

The Natural Observer

THE NEWS OF GOVERNOR DICK PARK
WINTER, 2016 - 2017



8,200



The number is meaningless unless you are personally involved with it in some way, counting perhaps or trying to save \$8,200. Try to imagine planting 8,200 trees. Seeing box upon box upon box of small seedlings was the first clue our volunteer tree planters got of the magnitude of the project. Peering into the boxes at bundles of little trees, a lot of bundles, was the next clue that this was not a job that would be completed in one weekend.

In 2013 and 2014 timber harvests were conducted near route 72 with the goal of increasing tree species diversity and ultimately wildlife diversity. Two fenced areas were created that would keep deer out. The large deer population in the park is preventing the current forest from regenerating, i.e., the deer eat the young seedlings and saplings, leaving very little or no young trees to take the place of aging trees. One fence encircles 23 acres, the other 18. It is within those fences that the tree planting occurred.

The trees planted included 2,000 white spruce, 2,000 white pine, 2,000 red oak, 1,100 black cherry, and 1,100 sugar maple. At the end of the first day approximately 860 seedlings found a home in the soil of Governor Dick Park and

everyone learned the REAL meaning of 8,200. It is a very, very big number, one seedling at a time (in rocky soil). Each tree, after a hole was poked into the ground, got a ladle full of special “slurry” that will encourage growth, was placed into the hole and soil was tamped around it, and then was marked with a surveyor’s flag.

The staff and Board of Governor Dick Park and our forester Barry Rose and his wife Linda extend a THANK YOU to everyone who helped with this project.

Harry Brown and son	Debra Jerald
Sally Brunner	John Wentling
Sharon Hughes	Tyler Steely
Audrey Estep and friend	Chuck Allwein
Dave Eichler	Diana Sprucebank
Tammy Batz	Carol Worley
Sarah Shirk	Wayne & Elaine
Renee Troutman and 5 American Heritage girls	
Lee and Audrey Wells	

WE VOLUNTEERS!

The job was finished by a crew hired by Barry and Linda. It took one month to get them all planted and now we can watch them grow! Each of you who placed a tree in the ground has contributed to the future of the forest. Not only will Governor Dick Park continue to be a beautiful forested park for people in which to recreate, but more species of birds and wildlife will find a haven here.



Governor Dick Environmental Center

Welcome, Winter!

Winter... a time to slow-down, relax, unplug, and contemplate. The seasons change for a reason and so should you.

All creatures cope with winter in their own way. Some migrate, some hibernate, and some insulate, each adapting to survive. If you are not lucky enough to migrate or hibernate, then adapting and surviving is going to be key....along with trying to make the most of it.

I've been at this "winter thing" for quite a long time. Every year it takes a little bit more positive thinking than the last, but I am a survivor.

If nothing else, winter is a great time to give some thought to how snowflakes are formed. Wilson Bentley – The Snowflake Man - dedicated his life to the study of snowflakes. He coined the phrase "no two snowflakes are the same" after capturing 5,000 snowflakes and finding no two identical. He wrote over 60 articles and books on the subject. Winter is the perfect time to do your own research on the subject!

Place a bird feeder with seed in your yard and start to uncover the fascinating world of birding. Winter is actually a great time to observe backyard birds. Birds are easier to notice with no leaves on the trees. It's fun to watch the hierarchy and etiquette that takes place at a feeder. Native plants and shrubs will also encourage birds and wildlife to your yard. Just like you, they need food and shelter to survive the winter. Plants that fruit in the fall season and have winter-persistent fruits will help feed the birds through the cold season.

Take in as much sun as possible. Exposure to the sun enhances the mood and boosts energy levels. Get outside and go for a walk. I love being the first to walk through freshly fallen snow. This is the best time to come upon animal tracks and try to imagine who was there, to follow where they went and to see what kind of day they were having. For me, it's a mental escape into their world. I like to follow the tracks to learn more about the animal. Was he feeding, stalking,

or just out for a morning walk like me? One of the most beautiful sights to come upon is a bird "snow angel." It's the impression left in the snow from a bird either landing or taking off in the snow. The feathers sweeping across the snow leave a unique design.



If no snow has fallen, look for some green in the woods. Christmas ferns are green all winter. Smaller plants that you may overlook include hepatica and the orchid putty root. The leaves of hepatica over winter are leathery & three-lobed. Pink, purple, blue or white flowers appear from late winter to spring. Putty root develops a single basal leaf during the fall that persists through the winter until it flowers in late spring. The upper leaf surface is dark green with fine white veins parallel to each other. The lower leaf surface is green, purplish-green or dull purple.

Think about taking a notepad, camera or field guide along while you take a walk. Make a point to notice something new each time. Take a picture or write down what you find, and then ask questions about it. Learn something new. It will motivate you to go out the next day and look for something new. Repeat daily -- Life IS an adventure.

Enjoy the season,
Diana



Eagle Scout Projects Update

Before the really cold weather had a chance to settle in, two Eagle Scout candidates completed projects in the park that will benefit park patrons for years to come.



Dylan Gomer created a display for the American chestnut tree and placed it on the Interpretive Trail beside a chestnut tree that sprouted from an old stump. Be sure to visit this display (and talk to the chestnut tree!). Thank you, Dylan!



Trail 2 follows what was the narrow-gauge railroad that ran from Mt. Gretna to the tower and back again in the late 1800's. Marek Mierski researched the railroad's history and put together a display, including photographs of the old train. He placed a bench at the site, making a resting place for those climbing the hill to the tower. And finally, he trimmed the trail that follows the railroad's switchback. Thank you, Marek!



Marek Mierski's project

Did you know you can give your child the gift of nature? Celebrate your child's birthday with a party at Gov. Dick Park!



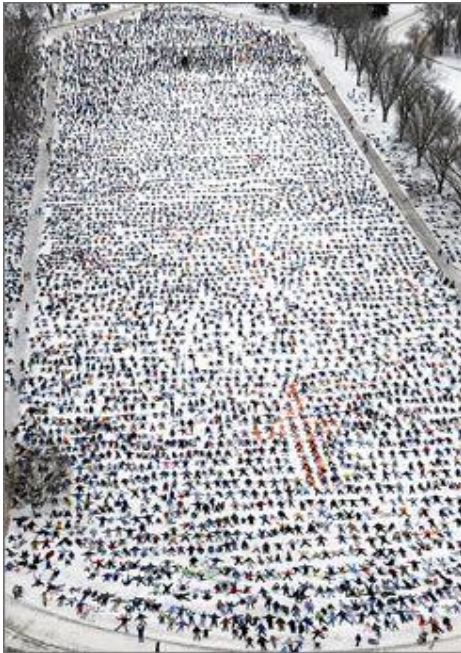
Your child and his or her guests can enjoy a naturalist-led nature program of your choice followed by time for opening gifts and blowing out the candles! The birthday child receives a surprise from us and there are theme-related crafts for all the children to take home.

Party goers can learn about birds, snakes, insects, raptors, or trees. The cost is \$100.00 for a maximum of 20 children (ages 5 to 12) for two hours. Please contact the park office to create a memory for your birthday child.

You may have heard someone say, "It's too cold to snow." There is no truth to this. Snow can always fall if it is cold out and there is moisture in the air.

Governor Dick Environmental Center

North Dakota holds the record for the most snow angels made simultaneously in one place.



On February 17, 2007, there were 8,962 people in North Dakota who plopped down in the snow at one time to fan their arms and legs to make snow angels. (That's more than the trees we planted!!)

FYI

Graffiti cost the park just under \$500 in 2016. That may not sound like much, but for a non-profit nature center that hurts. We bought paint to cover tower graffiti, lots of paint brushes, acetone to remove graffiti from the top of the tower, other graffiti removers, safety goggles and gloves, and scrub brushes. Several vandals were caught and a few were charged so report any unusual activity you see to 911.

To contact us:

*Clarence Schock Memorial Park at Gov. Dick
P.O. Box 161, Mt. Gretna, PA 17064

*3283 Pinch Rd., Lebanon, PA (diagonally across
from the State Game Lands parking lot)

*Phone: (717) 964-3808

*Email: governordick@hotmail.com

*Web: www.parkatgovernordick.org

Things to Do

All programs are free unless stated otherwise.
Meet at the Environmental Center on Pinch Rd.
Registration is required: call 964-3808 or e-mail
governordick@hotmail.com.

January 1, 11 a.m. – New Year's Day Hike 'n'
Kraut. \$3 per person OR bring a dish to share.

January 12, 7:15 p.m. – Monthly Board Meeting.

Feb. 5, 1 to 4 p.m. – Music by the Fireplace.
Program will cancel if roads are slippery or it's
snowing.

Feb. 10, 6 p.m. – Cabin Fever Hike by the Light of
the Moon. Cookies and cocoa in the Center after.
\$5 per person. Snowy weather or icy trails will
cancel the hike. Make sure you register with your
name and phone number.

Feb. 16, 7:15 p.m. – Monthly Board Meeting.

Feb. 18, 9 a.m. – Great Backyard Bird Count.
Bundle up and join in the bird count. No
experience necessary. Bring binoculars if you
have them.

Feb. 26, 1:30 p.m. – Senior Walkabout for hikers
over the age of 50.

March 5, 1 to 4 p.m. – Music by the Fireplace.

March 16, 7:15 p.m. – Monthly Board Meeting.

April 8, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. – Boating Safety Course.

***Calendar subject to change. Check our website
for up-to-the-minute information.***

Watch for the special winter edition newsletter to
arrive in your inbox in late January.

