

The Natural Observer

The News of Governor Dick Park

SUMMER, 2015

Don't take me home with you!!



Do you know that it is against the law to remove a box turtle from the wild? This species of concern has declined greatly in Pennsylvania. They are reptiles of habit and have a small home range, under an acre. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission oversees the protection of reptiles and amphibians. You can view their laws and regulations at www.fishandboat.com. Be part of helping box turtles survive – enjoy them where they are!

Be on the lookout!



This is the gypsy moth caterpillar, a very destructive pest of hardwood forests. Native to

Europe, their repeated defoliation kills the trees on which they dine. If you see a caterpillar like this, bristly with tufts on both side of the head and blue and red dots, get rid of it.

The Hands On Nature Program

Children ages two through six explore and move in and experiment with the natural wonders around them in this nature immersion program. Unlike many programs designed for children, this one has no program. It is delight directed. That means we investigate whatever the children find that piques their interest – insects and spiders, unusual leaves or spotty May apples, deer tracks and mud and what ants like to eat. We don't let a few raindrops chase us inside either. Below is Willow Musser, granddaughter of Vicki Kensinger. On a showery May morning one of the children asked to catch raindrops in a bucket – great fun! Willow then spied the water cascading from the rain spout and the children were “immersed” in mud and water. Thank you to the moms and grandma who allowed such fun to go on!



Governor Dick Environmental Center

From the Woods...

Hiking along trail 5 between trails 9 and 10 you may notice trees have been cut and a fence erected. Forester Barry Rose has created a 3.6-acre demonstration area showing the practices he will use in a larger area of forest that is densely overgrown with saplings of primarily black birch and some black gum. See photo below.



Black birch is an early successional tree species, meaning it is one of the first trees to populate an opening in the forest. Here in this section of Governor Dick property there are many black birch “poles,” trees smaller than 8 inches in diameter at breast height (dbh), so many that natural regeneration of oak trees is impossible because of crowding. In the demo area all trees less than 8 inches dbh were cut down in a “midstory removal” (they were occupying the midstory). See photo below.



This next photo shows the edge of the cut area on the left and the crowded birch poles on the right.



Five to ten percent more sunlight will reach the forest floor with the birch and black gum saplings cut. In essence, Barry is accelerating what would take place naturally over the years in forest succession.

Fourteen trees in half of the area are marked to demonstrate a “mast tree release.” It is desirable to have these trees produce as many acorns as possible for regeneration. Those trees are evenly distributed in that 1.7-acre strip and are identified with a red band and a number (below).



Each of the 14 trees had on average 3 trees touching its crown that were removed to open up the mast tree 100% to sunlight. In the photo above those trees are marked with a pink dot

Governor Dick Environmental Center

before cutting. The goal is to get the oaks to produce as many acorns as possible for natural regeneration. The mast trees will get a bigger crown, grow much faster, and will be a stronger tree, resistant to insect pests and disease. Thirty-nine trees on the 3.6 acres were dead or dying. Barry put 1,000 feet of fencing around half of the demonstration site, enclosing half of the midstory removal area and half of the mast tree release area. This will keep the deer out of a small section and will offer a comparison of woodland with deer and woodland without deer.

In addition, the slash (branches, twigs, and stems) from cutting the saplings was used to create brush pile habitat for wildlife cover and to shelter seedling trees. Some large black birch trees were cut 12 feet from the ground, making snags for wildlife such as woodpeckers who make cavities for their nests that other birds (chickadees and owls, for example), mammals, and sometimes black rat snakes use (below).



This area may serve as an outdoor forestry “classroom” in the future for schools and other groups. These forestry activities are compatible with Clarence Schock’s Deed of Trust drawn up in 1953. Clarence’s wishes were that the forest would remain a forest “forever” and while it seems a contradiction that trees are being cut

down to help maintain the woodland, this will insure there is a beautiful forest in the future for our children’s children as undesirable qualities are eliminated and diversity of species is enhanced. Governor Dick Park has a comprehensive Forest Stewardship Plan approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources detailing forestry activities to take place that will protect this land Clarence loved and that all of us value so greatly.

WE  VOLUNTEERS!



Thank you, Nielsen Company, for a good day’s work on a really humid day!



SAMBA to the rescue!! Thank you for pruning trails! Many hands make light work!

Governor Dick Environmental Center

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.

June 21, 9 a.m. – Fitness Hike.

June 21, 1-3 p.m. – Dog Day of Summer.
Self-guided scent trail with your dog.

June 27, 1 p.m. – Trail Yoga. \$5.

June 28, 3 p.m. – UNPLUG! Scavenger Hunt.

July 3, 6:30 p.m. – Pajama Party. (not a sleepover).
Wear your wildlife pajamas for this fun PA wildlife program. \$5.

July 5, 1-4 p.m. – Music on the Porch.

July 8, 10 a.m. – Teddy Bear Hike. Bring your teddy bear for games and learning about the black bear.

July 10, 10 a.m. – Outdoor Adventurers for children ages 7 to 12. \$5 per child.

July 11, 9 a.m.-noon – 2nd Saturday Volunteer Work Day.

July 12, 8 a.m. – Fitness Hike.

July 16, 7:15 p.m. – Monthly board meeting.

July 24, 10 a.m. – Outdoor Adventurers for children ages 7 to 12. \$5 per child.

July 24, 6:30 p.m. – UNPLUG! Nocturnal Animals.

July 29, 10 a.m. – Hands on Nature for children ages 2 to 6.

Aug. 2, 1-4 p.m. – Music on the Porch.

Aug. 7, 10 a.m. – Outdoor Adventurers for children ages 7 to 12. \$5 per child.

Aug. 8, 9 a.m.-noon – 2nd Saturday Volunteer Work Day.

Aug. 9, 8 a.m. – Fitness Hike.

Aug. 12, 10 a.m. – Hands on Nature for children ages 2 to 6. \$5 per child.

Aug. 21, 10 a.m. – Outdoor Adventurers for children ages 7 to 12. \$5 per child.

Aug. 21, 7 p.m. – Nighttime Insect Safari.

Aug. 22, 10 a.m. – Damsels and Dragons. Flies, that is. Optional hunt for damsels and dragons at the pond after the talk.

Aug. 23, 1 p.m. – Bill Russell the Mushroom Man. Talk and walk. \$5 per person.

Aug. 26, 10 a.m. – Hands on Nature for children ages 2 to 6. \$5 per child.

Sept. 5, 10 a.m. – Bird Watching Basics.

Sept 6, 1-4 p.m. – Music on the Porch.

Sept. 11, 10 a.m. – Toddlers in Tow.

Sept. 12, Noon-3 p.m. – 2nd Saturday Volunteer Work Day.

Sept. 13, 9 a.m. – Fitness Hike.

Sept. 19, 1-4 p.m. – Intro to Bouldering Class. For all ages. Optional shoe rental, \$3. Tell us your size before the class.

Sept. 20, 1-4 p.m. - RAIN DATE for Bouldering Class.

Sept. 20, 1:30 p.m. – Monarch Butterfly Migration. Walk to tower, learn about and count migrating butterflies.

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