



# WOODS talk

February  
March  
April

2025

## Asbury Woods

ANDREW J. CONNER  
NATURE CENTER  
BROWN'S FARM  
GREENWAY TRAIL



## ASBURY WOODS | The Year of Wildlife

This year marks the third year that Asbury Woods has a year-long theme for our programs and outreach activities, helping us to take a deeper look at various environmental and conservation topics as we pursue our vision for Northwestern Pennsylvania to be a place where appreciation for and protection of natural places is a deeply held personal and community value.

The Year of Wildlife is an opportunity to focus on animal species native to Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania has a rich diversity of habitat which allows an incredible array of wildlife to thrive across the State. This year we'll look into our own backyards, surrounding forests, fields, wetlands, lakes, and streams to discover the wildlife that surrounds us.

Amongst Asbury Woods 234 acres of property alone, you can discover 344 species of wildlife (as documented on iNaturalist and eBird as of May 2023)! That means 140 bird species, 123 varieties of insects, 10 mammals and more have been spotted and identified within our borders. Several threatened species and species of concern are found at Asbury Woods, including a rare butterfly, the Baltimore Checkerspot, found during a 2022 field survey.

Jennifer Farrar, Executive Director, commented, "While learning about exotic animals in far-off places can seem more exciting than thinking about native species, a year-long focus on native wildlife is an opportunity to raise awareness about local and regional conservation issues. We hope it sparks curiosity about the natural world and encourages people to protect local habitat for the amazing variety of animal life that calls Pennsylvania home."

In addition to programming and educational content, a key component of the Year of Wildlife will be a year-long exhibit in the Nature Center, **Wild About Wildlife! Discovering Pennsylvania's Native Species**. The exhibit will feature taxidermy specimens, interactive stations, and hands-on learning. Each month a different animal will be highlighted, starting with the Great Horned Owl in February.

*We are extremely grateful to the FirstEnergy Foundation for serving as the Presenting Sponsor of The Year of Wildlife.*



## Upcoming Events and Festivals Page 3

Year of Wildlife  
Kickoff  
February 8

Luminaria  
February 14

4 Mile Trail Run  
February 16

Maple Festival  
March 1 & 2

Get involved  
with City Nature  
Challenge  
April 25 - 28

## FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# New Things for the New Year!

Welcome to a new year and lots of new things at Asbury Woods! As we kick off 2025, we're thrilled about an update to the exhibit hall in the Nature Center, the first in more than 20 years. During January we were largely closed to the public to allow for the removal of the indoor amphitheater, making room for more flexible use of our space as programs and attendance has grown. The first exciting use of this more open area is the installation of our exhibit, **Wild About Wildlife! Discovering Pennsylvania's Native Species**. The exhibit will be up all year in conjunction with our yearly theme, The Year of Wildlife. See cover article for the details and watch for wildlife programs all year long thanks to a generous sponsorship from the FirstEnergy Foundation.

Another big change for the year has been the retirement of Steve Wasiesky who served as the MTSD Environmental Education Coordinator and has been synonymous with Asbury Woods for decades. Steve's passion for and dedication to Asbury Woods is unmatched. Even though he has retired from his career duties, we know he will still often be found at Asbury Woods, continuing his commitment to environmental education as a volunteer, which is how his journey began.

As people, spaces and programs change, what remains is the same commitment to our vision that Northwestern Pennsylvania is a place where appreciation for and protection of natural places is a deeply held personal and community value. We filter our decisions, programs, and new directions through that lens as we strive to provide well-managed, conserved property; stellar environmental education programs; and accessible outdoor recreation opportunities. If this vision speaks to you, I encourage you to support us with your most generous donations during 2025. Your support, gifts, advocacy, passion, participation, and volunteerism are what make it all possible.

Best wishes for a healthy, happy, and prosperous new year! Thank you for being part of Asbury Woods.

From the Woods,



Jennifer Farrar, CFRE  
Executive Director



ANDREW J. CONNER  
NATURE CENTER  
BROWN'S FARM  
GREENWAY TRAIL

[asburywoods.org](http://asburywoods.org) | 814.835.5356

**Vision Statement:** Asbury Woods strives to realize a future for Northwestern Pennsylvania where appreciation for and protection of natural places is a deeply held personal and community value.

The Mission of Asbury Woods is to inspire a greater connection to the natural world by protecting, managing and interpreting our property; providing outdoor recreational opportunities; and offering environmental education experiences.

The Asbury Woods Partnership is a 5013(C) nonprofit charity registered with the Bureau of Charitable Organizations. The official registration and financial information may be obtained from the PA Dept. of State at 1-800-732-0999. Funding for the Asbury Woods Partnership is provided through grants, program fees and the generosity of our members, donors and patrons.

## Asbury Woods Staff

Jennifer Farrar  
*Executive Director*

Sarah Bennett  
*Director of Education & Community Programs*

Stephen Engro  
*Director of Development & Marketing*

Mario Bruni  
*Marketing & Communications Coordinator*

Anush Dulgaryan Bruno  
*Visitor Services Associate*

Rachel Cherry  
*Environmental Educator*

Casey Keating  
*Environmental Educator*

Aaron Kulich  
*Facilities and Grounds Manager*

Emma Mader  
*School Programs Coordinator*

Abigayle Propst  
*Animal Care Technician*

Gigi Riesenbergl  
*Development Associate*

Jacob Stush  
*Environmental Educator*

Sheila Walmer  
*Constituent Relations & Office Manager*

Jessica Weiss  
*Naturalist*

Karina Wismer  
*Visitor Services Associate*

## Board of Directors

**Chair**  
Amy Brinling

**Chair-elect**  
Jennifer Lyons

**Treasurer**  
James Kubaney

**Secretary**  
Ashley Marsteller

Bridget Barber  
George Dusckas  
Gloria Gerbracht  
Ashleigh Montagna  
T.J. Richter  
Steve Ropski  
Jacob Thomas  
Jane McMaster  
Becca Turner  
Bridget Shames

**Solicitor**  
Mark Shaw

# UPCOMING EVENTS & FESTIVALS



## Luminaria | February 14

**Time:** 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

**Cost:** \$20 and \$5 to add childcare **Registration required**

**Location:** Nature Center

This one is for the grown-ups! Enjoy a self-guided romantic stroll following the flickering lights of luminaries lighting a path through the woods, then warm up with a cozy fire, snacks, sweet treats, beer, wine, soft drinks, and music. All attendees will get a special Valentine's Day gift. Childcare will be available.

Special Thanks to:



Sponsored by:



## 4 Mile Trail Run | February 16

**Time:** 12:00 p.m. check-in; 1:00 p.m. start

**Cost:** \$35 **Registration required**

**Location:** Brown's Farm

Start off the season with our 4-mile fun run! This non-timed event is all about enjoying year-round outdoor recreation and fitness on the trails of Asbury Woods. Post-race warm-up with chili compliments of Cali's West Catering and beverages from Erie Beer. To learn more visit <https://www.asburywoods.org/events/trail-run-series/>.

Special Thanks to:



Sponsored by:

**UPMC HEALTH PLAN**



## Maple Festival | March 1 & 2

**Time:** 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

**Cost:** \$6, Children 3 and under are free **Pre-registration preferred**

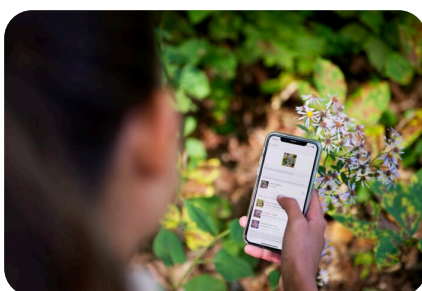
**Location:** Nature Center

The annual Maple Festival is a celebration of a heritage unique to our region. Learn more about this fascinating use of one of nature's sweetest renewable resources with an interactive and informative tour and demonstrations. The highlight is a stop in Asbury Woods working sugar shack where the magic of sap to syrup happens! Enjoy samples from local vendors showcasing all kinds of maple products and browse our gift shop full of hand-crafted pieces by local artists. To learn more visit <https://www.asburywoods.org/events/maple-festival/>.

Sponsored by:



**RENEWAL**  
by **ANDERSEN**  
FULL-SERVICE WINDOW & DOOR REPLACEMENT



## City Nature Challenge | April 25 - 28

The 4th annual Greater Erie City Nature Challenge will take place throughout Erie County. This four-day event is part of the global City Nature Challenge and challenges us to document as many wild organisms as possible on the free iNaturalist app. Not only will you be learning about the living things in Erie County, but each observation contributes to a growing global database that scientists can use in their research! Visit our website for more information about how you can get involved <https://www.asburywoods.org/events/city-nature-challenge/>.



## YOUTH

### EcoExplorers Club for Middle Schoolers

**Dates:** Every other Thursday Feb. 6 – May 15

**Time:** 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

**Age:** Current 6th-8th graders

**Location:** Nature Center

**Supporting Donor Fee:** \$45

**Program Fee:** \$56

This club is perfect for middle schoolers who love nature, science, and the outdoors!

### Homeschool Animals of Asbury Woods

**Date:** Tuesday, February 18

**Time:** 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

**Age:** 6-11

**Location:** Nature Center

**Supporting Donor Fee:** \$10

**Program Fee:** \$12

Homeschool students are invited to learn about animal tracks, animal identification, parts of a habitat, and who lives here at Asbury Woods.



### Homeschool Maple Magic

**Date:** Tuesday, March 18

**Time:** 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

**Age:** 6-11

**Location:** Nature Center

**Supporting Donor Fee:** \$10

**Program Fee:** \$12

Homeschool students are invited to learn all about maple trees and their key role in Pennsylvania's agriculture.

### Homeschool Amphibian Adventure!

**Date:** Tuesday, April 1

**Time:** 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

**Age:** 6-11

**Location:** Nature Center

**Supporting Donor Fee:** \$10

**Program Fee:** \$12

Homeschool students will go on an amphibian scavenger hunt and conduct a vernal pool investigation to learn about local amphibians.



### Year of Wildlife Kickoff

**Date:** Saturday, February 8

**Time:** 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.



The exhibit hall at the nature center has had a makeover and you're invited to celebrate! Join us for the official re-opening of the Nature Center and a kickoff the Year of Wildlife. Guided tours will be available every 30 minutes beginning at 1:30 pm. Watch all year for Year of Wildlife programs, easily identified by the deer symbol.

### Snow Sprouts

**Dates:** Saturdays, February 1- February 22 & Wednesdays, February 5- February 26

**Time:** 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

**Age:** 2-5 years old, accompanied by an adult

**Location:** Nature Center

**Supporting Donor Fee:** \$7

**Program Fee:** \$9

Little explorers and their favorite grown-up are invited to join us for hands-on nature exploration and guided outdoor play.



### Kids' Winter Day Camp

**Dates:** Monday, February 17

**Time:** 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**Age:** Children in kindergarten through 5th grade

**Location:** Nature Center

**Supporting Donor Fee:** \$56

**Program Fee:** \$70

Children can enjoy the day off school at Asbury Woods! We'll explore the outdoors, use our imaginations, and more!

### Nature Tots

**Dates:** Wednesdays, March 5 – April 30

**Time:** 9:30 – 10:15 a.m.

**Age:** Children 18 – 36 months old accompanied by an adult

**Location:** Nature Center

**Supporting Donor Fee:** \$6

**Program Fee:** \$8

Toddlers and accompanying adults will enjoy nature play and exploration through sensory experiences, hands-on activities, and crafts.

### Little Explorers Preschool Program

**Date:** Wednesdays, March 5 – April 30

**Time:** 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**Age:** Children 3- 5 years old accompanied by an adult

**Location:** Nature Center

**Supporting Donor Fee:** \$7

**Program Fee:** \$9

Little explorers and their favorite grown-up are invited to join us for hands-on nature exploration and guided outdoor play.

### Scout Outdoor Artist Day

**Date:** Saturday, April 26

**Times:** • Grades K-2: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
• Grades 3-5: 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

**Location:** Nature Center

**Program Fee:** \$100 per troop

Join us for a day of outdoor and nature-inspired art! For this Scout Day, Scouts should sign up as a troop, pack, or group.

# ALL AGES

## Family Owl Prowl

**Date:** Thursday, February 20  
**Time:** 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.  
**Age:** Adults and children ages 8 and up  
**Location:** Nature Center  
**Supporting Donor Fee:** \$7  
**Program Fee:** \$9



Learn about the Great Horned Owl and other native owls through lecture, owl pellet dissection, and outdoor owl calls.

## Cross Country Ski Clinic

**Dates:** Saturdays, February 1- 22  
**Time:** 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
**Age:** Adults and children ages 10 and up  
**Location:** Nature Center  
**Supporting Donor Fee:** \$13  
**Program Fee:** \$16

These clinics will teach participants the basics of cross country skiing. There must be at least 6" of snow for the clinic.



## Snowshoe Clinic

**Date:** Saturdays, February 1- 22  
**Time:** 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.  
**Age:** Adults and children ages 10 and up  
**Location:** Nature Center  
**Supporting Donor Fee:** \$13  
**Program Fee:** \$16

These clinics will teach participants the basics of snowshoeing. There must be at least 6" of snow for the clinic.



## Summer Camp 2025

We have prepared a schedule chock-full of outdoor adventures, nature exploration, science, and fun! Last year camp sold out, so plan to register early! Registrations will open to the public on February 17. Supporting donors have early access on February 3rd.

Visit our camp website for schedule and camp descriptions  
[asburywoods.org/camp/](http://asburywoods.org/camp/)

## Bear Bonanza

**Dates:** Saturday, March 15  
**Time:** 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.  
**Location:** Nature Center  
**Program Fee:** FREE, pre-registration preferred



Our March animal spotlight is on Pennsylvania's largest predator, the Black Bear. Dive into what Black Bears do all winter, learn about bear safety in Pennsylvania, and make a bear-inspired craft to take home!



## Bird Walks and Eco-friendly Bird Feeders

**Date:** Saturday, March 29  
**Time:** 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.  
**Location:** Nature Center  
**Program Fee:** Free, No registration required



Join the Allegheny College Bird Club for local bird walks around the Nature Center. You can also construct and decorate your own eco-friendly bird feeder out of provided common household materials.

## National Wildlife Week Celebration

**Date:** Saturday, April 5  
**Time:** 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.  
**Age:** All ages  
**Location:** Nature Center  
**Program Fee:** FREE, no registration required.



Celebrate National Wildlife Week at Asbury Woods! Visit the nature center for fun, hands-on activities with Asbury Woods and local partners to learn all about our native wildlife.

## Beavers: Nature's Engineers

**Date:** Saturday, April 19  
**Time:** 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
**Age:** All ages  
**Location:** Nature Center  
**Program Fee:** FREE, pre-registration preferred



Join us at the Nature Center to celebrate this month's animal spotlight, the American Beaver. Learn about beavers' unique adaptations that help make them "nature's engineers" and test your building skills to see if you can make a dam of your own.



A great place for your next event!

Asbury Woods provides a natural setting that makes a perfect backdrop to any special occasion. We have several unique and beautiful rooms and areas on the grounds that would make your special occasion a memorable experience for you and your guests.

Visit our website to see spaces and pricing  
[asburywoods.org/rentals/](http://asburywoods.org/rentals/)

Commerate the

## YEAR OF WILDLIFE

with our new t-shirt design.

Available now in the Squeaky Frog Gift Shop.





# ADULTS

## The Great Migration with Nature Photographer Dr. John Gerber



**Dates:** Thursday, February 6  
**Time:** 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.  
**Age:** Adults and Children ages 8 and up  
**Location:** Nature Center  
**Program Fee:** FREE, registration required

Dr. John Gerber is a world-class international photographer of nature, wildlife and more. He will share his experience in chronicling the Great Migration of Wildebeests in Tanzania.

## Cold Process Soap Making

**Dates:** Tuesdays, February 25 and March 25  
**Time:** 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.  
**Age:** Adults  
**Location:** Nature Center  
**Supporting Donor Fee:** \$28 includes all supplies  
**Program Fee:** \$32 includes all supplies

Experience the magic of soapmaking with Sealed by Nature. Each attendee will make 2 bars of soap from natural ingredients.

## Backyard Beekeeping Workshop

**Dates:** 4-week session every Wednesday April 2- 23  
**Time:** 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.  
**Age:** Adults  
**Location:** Nature Center  
**Supporting Donor Fee:** \$55  
**Program Fee:** \$65

Join our volunteer beekeeper, Charlie Schroeck, and learn all the aspects necessary to be a successful backyard beekeeper. This four-week workshop will include background information on honeybees, equipment needed, proper maintenance and honey harvesting. Registration includes the book, *Starting Right with Bees*.

## Spotlight on Beavers



**Date:** Thursday, April 10  
**Time:** 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.  
**Age:** Adults  
**Location:** Nature Center  
**Program Fee:** Free, registration required

This month our spotlight is on beavers! North America's largest rodent can have big impacts on landscapes. Join Warden Shane Irwin from the Pennsylvania Game Commission to learn about these interesting creatures and how to manage them on your property.

Pre-registration is required for all programs, unless otherwise noted

## Starting Seeds with Steph's Sprouts

**Date:** Sunday, April 27  
**Time:** 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.  
**Age:** Adults  
**Location:** Nature Center  
**Supporting Donor Fee:** \$23  
**Program Fee:** \$28

Learn the essentials of starting seeds for your garden with Steph's Sprouts!

## Forest Bathing

**Dates:** Saturdays, February 15, March 15, April 12  
**Time:** 10:00 – 11:15 a.m.  
**Age:** Adults  
**Location:** Nature Center  
**Supporting Donor Fee:** \$3  
**Program Fee:** \$5

Enjoy a meditative walk using your senses to explore the woods, including a sit spot and a sharing circle. This program will be led by Craig Casler, Certified Instinctive Meditation Teacher, and Forest Bathing Guide.

## Nature Exploration for Adults with Disabilities

**Dates:** Fridays, January 31, February 19, March 21, April 25  
**Time:** 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.  
**Age:** Adults with a caregiver  
**Location:** Nature Center  
**Supporting Donor Fee:** \$8  
**Program Fee:** \$10

Adults with disabilities and their caregivers will enjoy outdoor exploration on our accessible boardwalk followed by a hands-on nature activity. There will be a different theme each month. Only one registration is required per adult/caregiver pair.

## Medicinal Plant Walks

**Dates:** Sunday, April 27  
**Time:** 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.  
**Age:** Adults  
**Location:** Brown's Farm  
**Supporting Donor Fee:** \$3  
**Program Fee:** \$5

Join Kristy Baird of Verity Herbs and Wellness for a guided walk at Brown's Farm to check out what's growing and learn about traditional uses and lore.



## **NEW!** Native Plant Sale

Asbury Woods has partnered with *My Home Park* for a native plant sale. When you purchase native plants through this special sale, 20% of all proceeds will be donated back to help us meet our mission! You'll be helping to restore local ecosystems while directly helping Asbury Woods continue our work of protecting natural spaces and educating the community.

Every plant in this sale was carefully selected to thrive in western PA, making it easy to create a vibrant, low-maintenance garden that looks great and gives back to the environment.

Let's grow something incredible together! Your support makes a difference for your backyard, for your community, and for your planet.

For more information visit  
[www.myhomepark.com/asbury-woods-plant-sale](http://www.myhomepark.com/asbury-woods-plant-sale).

# You Can't Retire From Being Amazing!

Asbury Woods will be a little different in 2025. Long-time Millcreek Township School District Environmental Education Coordinator, Steve Wasiesky, has retired after 55 years of combined service and work at MTSD and Asbury Woods. Steve's connection with Asbury Woods started at age 11 when he visited for a 5th grade field trip. He also attended camp and as a teen worked here during the summers. Those early years led Steve to realize his passion for environmental education.

Steve received his Bachelor of Science degree in Biology and Secondary Education Certificates in Biology & Chemistry at Edinboro University. He had a 20 year career in the Chemical Divisions Coatings Technical Service



Lab at LORD Corporation before transitioning to a full-time role at Asbury Woods in 1999. He's been "Mr. Steve" ever since! During his decades at Asbury Woods, Steve has served as an educator, mentor, executive director, fundraiser, nature center expansion coordinator, grant writer, and all-around cheerleader! If there's a question about Asbury Woods, Steve has the answer!

The impact that Steve has had on environmental education throughout his career is astonishing. Not only has he educated tens of thousands of Millcreek Township students over the years, but he's had a major impact on environmental education across the state. Steve has been involved with Pennsylvania Association of Environmental Educators (PAEE) since 1979, including serving on the board of directors from 2010-2021, and as president from 2018-2020. He currently serves on several



regional and state level committees, including the Content and Writing Committees for the new Pennsylvania Science Technology Engineering Environmental Literacy and Sustainability (STEELS) Academic Standards.

When asked what he was most proud of during his career, Steve stated, "Explorer Post and teaching." Explorer Post was a career development program for youth ages 14-21. "You don't know what impact you make but you can see the careers Post members have had," he continued. Steve shared that those careers in education and science show the impact of being at Asbury Woods. "They are taking what they learn and doing it!" Most of the Post members have gone on to careers in education or science and they often reconnect with Steve to share their accomplishments.

"Steve's impact on environmental education in our region cannot be understated. It has been an honor to work with and learn from him. We look forward to carrying forth his passion and vision, and hopefully we will see him frequently!" shared Director of Education, Sarah Bennett.

Steve's lifelong dedication to Environmental Education has not gone unnoticed. He was awarded the 1975 Natural Science for Youth Foundation's Henry



Gund Junior Staff Achievement Award, 2010 Environmental Educator of the Year Award from the Pennsylvania Association of Environmental Educators (PAEE), and the 2022 PAEE Keystone Award, which recognizes an educator who has dedicated their life to advancing the quality and opportunity for environmental education in Pennsylvania.



## Year of Wildlife Animal Spotlights

Each month during the *Year of Wildlife* we will highlight a different native animal. Visit the exhibit hall to find that animal specimen, participate in hands-on learning activities, and look for animal programs in our schedule!



### FEBRUARY Great Horned Owl

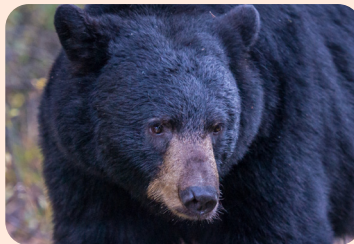
*Sponsored by Steve Wasiesky*



Visit the Discovery Station to create your own owl eye viewers, compare your "wingspan" to that of an owl, and identify different owl species based on their silhouettes! Dive deeper in this month's owl prowl on February 20.

### MARCH Black Bear

*Sponsored by Steve & Melanie Ropski*



Pennsylvania black bears are starting to emerge from hibernation this month! Visit the exhibit hall to see our full-sized black bear and learn all about these large creatures! Discover more during our family Bear Bonanza on March 15.

### APRIL Beaver



North America's largest rodent is ready for a visit at Asbury Woods! This month we are celebrating beavers! See if you can "chop" through wood like a beaver at our Discovery Station and learn more about these fascinating creatures and others on April 19.

For more details on how to become a *Year of Wildlife Sponsor of the Month*, contact Stephen J. Engro, Director of Development and Marketing at (814) 836-6179 or [sengro@asburywoods.org](mailto:sengro@asburywoods.org).

### Nature Center

November 1 – March 31:  
Monday – Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
Sunday 12:00 – 4:00 p.m

April 1 – October 31:  
Monday – Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Sunday 12:00 – 5:00 p.m

### The Squeaky Frog Gift Shop:

Same as Nature Center

### Trails

Open Dawn to Dusk

