

Middle Creek Speaker Series and Outdoor Explorer Series – Full Descriptions

Speaker Series are in orange, Outdoor Explorer Series in green

For any questions, please contact middlecreek@pa.gov or call 717-733-1512

February

Date: Saturday, February 1st at 5:00 PM

Title: Deer Processing Workshop

Description: Processing and butchering a deer you harvest can be quite a barrier to the new and even seasoned hunter. Join Game Commission staff at a hands-on workshop where you will be guided through processing a deer. Processing tools provided. Limited to 15 processing trainees. Contact the Visitors Center to sign up. Participants must be 18 years of age or older.

Date: Wednesday, February 12th at 6:30 PM

Title: Allegheny Woodrats on the Road to Recovery in Pennsylvania

Description: Allegheny woodrats are a native species found only in rocky habitats along the Appalachian Mountains. Unfortunately, the species has experienced significant population declines in the past two decades and is listed as a state-threatened species in Pennsylvania and a regional species of greatest conservation need. To recover the species and avoid federal listing, Pennsylvania Game Commission staff and partners have been working diligently to address the three primary drivers of Allegheny woodrat decline: decreased food availability, disease, and habitat fragmentation. This talk will discuss the Allegheny woodrat recovery program in Pennsylvania.

March

Date: Wednesday, March 12th at 6:30 PM

Title: Conserving Lancaster County's Wildflowers

Description: Lancaster isn't just an expanse of farm fields as far as the eyes can see, it also has some interesting and diverse habitats. Join the Lancaster Conservancy in a virtual trip around the county to learn about the diversity of native wildflowers and what the Conservancy does to protect and manage them. Where to visit to see them, and how volunteers make a difference!

Date: Saturday, March 15th at 10:00 AM (Rain Date: Saturday, March 22nd)

Title: Public Prescribed Fire Demonstration

Description: This year will be the fourth consecutive year of burning a field by the Visitors Center for the public to come learn about and view prescribed fire. Habitat workers and foresters will be on hand to answer questions and to display the equipment that enables the safe use of fire as a natural management tool for forests and fields. This event has a rain date, so keep an eye out for last minute information on this event happening or not. Call the Middle Creek Visitors Center for more information.

April

Date: Wednesday, April 9th at 6:30 PM

Title: Hawk Mountain: Local to Global Raptor Conservation

Description: Join us for a fascinating journey into the lives of raptors and the people that study them with the President of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association. Hawk Mountain is the first raptor conservation organization in the world and from its humble beginning it has grown into a global influencer in raptor conservation through science, education, and land stewardship. Hawk Mountain initiated a trainee program in the 1980's that has now had trainees from 78 countries around the globe.

Date: Saturday, April 26th at 10:00 AM

Title: Middle Creek Geology Ramble

Description: Join the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' State Geologist on a guided hike to explore Middle Creek and the Furnace Hill's geologic history. The hike will begin at the Visitors Center and conclude at the vista at the top of the Valley View Trail. Explore geology both close-up and from afar!

May

Date: Wednesday, May 13th at 6:30 PM

Title: Olympic Medalist Casey Kaufhold's Story from the Backyard to the World's Biggest Stage

Description: Casey Kaufhold shares her story about how she developed from a young hunter and recreational archer to an Olympic bronze medalist. A native to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Casey's life has always been surrounded by archery due to her parents' involvement of running and founding Lancaster Archery Supply. She went on to compete in the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and come home with a bronze medal from the Paris 2024 Olympics. Casey will discuss her relationship between the love of bow hunting and the passion for competing.

Date: Saturday, May 31st at 10:00 AM

Title: Backyard Bird Feeding Basics

Description: Learn the basics of healthy bird feeding! Different types of bird feed, suet, and birdfeeders will be discussed and on hand to look at. Keeping feeders clean and proper placement are also important factors in successful feeding to keep our feathered friends happy, as well as deterring those pesky squirrels. Additionally, some good native plants will be discussed that can be planted to benefit birds year-round.

June

Date: Wednesday, June 11th at 6:30 PM

Title: Camera-Trapping for Wildlife Research

Description: The use of remote automated cameras is a non-invasive and cost-effective way to survey and study wildlife in the field. Since the advent of digital photography, the use of remote cameras in

wildlife research has exploded. In this talk, Dr. Haines will review how he has used remote cameras to study wildlife and what new efforts are underway to use cameras in wildlife research.

Date: Saturday, June 21st at 10:00 AM

Title: Watercolor Workshop

Description: Join watercolor artist and art educator Taryn Showalter to learn how to create a landscape painting. We will go over basic watercolor techniques to create water, trees, and sky. Each person will create their own landscape painting of Middle Creek. No experience necessary, recommended ages 14+. This event is limited to 15 attendees, and you must RSVP in advance. Necessary materials will be provided. Please Call Visitors Center to RSVP.

July

Date: Wednesday, July 9th at 6:30 PM

Title: Insects Rule! - The Entire World Rides on the Backs of Bugs

Description: Insects play critically important roles in nature that directly impact us. Things like food pollination, decomposition and soil fertility are all roles insects play. The world could not survive without insects. Unfortunately, insects are declining in abundance and diversity, and we risk losing the critically important functions they perform. This presentation will explore the amazing beauty and diversity in the insect world, will discuss the ecological roles they play, and will present solutions that will stop their decline.

Date: Saturday, July 26th at 9:00 PM

Title: Insect Night Life

Description: What do insects do at night? How do they see in the dark? The ultra-violet world, in which insects live, has always intrigued Ryan and he'll detail anatomy and life cycle, while keeping the main focus on nocturnal insects. You'll have the opportunity to hold some of the largest LIVE bugs in the world! Next, Light Stations are set-up to attract insects, where the audience will venture into the darkness to see just what is...flying, crawling and hopping around at night.

August

Date: Wednesday, August 13th at 6:30 PM

Title: The Power of Mussels: An Overview of Pennsylvania's Freshwater Mussels and their Importance to the Health of our Aquatic Environments.

Description: Freshwater mussels are considered keystone species in aquatic communities around the world. They provide ecosystems services including water filtration and streambed stabilization which helps to maintain the health of our streams, rivers, and lakes. In North America, we are at risk of losing many of these species as 74% are recognized as endangered, threatened, or of special concern. This presentation will provide an overview of freshwater mussel life history, diversity, and ecology including a case study examining species recovery efforts in several Pennsylvania rivers.

Date: Saturday, August 23rd at 10:00 AM

Title: Invasive Species and How They Impact Our Lives

Description: Let's go for a walk and discuss common invasive species we encounter, how they impact the ecosystem, and different strategies that can be used to manage them.

September

Date: Wednesday, September 10th at 6:30 PM

Title: Light Pollution: The Destruction of Night Skies in Southeastern Pennsylvania

Description: This program will focus on bird migration research at Middle Creek using the Motus Wildlife Tracking System. You will learn about the birds that have been detected by the local Motus receiving station and the pathways that those birds have taken. There will be a specific focus on Eastern Towhee migration and the role that Middle Creek is playing in documenting the first migration pathways of this species.

Date: Saturday, September 20th at 9:00 AM

Title: Native Plant Exchange

Description: Are you looking to increase the native biodiversity in your back yard? Do you have some native plants you'd like to thin out and give others instead of throwing in the compost? Middle Creek will be hosting a native plant exchange where you can come swap your native plants with others. Some plants sourced from the Visitors Center's native plant garden will also be available to trade.

October

Date: Wednesday, October 8th at 6:30 PM (Rain Date: Sunday, October 12th)

Title: More than Just a Good Time: Pennsylvania's Outdoor Economy

Description: Outdoor recreation is more than just a good time, it's a growing industry in Pennsylvania and a strategic tool for development. Thousands of outdoor recreation businesses large and small create jobs, produce outdoor recreation products, and provide experiences that fuel our economy. Outdoor recreation improves the quality of life in our communities, helps to retain youth, attract workers, and create entrepreneurial opportunities. Next time you venture into Pennsylvania's great outdoors, know that there's a diverse industry supporting outdoor recreation experiences and that you are supporting Pennsylvania's outdoor recreation industry.

Date: Saturday, October 11th from 7AM to 5PM

Title: 2025 Big Sit! with the Lancaster County Bird Club

Description: Join LCBC member Bruce Carl anytime throughout the day on the hillside just up from the Visitor Center along the Conservation Trail for the 2025 Big Sit! The Big Sit!, a semi-competitive one-day bird watching event started in 1992 by the New Haven Bird Club, challenges participants to spot as many bird species as possible from a 17-foot circle. Since 2014, Bruce has hosted LCBC's Middle Creek Big Sit!

annually, using it as a fundraiser to keep the Visitors Center's feeders full and support LCBC's youth scholarship program. Bring your binoculars and observe the birdwatching action!

November

Date: Wednesday, November 12th at 6:30 PM

Title: History of Conservation and Conservation Law Enforcement in Pennsylvania

Description: This program will provide a history of Conservation Law Enforcement in Pennsylvania and in the United States. A special focus will be on the rise and fall of wildlife populations through the centuries and an overview of the heroes that fought to protect wildlife in our nation. There will be an additional overview and brief history of our federal and state wildlife agencies with a focus on the Pennsylvania Game Commissions extensive history. This event is part of America's 250th Anniversary Celebration.

Date: Saturday, November 15th at 11:00 AM

Title: Avian Anatomy

Description: Everyone, from waterfowl hunters to avid bird watchers, have wondered how birds are able to fly, float on water, and perform so many other seemingly impossible tasks. Join staff from the Wildlife Futures Program to get an inside look at bird anatomy.

Note: this presentation will include utilizing deceased birds for demonstrations. Attendees should be prepared for viewing dead animals and organs. Only birds testing negative for avian influenza will be used in the program.

December

Date: Wednesday, December 10th at 6:30 PM

Title: It's the most wonderful time of the year - Christmas Bird Count Season!

Description: Join us to explore the fascinating history of the Christmas Bird Count (CBC), the world's longest-running community science survey, which began in 1900 as a new tradition to replace Christmas "side hunts," where participants competed to see how many birds they could kill. This year marks the 126th CBC, and the Lititz Christmas Bird Count, covering Middle Creek and the surrounding area, is one of the oldest in the nation, dating back to 1905, even before Middle Creek existed. Discover how this cherished event brings bird enthusiasts together to celebrate conservation and community. Learn about the CBC's origins, its influence on birding in Lancaster County and beyond, and how bird occurrences in this area have evolved dramatically since the first count was conducted.

Date: Saturday, December 27th at 10:30 AM

Title: Winter Bird Walk and Christmas Bird Count Scouting!

Description: Join Lancaster County Bird Club for a field-based complement to their Dec. 10 lecture we are hosting on the Christmas Bird Count. This hands-on birding experience will allow participants to explore Middle Creek's winter landscape and observe the season's local bird species while gaining

insight into the process of counting birds for the CBC. Whether you're a seasoned birder or new to birding and CBCs, this outing offers a unique opportunity to connect with nature and learn how birding data is collected in the field each year for this community science survey.