Hello everyone! My name is **Jill Kane** and I am the new Naturalist II here at Oregon Ridge Nature Center! I am coming here from Harford County where I have worked in their parks and recreation system since 2012! I have also worked with Maryland State Parks as well as other nature centers on the Eastern Shore. I graduated from Salisbury University in 2018 with a bachelors in Environmental Studies. One of the things I love the most about working in park systems and the natural world is seeing how important these places become in the local community. I love to see folks come to a park for fun, exercise, connection, and even peace. If you're in the area – please stop by and say hello if you'd like – I would love to meet you!



Hello! My name is **Anthony Snyder** and I am the new Naturalist I at Oregon Ridge Nature Center. I am an experienced environmental educator, animal care professional, and mentor with over 13 years of experience. I am a social person and have been most recognized for the positive interactions and relationships I build with colleagues, guests, and volunteers. Outside of work I spend lots of time taking or editing wildlife photos and videos, playing tabletop games, or enjoying downtime with my wife. I am excited for this new stage in my career and for the opportunity to work with many new, passionate people.

Welcome Jill and Anthony!

Summer Camp 2024

at Oregon Ridge Nature Center



Oregon Ridge Summer Campers explored the park and met its animal inhabitants. They got up close and personal with the Nature Center's resident snakes, turtles and raptors, and observed many wild animals as well! Campers loved catching crayfish in the stream and bluegill in the lake. They got creative with all kinds of arts and crafts, including natural tie-dye and animal track prints! Hikes brought them through the meadow, the forest and around the pond. The oldest campers enjoyed field trips to Marshy Point for canoeing and tubing down the Gunpowder River! We roasted bread and told stories around a campfire and ended each week with snowballs and water ball fights. One thing our campers have in common is how excited they are to come back next summer!



Photos by ORNC Staff

Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council Annual Meeting

A Celebration of Service and Dedication

By Michelle Boyle

The June 4, 2024 Annual Meeting of the Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council was a lovely gathering, bringing together a dedicated community of members, volunteers, scholars and staff. Due to last minute changes, this year's meeting was held at the Oregon Ridge Lodge, Arts and Sciences Pavilion.

Outgoing Council President Ralph Brown welcomed all, recognizing the distinguished guests in attendance, including local officials and community leaders. Ralph kicked off the evening with heartfelt appreciation for the tenacity and dedication of those who have served the council and therefore the community. His remarks included a brief annual review, highlighting our accomplishments and ongoing goals and initiatives.

Master of Ceremonies for the evening, Tom Hall, shared his appreciation for the gracious hospitality of the council and volunteers and especially recognized the unique spirit of Oregon Ridge. Scholarship Chair, Polly Roberts introduced our new scholarship awardees for 2024 and shared their merits and aspirations.

Staff members were honored for their dedication, with special recognition to Jessica Jeannetta, Elizabeth Chessler and Kathy Kadow as well as our new Naturalist II, Jillian Kane.

Volunteers, including resident trail expert Keith Rosensteel and Boy Scout Troop 497 were acknowledged for their invaluable contributions and service and their expansive improvements to the Park.

The ceremonial portion of the evening concluded with an official business meeting, where members reviewed the annual report, voted on and approved the council budget, elected 5 new members to the Oregon Ridge Nature Center Board and elected long-time ORNC Council leader Winny Tan as our new Council President.

The Annual Meeting is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the generosity and strength of community that supports and sustains Oregon Ridge.



Photos
by Karen
Jackson



Honey Harvest Festival 2024

By Sindhu Moon

After twelve days of steady rain, over 2,700 visitors attended Oregon Ridge Nature Center for the 2024 Honey Harvest Festival. This year, the festival was a one-day event on a sunny 75-degree day. The highly anticipated festival remained true to its mission of providing pollinator education and advocacy in an entertaining fashion while adding a few new changes. One change included a bus from the Lodge shuttling visitors to the event to accommodate the larger crowd. Food trucks provided attendees with a steady stream of snacks and beverages.

A visit from Baltimore County Animal Services' Cuddle Shuttle led to one dog and one cat being adopted on the spot, with other visitors visiting the BCAS facility the following day. Phoenix Wildlife Center and Oregon Ridge Nature Center staff provided up-close animal encounters throughout the afternoon. 2024 American Honey Queen

Kaelyn Sumner spent the day educating visitors on the honey extraction process during live demonstrations in the auditorium and impressed the audience, including local beekeepers, with her encyclopedia-like knowledge. Oregon Ridge's own dulcimer group delighted visitors with their melodic arrangements. Other live music was provided by a local music school, Stages Music Arts.

Over twenty-five craft vendors participated, including those selling honey, stained glass, dog treats, candles and soaps, crochet and clothing items, and so much more. Sales of crafts were so steady, leading many vendors to ask organizers to have them back next year. Local organizations like 4-H, Baltimore Bird Club, Master Gardeners, and the Natural History Society of Maryland were thrilled with festival-goers interest. Visitor response was overwhelmingly positive, with many looking forward to returning next year.



Photos by Winny Tan and Stephen Jones Photography

Thank you Kathy Kadow! Happy Retirement!

By Winny Wong Tan

Eight years at the Oregon Ridge Nature Center, eleven years serving the Baltimore County Department of Recreation & Parks

Kathy Kadow was working at Benjamin Banneker Historical Park and Museum and said she was interested in transferring to Oregon Ridge Nature Center in 2016 when the Administrative Assistant position became available. We were so fortunate to have Kathy “hit the trails running” when she came on board. She has had years of marketing and graphic design experience as well as nature center experience, so she shared much of her wealth of knowledge and propelled the nature center programs in so many ways. One of the first things Kathy took charge of was the Community Garden. She managed the many applications and which plots are assigned. Then she kept the communication going and really built a community with all the garden plot owners.

Kathy is amazing. She can multitask and manage many things all in a day’s work: answering phones, replying to lots of emails, helping organize programs, at the same time greeting visitors and volunteers as they come into the nature center – all with a friendly smile. Her commitments were on display every day in every way.

In addition, Kathy and her husband Bernie, who also volunteers at Oregon Ridge, donated the honey from the Oregon Ridge hives. This year we were able to offer a recognition stipend to an outstanding intern using the funds raised from the honey sales. When the Central Maryland Beekeepers Association changed their meeting location to the Ag Center, they took their hives with them. Kathy and Bernie decided to purchase hives and bees and started beehives at Oregon Ridge so we could continue to have bees for educational purposes. Kathy is also a musician with the Oregon Ridge Dulcimers and leads programs and classes that bring the sweet sounds of instrumental music to Nature Center events.

Kathy goes above and beyond in serving the Park and its programs, our visitors and our mission. Kathy is all about sharing all that is great in the natural world.

Kathy’s dedication to the mission of the Oregon Ridge Nature Center cannot be measured. We wish Kathy a well-deserved retirement and hope she takes the time to check off a few things from her bucket list.

Thank you Kathy for all that you have done and continue to do.



The Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council Welcomes 5 New Members

Council Officers

Winnie Tan, President
Dr. Ralph Brown, Vice President
Erin McCleary, Secretary
Gary Anderson, Treasurer

Directors at Large

Laura Beutler *(New)*
Brian Nelson *(New)*
Colleen Morgan *(New)*
Sindhu Moon *(New)*

Council Standing Committee Chairs

Audit – Bob Stevenson
Budget – Mark Gingerich
Environmental Issues – Jim Curtis
Exhibits – Karen Jackson
and Elaine Kasmer, Co-chairs
Fund Raising – Mike Gillispie *(New)*
Grants – Gary Anderson
Stewardship – Don Callihan
Membership – Debbie Bacharach
Newsletter – Patricia Clagett
Public Relations – Michelle Boyle
Scholarship – Molly Glassman
and Donna Deleno Neuworth, Co-chairs
Speakers Series – Martha Johnston
Volunteers – Judy Breitenbach
Web Site – Jim Curtis



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