

The Natural Observer

Governor Dick Environmental Center NEWS

Winter 2018-2019



Construction of the ADA-accessible walkway has begun! The path is clear, and the concrete for the support posts should be poured a couple days after Christmas.



Photos by Audrey Wells

In the photo below the boulder can be seen where an observation platform will be built, offering a view down to trail 15.



One of the post holes can be seen above. This is looking back toward Pinch Road.



There are a lot of boulders! Some will support the boardwalk.

CriLon Corporation from Somerset, Pennsylvania has been awarded the contract for construction. They anticipate that the work will be complete before the end of May.



Gifts from Nature

“Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wildness is a necessity” ~ John Muir

When did you last stop to feel the warmth of the sun on your face or to listen to the silence of snow? Increasing urbanization, job pressures, and “techno-stress” have isolated people from the outdoors and resulted in an overly stressed, nature deficient society which is detached from the potential calming effects of nature (Miyazaki, et al., 2014) also known as Vitamin N (Louv, 2016).

Nature reconnection practices include, but are not limited to, forest therapy, wilderness therapy, and outdoor meditation (Liebeck, 2016). Many of these practices recognize that human wellbeing is a blend of mental, physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and environmental factors; humans are part of the web of life and contact with nature is psychotherapeutic (Pierce, 2010). According to Lee, et al., 2012, sedentary, stressful lifestyle-related health problems are of concern in all developed countries, but they suggest that forests may be an antidote to stress promoting healthier lifestyles and improved mental health in urbanized societies.

Our top tips for reversing nature deficit disorder:

- * Spend time (2-3 hours) outside at least once a month.
- * Grow potted plants for your office and home.
- * Exercise outdoors rather than in a gym.
- * Connect with the forest and with your senses.

It is likely you will then start to experience benefits such as:

- * Boosted immune system
- * Improved sleep

* Decreased anxiety

In 2019 join us at Governor Dick Park and enjoy mindful walks in the forest, breathing in the crisp scented air, crunching fallen leaves on the path, and watching the clouds in the sky. A simple, mindful walk such as this could be extremely beneficial to our health and wellbeing, especially in today’s stressful technology-dominated world. Keep an eye on our events pages for details of spring and summer guided walks which will help you reconnect with nature.

Debbie, Volunteer



Lee, J., Li, Q., Tyrväinen, L., Tsunetsugu, Y., Park, B.J., Kagawa, T., & Miyazaki, Y. (2012). Nature therapy and preventive medicine, in Public Health-Social and Behavioral Health, J. Maddock, (Ed.) 16, 325–350, Rijeka, Croatia: In Tech.

Liebeck, C. (2016). Alternative Healing, A Walk in the Forest. Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting. Retrieved on March 10, 2018 from <https://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/alternative-healing-walk-forest>

Louv, R. (2016). Vitamin N: The essential guide to a nature-rich life. Algonquin Books, New York.

Miyazaki, Y., Ikei, H., Song, C. (2014). Forest medicine research in Japan. *Nihon EiseigakuZasshi*, 69(2), 122-35.

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Thursday Evening Extended Hours

There is extended evening trail access on Thursday evenings only through to and including March 14, 2019. The trails will be accessible until 9:00 p.m. Stay on the trails and respect the private properties of our neighbors by staying quiet near their homes and directing your light onto the trail and not into their windows.

Trail Courtesy



A Note from the Manager

As Governor Dick Park becomes better known, it is more likely that you will not have a trail all to yourself. Be alert for other people around you and respect their time in the forest. We discourage ear buds and headphones because you cannot hear another person approaching and you miss all the sounds of the forest that make an outdoor experience so healthful and rejuvenating. **DOGS MUST BE LEASHED!** It is state law. Not everyone is keen to having your Fido come rushing toward them to plant muddy paws on their legs or worse. Dog and people clashes are on the increase here, and we ask everyone to be courteous. This is an easy problem to fix (remember the leash!) and each dog owner should do his part before we reach the time when dogs will not be permitted in the Park.

Always remember to share the trail with a smile. There are enough grouches and Grinches in the world – we should not find them on a trail at Governor Dick Park.

Happy trails to everyone! *Audrey Wells*

Speaking of trails.....

You may notice blue slashes and red X's on trees throughout the Park. These are painted on the invasive alien ailanthus trees, also known as the tree of heaven. This tree is important to the life cycle of the invasive spotted lanternfly, first reported in Berks County in 2014 and found in the Park in October. Thirteen southeastern PA counties are under quarantine. The USDA is

working in the Park to eradicate this very harmful pest. The trees marked with blue will be cut down, and the trees marked with a red X will receive an insecticide treatment in the soil around them. The tree will take up that insecticide, and when the lanternfly, a large tree hopper, sucks the tree juices, it will die. Cutting and insecticide treatment will begin in spring.

It is more critical than ever that you do not move firewood between counties.

**DON'T MOVE
FIREWOOD.org**

Q: What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire?



A: Frostbite.



Our memorial brick campaign has been well received, and we are extending the deadline for sponsoring a brick to March 31, 2019. Orders for a 4" x 8" brick can be completed online at www.bricksrus.com/donorsite/governordick. The cost is \$100 and all funds raised go to the construction of the boardwalk.

WE ♥ VOLUNTEERS!

THANK YOU, 2018 VOLUNTEERS, FOR ALL YOUR HELP AND SUPPORT! WE CAN'T GET ALONG WITHOUT YOU.



The Long-tailed Weasel
Mustela frenata

This uncommonly seen resident of Governor Dick Park is nocturnal. Weighing between 2 ½ to 9 ounces and measuring about 15 inches long, including a tail that can be up to 6 inches long, this is a predator of any creature smaller than itself, including insects and worms. After a snowfall of a couple inches, look for its tracks beside logs and near springs. Its tracks will tell a tale of survival as they roam the forest looking for a meal and trying not to become one for a predator larger than itself such as the owl or fox. They hunt the “subnivean” world under the snow where rodents have tunnels, and during the day retreat to their own insulated burrows for rest. In its more northern range its coat changes to white in the winter.

Since they are long-bodied animals, they move in a bounding fashion. They have five toes on the hind and forefeet, but unless conditions are perfect, all five toes rarely show.

Next time we get a little bit of snow, preferably wet, head outside to read the stories written in the snow.

Homemade Bird Suet

2 parts melted fat (beef fat or lard)
2 parts yellow cornmeal
1 part natural peanut butter

Put ingredients in a saucepan and melt together over medium heat. Put in small containers (a tuna can works perfectly). Refrigerate or freeze. Use in cold weather or else it turns rancid. It can be used in suet cages or in suet logs that have holes drilled in them to hold the food.

THINGS TO DO



All programs are free unless stated otherwise. Meet at the Environmental Center on Pinch Rd. unless noted otherwise.

Registration is required: call 717-964-3808 or e-mail governordick@hotmail.com.

Jan. 1, 9:00 a.m. – First Day Hike. 5 miles.

Jan. 6, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. – Music by the Fireplace. Weather and road conditions permitting.

Jan. 17, 7:15 p.m. – Monthly Board meeting.

***Programming subject to change. Follow our website for up-to-the-minute program details. We will send out an update of programs in February.**

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