

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: Wednesday, February 14th at 6:30 PM

Title: Dam Removal: A River Love Story

Description: American Rivers is a nonprofit dedicated to restoring the health of our waterways. One way to achieve that is through dam removal projects. While many dams have important uses such as water supply, flood management, and hydropower, many others – both publicly and privately owned – have reached the end of their useful life. Those dams can pose public safety risks, impact fish and other aquatic life, and can be costly liabilities to their owners. Removing dams restores native aquatic life to rivers, reduces the risk of aging dams failing possibly causing catastrophic flooding, damages, and/or loss of human life.

Date: Saturday, February 24th at 10:00 AM

Title: On the Search for Silk Moth Cocoons

Description: Most parks, rail trails, and other public areas have moth cocoons hiding within variable habitat. Learning how to find them can be a ton of fun and in most cases, requires minimal effort. This event will start with a quick discussion about local silk moth species and the cocoons in which they hibernate. Then we'll take the group on a hike, to help teach everyone how to find cocoons. Host plant, habitat, geography, time of day, and identifying moths to specific habitat will be the focus of the day. Actually finding cocoons will be a huge bonus!

March

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

Title: Past, Present, and Wilderness Ways of the Lenape

Description: Chief Adam Waterbear will discuss the past and present of the Lenape people, including pre-colonial life, relationships with William Penn, the era of Penn's Sons and the Walking Purchase, the Lenape diaspora, and what the Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania is doing today to revitalize Lenape culture and continue their role as caretakers of the environment. Chief Adam will also share stories and culture that speak to the Lenape connection to wilderness and nature.

Date: Saturday, March 16th at 10:00 AM (Rain date March 23rd)

Title: Public Prescribed Fire Demonstration

Description: This year will be the third 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 10th at 6:30 PM

Title: Taking the Pulse: How We Study Arctic Raptors

Description: This presentation will review recent results from Hawk Mountain Sanctuary's research program, with an emphasis on snowy owls and rough-legged hawks. The audience will witness how we manage to monitor those highly mobile and unpredictable predatory birds throughout consecutive years via a slide show depicting field work situations.

Date: Saturday, April 20th at 10:00 AM

Title: Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) – An Up-Close Look at Bird Banding Research

Description: Join Game Commission staff as they explain the process of bird banding using mist-nets and how Middle Creek is contributing to a nationwide research database called M.A.P.S. Trained and permitted staff will discuss and demonstrate how they catch, band, and measure birds while explaining how this data can help conserve birds and their habitats for the future. The live bird banding demonstration will allow participants to see the action up close, weather permitting.

May

Date: Wednesday, May 8th at 6:30 PM

Title: Wildlife Health in Pennsylvania: Why it's Important and How You Can Help

Description: You've probably seen a mangy fox, but have you ever wondered how it got that way and what will happen to it? We'll discuss some of the common problems affecting wildlife and how they are connected to the health of our pets and ourselves. We'll also discuss what you should do when you encounter a sick, injured, or even dead wild animal, and how to help us better monitor wildlife and keep them healthy for future generations to enjoy.

Date: Saturday, May 18th at 10:30 AM

Title: Wetland Wander

Description: Take a walk through Middle Creek's wetlands, learn about their ecology, and why they are important. During the walk we will identify common wetland plants, look at wetland soils, and look for signs of wildlife. Be ready to get our hands dirty while learning how wetlands contribute to a healthy ecosystem. Please wear rubber boots or shoes if you have them. Dress appropriately for going in wet and muddy areas.

June

Date: Saturday, June 8th at 8:00 AM

Title: Birds, Blooms, and Butterflies

Description: Join the Quittapahilla Audubon Society on a guided hike to seek out the splendors of early summer. This hike will start at the Visitors Center and seek out what is currently in bloom, what is flying by; both in terms of birds and insects. The important ecological relationships between these species will also be investigated.

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

Title: Old Field Restoration and the Return of the Northern Bobwhite Quail

Description: Old field habitat was once prevalent across Pennsylvania. It is made up of a mix of grasses, forbs and shrubs that benefit a host of native species including the northern bobwhite quail. The Game Commission has been working diligently to return this habitat and species to the Commonwealth.

July

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

Title: Borders for the Birds and the Bay – Field Border Incentive Program

Description: Planting grass borders creates habitat for wildlife while improving soil, water, air quality, and preventing erosion. Pheasants Forever is partnering with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Chesapeake Bay Program to provide financial incentives for the installation of field borders along crop fields. Landowners can receive a one-time payment to install native or introduced grass borders. Examples include little bluestem, deertongue, switchgrass, orchardgrass, and wildflowers. Each planting is tailored to the acreage and landowner preferences.

Date: Saturday, July 27th at 10:00 AM

Title: Fly Fishing Fundamentals

Description: This program is designed to benefit those new to fly fishing. Taylor Helbig, fly fishing guide with Sky Blue Outfitters, will share fundamentals of the sport to help beginners prepare for targeting a variety of fish species. He will introduce fly concepts, equipment, key principles of fly casting, presenting a fly, landing and releasing fish, and more.

August

Date: Wednesday, August 14th at 6:30 PM

Title: Trout Stocking Reform: A Desperately Needed Lifeline for PA Streams

Description: Each year, a minimum of 5.5 million trout are stocked in PA. These species are predominantly invasive brown and rainbow trout, considered by the scientific community to both be in the top 100 most harmful invasive species worldwide out of around 5000 known invasive species. They have been shown to harm native aquatic species all around the world, and PA is no exception. In this talk, the negative effects of stocking streams, barriers to stocking reform, and what you can do to advocate for desperately needed stocking reforms will all be discussed in depth.

Date: Saturday, August 24th at 10:00 AM

Title: Identifying Incredible Edible Mushrooms of PA

Description: Join us for an educational walk at the Middle Creek to learn about the many mushrooms that grow in Penn's Woods. We'll be discussing the basics of mushroom biology and identification, how to distinguish differences between edible fungi and their poisonous look-a-likes, where to get started looking, and some of our favorite ways to cook with them. Whether you're entirely new to wild mushroom hunting or a seasoned forager, all are welcome to join us for an enjoyable morning meandering for mushrooms!

September

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

Title: Traveling with Towhees: Motus Bird Migration Tracking at Middle Creek and Beyond

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: Sunday, September 22nd at 11:00 AM and throughout the day

Title: Birding on the Habitat Hayride

Description: Join Lancaster and Lebanon's bird clubs on National Hunting and Fishing Day's famous Habitat Hayrides to look for birds and learn about the habitats that those species utilize. Please note that seating on the hayrides is limited and are first come, first served. Numerous hayrides will run throughout the day. Rain cancels this event.

October

Date: Saturday, October 5th at 8:00 AM

Title: Fall Migration Bird Walk and Big Sit!

Description: Join the Lancaster County Bird Club (LCBC) on a morning bird walk in search of fall migrant birds. The walk will end at the LCBC-sponsored Big Sit conducted up the hill from the Visitor Center. The Big Sit is an annual fundraiser held by LCBC and part of a nationwide event to see how many birds can be spotted during the day from inside a 17-foot circle. Bring binoculars!

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

Title: Borders for Birds: Creating Early Successional Habitat and Promoting Healthy Forests on Private Lands by Utilizing USDA Programs

Description: Expand the knowledge of private landowners on what conservation practices they can implement on their land to provide quality wildlife habitat within forests with USDA NRCS programs. We will review some of the practices available including treating noxious and invasive species, types of

timber stand improvement, practices to create early successional habitat creation and many more. We will go through step by step process of applying and receiving funding from NRCS and what to expect.

November

Date: Saturday, November 2nd at 10:00 AM

Title: A Close-Up Look at Our Wildlife Nesting and Roosting Structures

Description: Join the Game Commission for a behind-the-scenes tour of the many different nesting and roosting structures found around the Visitors Center. Houses and roosting structures include those for purple martins, American kestrels, barn owls, eastern bluebirds/tree swallows, chimney swifts and bats. The talk will include all sorts of information for these structures such as characteristics of a well-made nest box, preferred habitat, installation tips, how and why to monitor these structures, and how to prepare wildlife structures for the nesting or roosting season.

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

Title: Solid Air, Invisible Killer: Saving Billions of Birds from Windows

Description: This presentation will present an overview of an important conservation issue for birds and people using Dr. Klem's 2021 book on the topic. The book describes the cause and breadth of this universal problem of windows as indiscriminately lethal and devastating hazards to free-flying birds, and how to solve it. Detailed objective observations and experiments reveal that birds behave as if clear and reflective windows are invisible to them. Alarming, among the dead are the fittest individuals in species populations. Unlike the complexities of other environmental challenges, such as climate change, this human-associated avian mortality factor can be solved. The means to do so will be described and are documented in greater detail in the pages of his book.

December

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

Title: Monitoring for Non-native Aquatic Invertebrates in the Great Lakes: A Sentinel Site Approach

Description: Non-native species have significant economic and ecological impacts across ecosystems. Scientists at the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center lead an aquatic invasive species monitoring program with many partners in the US Great Lakes to detect new species and inform management decisions. This group uses various techniques to collect and analyze samples for non-native organisms.

Date: Saturday, December 14th at 11:00 AM

Title: Winter Animal Tracking

Description: Learn about animal tracks and how best to find them in the winter. This program will start by learning about common animal tracks and signs to look for, including scat, browse, and more. Attendees will learn how this relates to trapping, law enforcement, hunting, and other activities. Tracks will then be searched for in the field in places like stream banks, fields, and if possible, snow.