

# The Natural Observer

*The Newsletter of the Governor Dick Environmental Center*



*Winter, 2019-2020*

## Coming Very Soon! Our Winter Lecture Series

We are very excited to be partnering with the Lebanon Valley Conservancy to offer a new series of lectures for the winter months on the second Sundays of January, February, and March. The lectures begin at 2:00 p.m. and the topics are as follows:

January 12 – “Return on Environment: Lebanon County” with Jeanne Ortiz of Audubon Pennsylvania.

February 9 – “Invasive Plants of Pennsylvania” with Rebecca Urban, Associate Professor of Biology at Lebanon Valley College.

March 8 – “Dare 2B Tick Aware,” a program of the Pennsylvania Lyme Resource Network with Anne Desjardins, Lebanon County Lyme Support Group leader.

## DID YOU KNOW?

On November 23 we held our 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Bouldering Competition with 282 climbers. Did you know in a couple of past years with better weather we reached our cap of 375 climbers?! With so many exceptional climbing areas on the park’s 1,105 acres, it doesn’t get crowded!

Did you know this competition is entirely organized by a dedicated volunteer, Adam Hartman? He created the competition as a fund raiser for the park.

Did you know Adam Hartman is the author of the Governor Dick Bouldering Guidebook, on its second printing (third if you count Travis Gault’s first edition)? The guidebook is a fund raiser for the park as well.

*Thank you, Adam and other volunteers that made the bouldering competition so much fun and so successful!*



Share your love of nature and Governor Dick Park by donating your time and energy. There are also multiple ways to partner with us financially through our ongoing memorial brick campaign and planned giving. Contact the office for more information.

## New Donation!



Several years ago a set of unusual deer antlers was donated to the Center from Vicki Dippold of Danville, Northumberland County. The buck sported a small third antler on the left side. How unusual! Or so we thought!

In November a local resident, Charles “Chuck” Book, donated an almost identical head mount from a deer he shot in Lancaster County. It, too, has the small third antler on the left side. Nature is full of surprises! Thank you, Chuck!

**Fact:** Antlers are bones that grow outside of the deer’s body and they grow extremely fast.

# WE VOLUNTEERS!

Every year we are reminded how lucky we are to have so many amazing volunteers committed to the park. We have people that help with trail maintenance and blazing. We have folks that pick up trash, spread mulch, paint benches, and help with the myriad of tasks it takes to keep your park clean and open to the public. We have volunteers that help us engage park visitors in positive outdoor experiences through bouldering, butterfly watching, hiking, and even forest bathing. As we wrap up our year we would like to thank everybody that helps to make the park a positive recreation destination.

Each month we have a volunteer morning to gather and work on necessary tasks. Our final work morning of the year was on November 9. Though it was chilly it didn't stop us from venturing out on an egg hunt, the lanternfly kind.

The spotted lanternfly made its first appearance in the park in 2018.



(courtesy of Penn State Extension)

Originating from Asia, it was first found in the U.S. in neighboring Berks County in 2014. Since then it has firmly established itself as a nuisance invasive with great potential to harm agricultural crops, especially fruit crops. They are specifically attracted to the ailanthus tree (tree of heaven) but have readily adapted to feeding on over 70 tree species in Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania is working to contain and control the spread of spotted lanternfly. One control method they have identified for the public is the scraping of lanternfly eggs in the fall and winter months.

Lanternfly overwinter as eggs which hatch from May to June. After going through multiple juvenile stages (instars), we see adults from July to as late as December. Adults lay eggs from September to December.

We started our search for eggs by seeking out ailanthus trees. Once found we circled the tree looking on any suitable surface and found them on a wide variety of trees including birch, tuliptree, ailanthus, and oak. But we also found them on boulders. Outside of the park they are known to lay eggs on cars, trailers, and even playground equipment. It was an enlightening morning adventure for us as we realized just how many potential egg masses there might be in the park. I encourage everybody to look at the great information (including videos on how to effectively scrape eggs) the Penn State extension has published on the spotted lanternfly <https://extension.psu.edu/spotted-lanternfly>. Then head out into the park or your own backyard to scrape those eggs away.

~Sally Schach

(egg photos courtesy Sally Schach)



## Think About It...



If water became heavier when frozen, life on earth would be impossible.

Water is one of the few liquids that becomes lighter in weight when it freezes. Well, what if it became heavier? Think about it. If ice were heavy, during a cold spell river and lake ice would sink and most rivers and lakes would stay frozen all year long because the warming rays of the sun would not be able to reach to the bottom to thaw it. Think about swimming in a lake and feeling the cold water near the bottom. Brrr! Our world would be locked in ice all year if it didn't become lighter and float.

## -----Wise Winter Boating-----

While Governor Dick Park does not have a lake or a river, we offer a Boating Safety Course every spring (see our "Things To Do" below). One important regulation that the Fish and Boat Commission has reads as follows:

"Boaters are required, by law, to wear life jackets on boats less than 16 feet in length or any canoe or kayak during the cold weather months from **November 1 through April 30.**" Why is that? Little vessels are more likely to capsize and the best way to survive falling into cold water is to wear a life jacket. It helps to keep your head above water and it will also keep you afloat. A life jacket can provide some thermal protection against hypothermia while you wait for rescue. It's smart to obey the law!

## THINGS TO DO



**\*\*Watch our website for up-to-the-minute details.**

January 1, 10:00 a.m. – First Day Hike to Dinosaur Rock.

January 5, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Music by the Fireplace bluegrass jam. Pickers welcome.

January 12, 2:00 p.m. – "Return on Environment: Lebanon County" lecture.

January 16, 7:15 p.m. – *Monthly Board meeting.*

February 2, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. – Music by the Fireplace bluegrass jam.

February 9, 2:00 p.m. – "Invasive Plants of PA" lecture.

February 20, 7:15 p.m. – *Monthly Board meeting.*

February 29, 1:00 p.m. – Leap Day Hike of 5 miles.

March 1, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. – Music by the Fireplace bluegrass jam.

March 8, 2:00 p.m. – "Dare 2B Tick Aware" lecture.

March 14, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. – Boating Safety Course. Cost by donation.

March 19, 7:15 p.m. – *Monthly Board meeting.*

March 22, 1:30 p.m. – Golden Eagle Hikers. 2-3 miles for hikers over age 50.



### To contact us:

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