



UNIVERSITY OF MOUNT UNION HUSTON-BRUMBAUGH NATURE CENTER



2020 Fall/Winter Newsletter

Discover the Wonder of Nature's Ever-Changing Story

Nature Almanac

October

- 1 Full Harvest Moon
- 4 Goldenrod goes to seed
- 31 Blue Moon

November

- 1 Look for deer rubs, a visual "sign" left by bucks claiming breeding territories
- 18 Average date of the first measurable snowfall
- 30 Full Beaver Moon

December

- 1 Winter begins on the birdwatching calendar
- 21 Winter Solstice
- 29 Full Cold Moon

January

- 1 Want to try making maple syrup? Start gathering your supplies now!
- 16 Search for your first robin of the year in thickets with fruit
- 28 Full Wolf Moon



The John T. Huston – Dr. John D. Brumbaugh Nature Center

Mission Statement:

The John T. Huston - Dr. John D. Brumbaugh Nature Center provides and supports opportunities for enjoying and learning about our natural and cultural heritage.

Staff:

Cali Granger, Horticulture and Facility Coordinator
Jamie Greiner, Sustainability and Campus Outreach Manager
Michael Greiner, Site Manager
R. Chris Stanton, Director
Bonnie Twaddle, Community Outreach Coordinator
Lin Wu, Ecologist
Adam Zorn, Program Manager

Visit:

Huston-Brumbaugh Nature Center
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Summer Research at the Nature Center

Dr. Chris Stanton

The summer of 2020 presented multiple challenges due to COVID-19, but field research marched on at the Huston-Brumbaugh Nature Center. Three Mount Union students were chosen to be Brumbaugh Scholars this year, allowing them to investigate a question while working closely with a faculty mentor. Carson Ciesinski, an environmental science major, worked with Dr. Andrew Hutsky to study the impacts of agricultural practices on the health of adjacent natural areas. Jarod Hunter, a biology major who worked with Dr. Lin Wu, compared the ecological communities and relative health of the Nature Center's two ponds. Emily Maroni, a chemistry major, partnered with Dr. Amy McElhinney to document microplastics and other plastic contaminants around the property. To hear about the results of these projects, attend the Brumbaugh Scholars Showcase on November 8 or look for their presentations on our website.

In addition to the student research, the Nature Center continued to collect data for its many other projects. Summer bird banding, barn bat counts, and milkweed growth studies were completed, and the information submitted to state, regional, and national databases. A new statewide bee survey, coordinated by The Ohio State University, was initiated on our research property to document bee diversity by county and we are serving as a study site for Columbiana County. Results of this effort will be tabulated this winter, so stay tuned for some exciting news regarding the diversity of our local pollinators.



Nature Center Virtual Classroom

The Nature Center is opening a virtual classroom for teachers, parents, and learners of all ages to access environmental education lessons grounded in content related to NE Ohio's plants and wildlife. Videos previously posted on our social media channels will be combined with lesson plans and outdoor activities to encourage exploration and learning in the outdoors this fall. New lesson plans and videos will be added as the seasons transition from fall to winter and continue into the spring.

The virtual classroom is hosted online at mountunion.edu/nature-center.

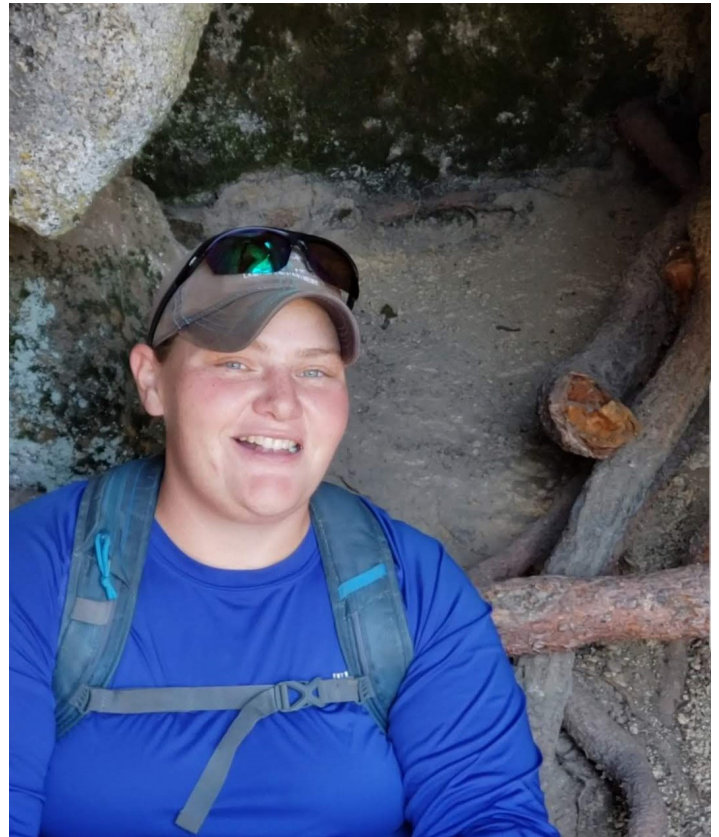
Welcome, Cali

Dr. Chris Stanton

Earlier this year, Karen Santee retired from our staff and a search had begun for a new horticulture and facility coordinator. Thankfully, there were many qualified applicants and the top three candidates were all excellent options. But after a long (and delayed) process, we are very excited to announce that our newest addition to our staff, Cali Granger!

Cali is an alumna of West Branch High School and a 2013 graduate of Mount Union. She worked at the Nature Center while a student and has been involved in many of our programs over the years. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in biology and a Master of Science degree in plant health management from The Ohio State University. Most recently, she has been assisting renowned author and researcher Dr. Olivia Carril with bee surveys in northern New Mexico and taught last year as an adjunct professor for the Department of Biology at Mount Union.

Cali began working on July 1 and has already made noticeable improvements to our buildings and grounds. When asked about her new position, she said, "I finally got my dream job! When this opportunity arose, it was at the most perfect time in my life, almost as if it was meant to be." Looking forward, Cali is eager to organize the gardens to reflect her interests and educate others about the areas in which she is truly passionate. As you are visiting, be sure to say "hi" when you see Cali around the property!



ROW Report Available

Adam Zorn

For over four years, the Nature Center staff members have been working with FirstEnergy Corp. to rehabilitate habitat in the utility right-of-way (ROW) crossing the Nature Center's property. As part of the effort, several research projects were initiated to track the wildlife response to the improved habitat. Research projects have been conducted by Nature Center staff, volunteers, and Mount Union students.

Much of the formal research has focused on birds and native bees, two important indicators of habitat health. All species of wildlife and plants found within the ROW are cataloged utilizing the iNaturalist app. *The FirstEnergy ROW Habitat Reclamation Report* highlights the people involved, the processes undertaken, and the host of plants and animals thriving in the ROW.

View the full ROW report summarizing much of the work that has gone into the habitat rehabilitation and the research and monitoring efforts underway to measure its effect on the Nature Center's wildlife at mountunion.edu/nature-center.

Visitors Survey

Share Your Opinion

It has been almost three years since the last visitor survey. We have made a lot of changes (some are still in progress) and welcomed a lot of new visitors since 2017, so we want to hear your opinion. The survey only has eight questions, so it should be easy to fill out in a few minutes. The survey is available on our website at mountunion.edu/nature-center. Thank you in advance for sharing your opinion and impressions with us!

General Information

- All events begin at the Visitors Center and are held rain or shine unless otherwise indicated.
- Events marked with an asterisk (*) require registration. All other events are informal, open to adults and families, and are available without registration.

To register or inquire about events, call (330) 823-7487 or email naturecenter@mountunion.edu.

Huston-Brumbaugh Nature Center's Schedule of Events

In-Person Programs

Notice

Participation is limited and participants will be expected to wear a face covering and respect six feet of physical distance among other CDC and Ohio Department of Health guidelines. Events may be canceled due to prescribed COVID-19 protocols. Registration is required to participate unless otherwise indicated.

October 4-10

Mental Illness Awareness Week

The week's theme is "What People with Mental Illness Want You to Know." To raise awareness of and reduce the stigma attached to mental illness, there will be a self-guided walk through the Nature Center's labyrinth during daylight hours this week. Quotes from people with mental illness, as well as other information, will be posted throughout the labyrinth for you to read as you walk through and enjoy the out-of-doors for your own mental and physical health. Please practice social distancing and wear a mask if other people are walking the labyrinth at the same time. No registration necessary.

October 5-9

***Silent Walk 5:30-6:30 p.m. daily**

Immerse yourself in the sights and sounds of nature in one of the most colorful seasons of the year. We will walk slowly and lightly, keeping our eyes and ears open and our voices silent to experience the relaxation that being outside can provide. Walks begin at the Visitors Center rain or shine, so please dress for the weather. Canceled in the case of thunderstorms. ***Registration is required.**

Saturday, October 10

***The Big Sit! 8 a.m.-5 p.m.**

It's a "tailgate party for birders" with the objective to tally as many bird species as can be seen or heard inside a 17-ft count circle. Last year we tallied 34 species from our lawn chairs at the North Woods! Join us for a couple of minutes or a couple of hours during this annual, international, noncompetitive birding event. ***Registration is required by October 9.**

Sunday, October 11

***Milkweed Seed Collection 2-4 p.m.**

Learn when and how to harvest seed pods from common milkweed. This wonderful plant is critical to the survival of Monarch butterflies and other milkweed specialists. It is easily cultivated at home with careful collection and a little preparation. We will collect pods, clean the seeds, and participants will be able to take some of their seeds home to start their own milkweed patch. ***Register by October 9.**

Saturday, October 17

***Fall Foliage Hike 2-4 p.m.**

Explore the Brumbaugh Woods trail and enjoy the array of fall colors on display across the Nature Center. This is a moderate hike with an expected distance of almost 2 miles. Prepare appropriately for the weather and trail conditions. ***Register by October 16.**

Sunday, October 18

***Fall Haiku Writing 2-4 p.m.**

Writing a haiku (a short, three-lined poem) is a fun and challenging way to describe what you see while hiking the trails. Join us for a short introduction in the pavilion, a walk on your own to observe the fall season, then share your words and thoughts with the group. No experience is necessary, and all ages are welcome. ***Register by October 16.**

October 18-24

Laughter is the Best Medicine

Scientific research has revealed that laughter can provide health benefits, such as soothing tension, relieving pain, and improving your mood. As you walk the Nature Center labyrinth, you will find jokes, comics, and puns posted throughout to make you smile, giggle, or even laugh out loud! Enjoy this joyful walk during daylight hours all week. Please practice social distancing and wear a mask if other people are walking the labyrinth at the same time. No registration necessary.

Sunday, November 8

***Brumbaugh Scholars Showcase 2-4 p.m.**

See the work of outstanding University of Mount Union students in this showcase event. The 2020 cohort of Brumbaugh Scholars undertook projects related to aquatic ecology, microplastic pollution, and soils of the Nature Center. Your attendance is appreciated in support of the students, their mentors, and their academic research! ***Register by November 6.**

Sunday, November 15

***Last Flower Hike 2-4 p.m.**

Search for the last flowers of the season. Yes, there are still some flowers to be found, and you may be surprised to find out which plant begins flowering so late in the calendar year! This is a moderate hike with an expected distance of one mile. ***Registration is required.**

December 6-20

Holiday Celebration Open House

The Huston Cabin is dressed up for the holidays. Drop in weekdays from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. and Sundays from 1-5 p.m. to walk through the cabin. Great photo opportunities inside and out. Try a holiday-themed scavenger hunt, read the story walk, and leave a letter for Santa. Send an email or check our social media pages for directions on how to leave a letter for Santa!

Sunday, December 13

***Early Winter Hike 2-4 p.m.**

Explore the Brumbaugh Woods trail and enjoy the sights and sounds of early winter at the Nature Center. This is a moderate hike with an expected distance of almost two miles. Prepare appropriately for the weather and trail conditions. ***Register by December 11.**

December 14 – January 5

121st Christmas Bird Count All Day

Participate in the Audubon 121st Christmas Bird Count as a volunteer in the Quail Hollow (Dec. 19) or Tri-Reservoir (Jan. 1) count circles. Join a team of volunteers to count birds in the field, or you may be able to participate at home. Contact the Nature Center or visit the Audubon Society online at audubon.org/conservation/join-christmas-bird-count.

December 24 – January 2

Holiday Break

The Visitors Center will be closed as part of the University of Mount Union's holiday break. Staff will be present daily for limited hours to respond to email, voice messages, and care for the animals. The Visitors Center will reopen on January 3.

Sunday, January 3

***Winter Insect Walk 2-3 p.m.**

For many, winter is a reprieve from the buzzing and biting insects that torment us all summer, but do you wonder where insects go in the winter? Do they all die? Do they migrate? Do they find or make shelter? On this guided walk, we will explore, discuss, and identify many of the ways that insects can survive the winter. Dress for the weather. ***Register by January 2.**

Sunday, January 10

***Mid-winter Hike 2-4 p.m.**

Explore the Brumbaugh Woods trail and enjoy winter across the Nature Center. This is a moderate hike with an expected distance of almost two miles. Prepare appropriately for the weather and trail conditions. ***Register by January 8.**

Friday, January 15

***Winter Stargazing 7:30-9 p.m.**

Explore the night sky on this guided evening walk! Learn to identify constellations, planets, and other celestial objects. Bring a flashlight, binoculars (for a closer look at the starry sky), and dress for the weather. Meet in the main parking lot of the Nature Center at 7:30 p.m. We will walk to our viewing spot for the evening. ***Register by January 14.**

Sunday, January 17

***Winter Haikus 2-4 p.m.**

We will continue to explore the Nature Center property during the winter season in an attempt to find and capture special moments that are unique to this place and time. This program is open to all ages and experiences. ***Register by January 15.**

Recurring Programs

Acoustic Jam

2-4 p.m. on October 4 and November 1

Join us at the Nature Center for a music jam. Bring an instrument or just come to listen. Beginners are welcome. Make new friends, have fun, and learn a new tune or two! No registration required.

***Walk with a Naturalist**

10-11:30 a.m. every other Wed. beginning September 30

Take a leisurely walk with a Nature Center staff member to enjoy and explore the Nature Center's trails. Wear sturdy shoes. Cameras and binoculars are encouraged.

***Registration required.**

Virtual Programs

Wednesdays, October 14 to November 11

***Bird Feeding Specialist 2-3 p.m.**

Information, tips, and tricks about feeding wild birds in your backyard over five weeks. Bird feeding basics (Oct. 14), bird feeder care and cleaning (Oct. 21), unwanted guests (Oct. 28), suet and such (Nov. 4), and thinking about spring (Nov. 11). Sessions include a presentation and time for questions. Register for one program or the full series. ***Registration is required. Registration for each program closes at 5pm the day before the program.**

Thursday, October 22

***Climate of the Future! 7:30-9 p.m.**

Simulate the climate of the future! Chuck McLaugherty will lead an engaging online workshop using the tool En-ROADS created by Climate Interactive and MIT Sloan. Participants will propose climate solutions such as energy efficiency, carbon pricing, and carbon dioxide removal. En-ROADS allows participants to see the impact on changes in global temperature and other factors. The experience is hopeful, scientifically-grounded, action-oriented, and eye-opening. ***Registration is required and closes at 5 p.m. on Oct. 21.**

Wednesdays, November 18 to December 16

***Backyard Birdwatching 2-3 p.m.**

From the common birds to the tricky IDs, we will learn about and learn to identify some of Ohio's most common backyard birds, especially those attracted to bird feeders. Over five weeks, we will cover the top 10 visitors (Nov. 18), other common visitors (Nov. 25), woodpeckers (Dec. 2), hawks (Dec. 9), and tricky bird IDs (Dec. 16). Sessions include a presentation and time for questions. Register for one program or the full series. ***Registration is required. Registration for each program closes at 5 p.m. the day before the program.**

Snapshot USA

Adam Zorn

During the fall of 2019, the Nature Center was one of more than 100 cooperators across the country participating in Snapshot USA, a collaboration between researchers from each state seeking to capture the diversity of animals across the United States using camera trapping. From September through October 2019, collaborators simultaneously deployed trail cameras in all 50 states.

Snapshot USA's goal is to facilitate the collaboration of cooperators to contribute to a national database of public wildlife data. Holding true to intentions, Snapshot USA data were prepared for publication in the journal *Ecology* and is expected to be published this fall. Data visualization for all mammal species detected and wildlife photos from across the country are available at <https://emammal.si.edu/snapshot-usa>.

As is common with many research projects, there are more questions than answers after last year's data were submitted. The second year of Snapshot USA data collection begins in September. The Nature Center is again participating and submitting camera trap data to this nationwide project.

Snapshot USA is a collaboration of the Smithsonian Institution and North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences and powered by eMammal. eMammal is a data management system and archive for camera trap research projects. This cyber-tool is designed to

not only be useful to scientists, but also to the citizen scientists who aid scientists in photo collection. Camera trappers use eMammal software to look at pictures, identify animals, and upload them for review and archive at the Smithsonian. These data then help address important conservation-related questions. The pictures provide a unique view into the secret world of wildlife. For more information about Snapshot USA, visit <https://emammal.si.edu/snapshot-usa>.



Holiday Sustainability

Jamie Greiner

Halloween

Don't spook Mother Earth, try the following sustainable tips instead of buying a pre-made costume, browse thrift shops for some vintage (from the "grave") flare. Or, to make your own, type "DIY Halloween Costume" into Pinterest! Get "Witch-Crafty" with your décor. Reimagine old stockings as spider webs and cardboard boxes as tombstones. Purchase locally grown pumpkins or grow your own! After carving, don't throw away the seeds – toast them in the oven (sprinkle with salt, cinnamon/ sugar, or garlic for added flavor). Hand out candy that comes in recyclable packaging, instead of plastic. Ideas include mini cardboard boxes (like Dots, Nerds, Milk Duds, Junior Mints, Lemonheads) and aluminum foil (Hershey kisses, Rolos, Mini Reese cups for example).

Thanksgiving

Be thankful for Mother Earth too, try the following sustainable tips. Thanksgiving is one of the biggest days for food waste - 200 million pounds of turkey will go to waste. Don't just trash the scraps, use the peelings and trimmings to make homemade stock or consider eating the scraps. Try mashed potatoes with the skins left on, but if you just can't do it then toss the skins

with a little olive oil, salt and pepper, and bake at 375°F for 15-20 minutes until crisp. Snack on the "chips" while you cook. Think of creative ways to transform holiday leftovers into something new. Google search - "20 Thanksgiving Leftover Recipes to Savor the Holiday's Best Flavors" (www.goodhousekeeping.com). Can I say, "Turkey Enchiladas, Stuffing Waffles, Fried Mashed Potato Balls (yum)?"

Christmas

You don't have to be a Grinch to be green, try the following sustainable tips. Upgrade to LED lights. You can still enjoy your Griswold light display while using 90 percent less energy than conventional holiday lights. If you're buying a live Christmas tree, look for one that's grown locally, and consider how you will dispose of it. They can be great habitat in the backyard if you have the space. An even more eco-friendly option is to get a plantable tree that you put in your yard. Look for recycled content gift-wrap. Steer away from foil and glitter paper, which aren't recyclable. Better yet, ditch the wrapping paper all together. Make the packaging part of the gift, think decorative boxes or baskets, or use gift bags, which are easy to fold up and reuse. Don't forget to save bows and ribbons too!

Facilities and Grounds Report

Mike Greiner

Many improvements have been completed around the Nature Center, some more visible than others. The most notable changes visitors will notice are improved trail surfaces, boardwalk relocation around the chicken coop and cabin, a deck and bench at the barn, a new boardwalk around the vernal pool, and a new overflow system at the pond.

Soggy spring trails and increased foot traffic during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic created a few quagmires on the trail system. More than 20 tons of stone were added to our trails this spring to stabilize them and protect the surrounding habitat from erosion. Fresh air and social distancing are encouraged on the renovated trails!

Peyton Shirley, Troop 150 Eagle Scout candidate, completed a boardwalk renovation around the chicken coop to improve trail location and interaction with the chickens. Soon after, a section of the boardwalk around the cabin was relocated to improve traffic flow in that area. To complete boardwalk work in the barnyard area, a small deck and bench were added where the boardwalk terminates at the front pasture fence.

Randy Ray Detchon, Troop 177 Eagle Scout candidate, assisted the site manager in completing an elevated boardwalk around the vernal pool near the Visitors Center. The boardwalk will enhance visitor observation of the vernal pool and its inhabitants.

And finally, a new pond overflow was added. The old overflow system couldn't maintain a consistent water level at the pond. The new overflow is more stable and keeps the water level in the pond at its original, higher level.



A project not so noticeable is the renovation of the library and office area of the Koch Environmental Learning Center. The library area was rearranged to accommodate a conference table for staff meetings and other small groups. The program manager's office was renovated to accommodate a second office for our new horticulture and facility coordinator.

Projects will continue through the fall. New bridges, fences and building improvements will continue. Thank you for your continued interest in what is happening at the Nature Center.

Volunteer Recognition

We extend a sincere thank you to our April, May, June, and July Volunteers! Our outstanding Volunteer staff assists us in maintaining high-quality programming and a beautiful facility. Thank you for ALL that you do!

Adrianna Border
Katriel Border

Lani Border
Ruth Border

Thaddeus Border
Al Eibel

Ann Hendel
Trevor Wise

As you can see by the short list of Volunteer names, the onset of COVID-19 this spring necessitated the suspension of public programming, closed the doors to the Visitors Center, and encouraged our Volunteers and supporters to comply with the stay-at-home order for their health and safety. Our annual Founders Day and Volunteer Recognition Luncheon will be re-scheduled to a later date when we can assemble, eat, and celebrate safely with one another again. The daily joy, energy, and friendship our comrades bring has been replaced by a relative silence in the Visitors Center. They are missed by all the Nature Center staff. We look forward to the days when we can interact safely with all of you again. Thank you for your patience and understanding! Be safe and stay healthy!



The John T. Huston-Dr. John D.
Brumbaugh Nature Center
1972 Clark Ave.
Alliance, OH 44601

Non-Profit
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Permit No. 218
Alliance, Ohio

Discover the Wonder of Nature's Ever-Changing Story

Visitors Center and Bird Observatory Hours

April through October
Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday, 1-5 p.m.
Closed Mondays

November through March
Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Sunday 1-5 p.m.
Closed Mondays and Saturdays

Our trails are open from dawn to dusk every day.

**The Nature Center is located six miles south of
the University of Mount Union on Daniel Street, just off Route 183**



Contact us at:

Phone: (330) 823-7487

Email: naturecenter@mountunion.edu
mountunion.edu/nature-center