







# 2018 Spring Newsletter Discover the Wonder of Nature's Ever-Changing Story

#### **Nature Almanac**

#### February

1	No full moon this month; the first time since February 1999
5	Barred Owls vocalize frequently as they start their nesting season
26	Killdeer return to thawing farm fields and lakeshores

#### March

1	Full Worm Moon
4	Clean out and repair bird boxes for spring nesting
18	Listen for the 'peent' call of the American Woodcock after dark
31	Blue Moon

#### April

7	The chorus of Spring Peepers reaches a fever pitcl
23	Spring wildflower bloom begins to peak
29	Full Pink Moon

#### May

1 Dogwood	trees are in bloom
12Internation	nal Migratory Bird Day - get out and enjoy spring migration!
29 Full Flower	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:

Jamie Greiner, Sustainability and Campus **Outreach Manager** Michael Greiner, Site Manager Charles McClaugherty, Director Karen Santee, Facilities Manager Bonnie Twaddle, Community Outreach Coordinator Lin Wu, Ecologist Adam Zorn, Program Manager

#### Visit:

Huston-Brumbaugh Nature Center 16146 Daniel St. NE Minerva, Ohio 44657

#### **Contact:**

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

**University of Mount Union** 1972 Clark Ave.

Alliance, OH 44601

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## Al Eibel Awarded Volunteer of the Year

#### **Bonnie Twaddle**

Al Eibel was named Volunteer of the Year at the Nature Center's annual Founder's Day Luncheon on September 24, 2017. Al has been a dedicated volunteer at the Nature Center for many years as a bird bander and educator. Al has been banding birds since 2003 and has volunteered his time and skills to band rehabilitated birds for the Wildlife Conservation Center, banding nestlings in nest boxes at various locations throughout eastern Stark County, and banding birds for education and research at his home, Alliance Middle School, and the Nature Center. As a retired biology teacher from Alliance City Schools, Al has a passion for doing and communicating science with people of all ages. If you stop in for a "Bird Banding with Al" program or cross paths with him banding birds on the powerline corridor in the summer, you will most certainly see and learn something new. Thank you, Al, for all of your time and dedicated service to the Nature Center!

Our annual Founders Day Luncheon includes a meal, entertainment, and recognition of all the founders, friends, and volunteers that help us maintain quality programming and a beautiful facility. Entertainment was provided by Stark Parks Wildlife Conservation Center, showing non-releasable raptors from their rehabilitation center. Linda Watkins, Stark Parks

Wildlife Rehabilitator, and assistants brought live, non-releasable raptors to educate attendees about the threats facing these birds and how we can help these important animals.

Congratulations also to Cathy Hart, Larry Miller and Stan Vuletich who received "From the Heart" Awards. This award recognizes exemplary acts of kindness that come from the caring heart. Thank you all for sharing your talents with the Nature Center and our visitors! During the past year, 171 Volunteers provided 1,905 hours of their valuable time in many different capacities. We can serve our visitors and the community to a great extent because of our dependable and dedicated Volunteer staff. We cannot thank you enough!





## **Earth Day**

Jamie Greiner

The first Earth Day on April 22, 1970 activated 20 million Americans. This first

Earth Day is commonly attributed with launching the modern environmental movement. Today, more than 1 billion people partake in Earth Day activities each year. It has become the largest civic

observance in the world. Earth Day's 2018 theme is "End Plastic Pollution". From poisoning and harming marine life to disrupting human hormones, from polluting our beaches and lands to clogging our waste streams and landfills, the fast growth of single use plastics is a leading threat to the health and well-being of our planet (earthday.org). The

good news is we can play an active role in demanding action to end plastic pollution. The intention is to have Earth Day 2018 mark the first step toward the ultimate goal of replacing fossil fuel-based plastics with nonpolluting materials. For more information, visit www.earthday. org and be sure to attend the Earth Day Events scheduled at the Nature Center.

## **16th Annual Photo Contest and Exhibit**

Amateur nature photographers are invited to enter their photos in the Nature Center's 16th Annual Nature Photography Contest and Exhibit on February 23, 2018. Participation is free, but submissions are limited to nature photos captured in eastern Ohio (east of Interstate 71 and Ohio Route 23). Photos must be size 8x10 and securely mounted and matted on 11x14 mount board (not under glass or in a frame). Photos must be the original work of the photographer.

Nature photos will be accepted for the following categories: Wildlife – Vertebrates, Wildlife - Invertebrates, Wild Plants, Landscapes, Seasons, Huston-Brumbaugh Nature Center, Mount Union Campus, Black & White, Youth (photos by children 12yrs old and under), and Open. The new "Open" category has no geographic range restriction, but the entry must be a nature photo and is available only to participants who are submitting at least one other photo in another category. Ribbons will be awarded for each category. Formal

judging will be completed by a panel of judges comprised of professional photographers and naturalists. Judges will also determine one winner of "Best in Show". The public will vote for "People's Choice" awards for each category. People's Choice judging is determined by ballots cast by the public from February 23 through March 11.

Photo submissions will be accepted by Nature Center staff in the Visitors Center during normal operating hours beginning in February.

Photographers are limited to 5 entries in total and 3 entries per category, except the Open category which is limited to one entry per photographer. The same rules apply to youth participants. Deadline to submit a photo is Sunday, February 18, 2018 at 5 p.m. Full details and contest entry forms are available on the Nature Center's website and in the Visitors Center lobby.



An open house/artist's reception will take place on Friday, February 23 from 6 - 8 p.m. Photographers, friends, and the public are all invited to attend. People's Choice balloting begins during the open house and runs through March 11. The exhibit will close on March 18. Questions regarding the contest and exhibit may be directed to Adam Zorn, Program Manager at (330) 829-8988.

# The Return of the Natives Al Eibel

Native plants have become an obsession with me. For years at my home, I have removed non-native plants and replaced them with native plants or I have let native volunteers take over: ironweed, joe pye weed, goldenrods, yarrow, asters, mistflower, and boneset.

Although the wildflowers are often stunning when in bloom, I still favor the native grasses, including big bluestem, little bluestem, Indiangrass, and switchgrass. One of my favorite native grasses is northern sea oats, a perennial woodland species with a unique and attractive seedhead. Northern sea oats (Chasmanthium latifolium), grows 3-4 feet tall in full sun or shade making it a better fit for a property with lots of trees, and, because it matures at waist height, can be planted below windows and will not obstruct the view.

The other grasses require full sun, and most, with the exception of little bluestem, grow 6-7 feet tall.

I have had good results collecting and germinating my own northern sea oats seeds and planting the mature plants in the fall. I collect seeds in late summer and throughout the fall by simply stripping the seed heads off the stem by sliding my thumb and forefinger along the stem. The seeds fall into my cupped hand and I put them into a labeled ziplock bag. Northern sea oat seeds require several weeks of cold temperatures (cold stratification) before they can germinate. I store the seeds in my unheated garage for several months in containers that are insect and mouse proof.

In February or March, I fill a large pot (14 inches in diameter and 12 inches tall) with

potting soil to within a couple inches of the top. I use potting soil so that when the seeds germinate, I'm assured they are northern sea oats and not an unwanted plant. I mix the seeds with a small amount of potting soil and sprinkle them over the filled pot. I cover the seeds with about a quarter inch of soil and water with a spray bottle so that I do not disturb or uncover the seeds. Then I wait and spray whenever the soil appears dry. The seeds usually germinate within a couple weeks.

Once the weather warms, I put the pot on our front stoop and let the grass grow throughout the summer. After the first frost, I plant the entire bunch of grass in the ground. Northern sea oats remains attractive and standing throughout the fall and winter, and in the spring, because it is a perennial, new growth appears.

## **Huston-Brumbaugh Nature Center's Schedule of Events**

#### Friday, February 16

Great Backyard Bird Count 9-11 a.m.

Join Nature Center staff and members of the Canton Audubon Society as participants in the Great Backyard Bird Count in the comfort of the Bird Observatory. Snacks and warm drinks provided. No registration required.

#### Saturday, February 17

\*Breakfast with the Birds 10 a.m. - Noon

Have breakfast refreshments with the birds in the Bird Observatory with Nature Center staff and Canton Audubon Society volunteers while participating in the Great Backyard Bird Count.

\*Register by Friday, February 16.

#### Sunday, February 18

Great Backyard Bird Count 1 - 3 p.m.

Join Nature Center staff and members of the Canton Audubon Society as participants in the Great Backyard Bird Count in the comfort of the Bird Observatory. Snacks and warm drinks provided. No registration required.

#### Monday, February 19

Great Backyard Bird Count 9-11 a.m.

Join Nature Center staff and members of the Canton Audubon Society as participants in the Great Backyard Bird Count in the comfort of the Bird Observatory. Snacks and warm drinks provided. No registration required.

#### Friday, February 23

*Nature Photo Contest and Exhibit* 6 - 8 p.m.

See page 3 for entry and event details. Photo submission deadline is 5 p.m. on Sunday, February 18.

#### Sunday, February 25

\*Cooking with Maple Syrup 1 - 4 p.m.

A two-part program about making maple syrup with Program Manager Adam Zorn and cooking with maple syrup with Judi Strauss. This natural sweetener provides both sweetness and unique flavor to everything, from desserts to salads to main dishes. Judi Strauss will demonstrate how to cook with maple syrup in ways you never thought of before. It's more than just a topping for pancakes! Lots to sample in class and recipes to take home

\*Registration is required and limited to 16 adults. Food Fee is \$9 per person. Registration opens on Monday, January 29 at 9 a.m.

#### Saturday, March 10

District 13 Science Day

We cannot make Ohio District 13 Science Day a success without your help. We are looking for Science Day judges and volunteers. If you would like to be a judge or volunteer, please contact Jamie Greiner at 330-829-8161 or greineja@mountunion.edu. You may also visit our District 13 Science Day web page at:

http://raider.mountunion.edu/Organizations/scienceday/

#### Friday, March 23

\*Amphibian Night 7 - 10 p.m.

The Nature Center is home to several species of amphibians. Join this evening program to listen, look for, and learn about various species active in early spring. We will start our exploration near the Visitors Center (good for young kids and various mobility levels) before starting a moderate hike to the East Pond (best for ages 10 and up). Bring a flashlight and suitable footwear.

\*Register by Thursday, March 22.

#### Sunday, March 25

\*The Science of Bass Fishing 2 - 3:30 p.m.

Mount Union's Assistant Professor of Biology Dr. Christopher Marks leads an information session on one of the most popular gamefish in the Northeast Ohio region. Early spring brings some of the best bass fishing. Dr. Marks will present information on bass fishing from a biologist's perspective. Discussion will include an overview of techniques as well as what peer-reviewed publications have to say about some of those popular anecdotal beliefs. Avid fishers, novices, and those looking to learn are welcome.

\*Register by Friday, March 23.

#### Saturday, April 7

\*Free A Tree 2 - 4 p.m.

Invasive bittersweet vines and heavy accumulations of grapevines can have an adverse impact on tree growth. Help us free a tree by cutting and removing harmful vines from trees at the Nature Center. Cut vines will be used in the next day's Spring Wreath Workshop. We will use hand tools such as pruning shears, loppers, and handsaws. Participants will be required to sign a liability waiver.

\*Register by Friday, April 6.

#### Sunday, April 8

\*Spring Wreath Workshop 2-4 p.m.

Thanks to Saturday's Free A Tree program, some of our trees were freed from vines inhibiting their growth and general well-being. We will be creating unique spring wreaths from the cut vines. All the supplies will be provided to make the wreaths. We will have some floral picks and ribbons on hand, too. We suggest that you bring some floral picks and other items to create a wreath that will suit your taste. \*Registration is required and limited to 16 participants ages 12 and up. Registration opens on Monday, March 12 at 9 a.m.

#### Sunday, April 15

Food of the Future 2 - 4 p.m.

Environmental science students from the University of Mount Union will present a look at the future of food production. They will describe the results of their investigation into the future of alternative food production systems and offer answers to questions such as: What are some of the significant new trends in agriculture? What are the advantages and disadvantages of some of the proposed new approaches to food production? How will these new approaches influence the related challenges of hunger and malnutrition? **RSVP appreciated.** 

#### Sunday, April 22

Earth Day at the Nature Center 2 - 4 p.m.

Celebrate Earth Day with the Mount Union GREEN Raiders as they host the following activities: Sustainable Living Program (2-2:30 p.m.), Kids Storytime (2 p.m., 2:30 p.m., 3 p.m., 3:30 p.m.), Upcycled Eco-Craft Station (2-4 p.m.), and a Guided Nature Hike (3-4 p.m.). **RSVP appreciated, but not required.** 

#### Saturday, April 28

Bioblitz: City Nature Challenge 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

A bioblitz is an intense period of biological surveying in an attempt to record all the living species within a designated area. Help us bioblitz the Nature Center and contribute sightings to the 2018 City Nature Challenge. Scheduled and self-guided activities with instruction will be available during the day. Full details available as the date approaches. No registration required.

#### Sunday, April 29

Bioblitz: City Nature Challenge 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

A bioblitz is an intense period of biological surveying in an attempt to record all the living species within a designated area. Help us bioblitz the Nature Center and contribute sightings to the 2018 City Nature Challenge. Scheduled and self-guided activities with instruction will be available during the day. Full details available as the date approaches. No registration required.

#### Sunday, May 13

\*Neighborhood Naturalist: Pocket Plant Press 2 - 4 p.m. Participants will build their own small plant press and then go into the field to identify and collect small leaves or flowers. The press will be approximately 4"x 6" and is reusable. Materials will be provided. \*Registration is required. Limit 12 registrants. Register by Friday, May 11.

#### Sunday, May 20

\*Gardening for Pollinators 2 - 3:30 p.m.

As most gardeners know, pollination is a very important process that occurs in our gardens for many fruits and seeds to develop. So why not create or enhance an existing garden that will attract a variety of pollinators? This presentation will discuss simple steps you can take to make your garden more attractive to pollinators. Participants will receive seeds, plants and a pollinator home to begin or enhance their gardens to be more pollinator-friendly.

\*Registration is required and opens on Monday, April 23 at 9 a.m. Attendance is limited to 20 adults.

#### Sunday, June 24

\*Gardening for Pollinators 2 - 3:30 p.m.

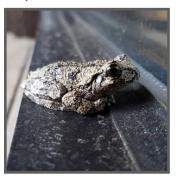
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\*Registration is required and opens on Tuesday, May 29 at 9 a.m. Attendance is limited to 20 adults.

#### Saturday, June 30

Fiber Arts Through the Ages 1 - 5 p.m.

SAVE THE DATE: free classes, demonstrations, and workshops on everything dealing with the fiber arts from sheep to shawl. Presented by the Canton Fiber Arts Guild.





#### Follow us on Instagram for more photos like these!

## **Recurring Programs**

Acoustic Jam: 2 - 4 p.m.

February 4, March 4, April 8, May 6, June 3
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.

Bird Banding with Al Eibel: 8 a.m. - Noon

March 17 and 31; April 14, 28, and 29; May 5 and 19;

June 2 and 23

See live, wild songbirds in the hand and learn why bird banding is an important tool for bird and wildlife conservation. Drop in any time between 8 a.m. and Noon. Meet Al outside on the east side of the Visitors Center. Banding sessions are canceled in the event of rain.

Spring Bird Walk: 9 - 10:30 a.m.

April 9, 16, 23, and 30; May 7 and 14

Join Naturalist Adam Zorn on the Nickel Plate Trail in Louisville, Ohio for a morning bird walk. Great for beginners and experienced birders. Level, paved walking surface. Bring your binoculars. Meet at the trail head on Pinevale Ave, Louisville, OH. Canceled for inclement weather. RSVP requested.

## **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

## **Volunteers Needed for Field Trips**

**Bonnie Twaddle** 

Our calendar is nearly full of scheduled school field trips for this Spring! The two main areas of need are Trail Guides for seasonal or themed hikes through the woods, and leaders and assistants for the five different stations of the Children's Hands-On Gardening Program. School field trips occur during weekdays somewhere between the hours of 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. We encourage volunteers to observe a couple of times in either or both areas to see what is a good fit for you.

Many young students have few opportunities to learn about the wonderful out-of-doors by way of guided hikes or hands-on gardening. Please consider helping us make these field trips exciting, educational, and positive experiences for all the children who visit. For more information about these Volunteer opportunities, please contact Bonnie Twaddle at 330-823-7487 or twaddlb@mountunion.edu.

## **Stakeholders and Surveys**

#### **Adam Zorn**

In November, the Nature Center staff hosted a stakeholder meeting to solicit feedback from visitors, volunteers, community leaders, and Mount Union constituents about the trails, facilities, and future projects at the Nature Center. Over 30 attendees offered their opinions and ideas across five key areas identified by the Nature Center staff: Trails and Wayfinding, Visitor Services, Interpretive Materials, Volunteers and Outreach, and Sustainability. Participants were asked to complete a visitor's survey and a trails survey to provide more specific feedback related to those areas of interest. Replicate surveys were available from November to January to collect additional feedback from anyone unable to attend or unaware of the stakeholder meeting.

Stakeholder comments during the meeting were largely positive related to all five key areas. Participants provided many ideas and suggestions for improvements and enhancements of existing services, facilities, and programs, as well as feedback on upcoming improvements to the Nature Center's trail system and wayfinding infrastructure (kiosks, maps, trail markers, etc.). The opportunity to speak directly with a variety of stakeholders proved invaluable for the staff to better understand the context and nuance of the various comments and suggestions offered during the afternoon.

The visitors survey and trails survey each registered over 100 responses during the 3-month period. The visitors survey was designed to understand who our visitors are, why and when they visit, and what they like to do when at the Nature Center. The trail survey was designed to understand who our visitors are, how frequently they use the trails, what they like to do on the trails, and what kind of improvements they would like to see made to the trail system.

Here are a few highlights from the results of each survey:
• Nearly half of survey respondents reported visiting the Nature Center 1-5 times in the past year on the visitor's survey (49%) and trails survey (47%). Other response choices (0, 6-10, more than 10) comprised the rest of the responses in both surveys with "more than 10" being the second highest result.

• The visitors survey results showed little preference for visiting

on weekends vs. weekdays and most visitors prefer to visit in spring, summer, and fall.

- Visitor's survey respondents indicated trails, programs/workshops, wildlife/plants, special events, bird observatory, and barnyard/farm animals (listed in order of preference) as their primary attraction at the Nature Center.
- Most respondents to the trails survey rated the Nature Center's trails as good (56%) or excellent (36%).
- A majority (53%) reported using a mix of trails (boardwalk, gravel, natural) as opposed to only one surface type when walking the trail system.
- The trails survey shows our visitors report being able to find their way on the Nature Center's trails all the time (56%) and some of the time (43%). 1% reported rarely being able to find their way on the trails.
- When asked to select all that apply, trail survey respondents chose more educational signage about nature and better directional signage/blazing as their clear-cut choices for trail improvements, followed by less wet/rough spots on trails, more educational signage about history, better maps, and more/clearer regulatory signs.

So, what do we know now? According to our stakeholders and survey respondents, we have some work to do! Since trails are the main reason most people visit the Nature Center, we are making plans to reorganize and simplify the trail system. New directional signage, a few strategically placed kiosks, and a new trail map are currently in the design phase. Some improvements will be made to trail surfaces as needed and where appropriate, too. We believe that these improvements will address some of the deficiencies noted in the surveys and stakeholder meeting, and we intend to implement changes and improvements with little to no effect on the current aesthetics of the Nature Center.

We sincerely appreciate all the feedback we have received from the stakeholder meeting and surveys. Thank you to all who attended the meeting and took the time to fill out our surveys in person or online. If you didn't have a chance to provide your input, our phone number and email address are in the sidebar on page 2 of this newsletter. We'd love to hear from you!

## **VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION**

We extend a sincere thank you to our September, October, November, and December volunteers! Our outstanding volunteer staff assists us in maintaining high-quality programming and a beautiful facility. Thank you for ALL that you do!

Kim Anderson **Eileen Armstrong Jolynn Armstrong Josh Armstrong Shari Armstrong Jordan Aubel Kelly Babbo Mario Babbo Avery Ball** Joseph Balogh **Randy Barker Sophia Barrington Phil Bartholomae Angelica Bartholomew Jeremiah Bauer Anna Bauhof Matt Bennett Rick Blessing Dani Bolovan Adrianna Border Katriel Border Lani Border Ruth Border Thaddeus Border Patty Bruey Morgan Brumenschenkel Chris Campbell Kathy Chambers Mark Clough Lily Cola Stacey Costanzo Quinnan Crowe Steve Cuddihy Steven Cuddihy Lisa Dalman** 

**Shirley DeMaiolo Randy Detchon** Randy Detchon, Jr. **Laura Dornan Will Draves Elayne Dunlap Stephen Durst** Jim Dutter **Rachel Eastman Al Eibel Devin Farmiloe Madeline Fraley** Caitlyn Franczkowski **Sandy Gahan Mallory Glenn Laine Grabowsky** Cali Granger **Berry Grant Jim Greiner Ben Hayes Jane Helwig Ann Hendel Zach Henkels Paul Hobe** Kayla Hood **Megan Hoover Judy Horn Josh Hornyak Amy Hosking** Zak Jaeb **Mary Beth Keck Emily Keller Dillon Kidd** John Kilbourne **Cody Klette** 

**Jasmine Kornel Darren Krolikowski Kera Leskovec Kimberly Lessic** Tyler Longstreth **Wil Luca Lou Marich Jared Marsh** Jordan Martin **Martha McClaugherty Shannon McDonald Christy McIntyre Kate McMahon Sarah McMahon Tammy Mierzna Keith Miller Larry Miller Bernie Miner Mark Mishak Brady Mohr Kim Moles Jackson Molody Landri Moore Ben Mullaly Andrew Muray** Alex Nastari **Conner Nastari Sam Nastari Susan Nastari Kira Nicholson** Megan Okuda **Evan Olbrych Carol Pancake Josh Perry Alexis Polce** 

**Steele Porter Brett Radabaugh Sophie Ramsey Patty Rickard Kenneth Rinehart Bill Robinson Matt Robinson** Mikayla Robinson **Nate Ross Liz Ross Jones Frank Sanor Miriam Sanor Roman Selby Amy Seymore Hadil Shakhtra Dominic Simeone Matt Simeone Jennifer Simpson Susan Smith Michael Sovak Jake Stallman Kayla Stephens Brian Strawser Darla Sutton Joshua Thorne Jacob VanDerkar Brian Walker Kaitlin Walsh Tyler Weisburn Jonathan Wilson** Thomas Wines **Justine Wyrzykowska Zach Zimmer** 

## **SPECIAL THANKS!**

Additional gratitude is extended to **Alliance Community Hospital**, who donated handwashing booklets for every Alliance-area 4th grade student in conjuction with the **Children's** Hands-On Gardening Program, and **Shirley and James Rakes** who donated fresh garden produce to the Gardening Program. Thanks to **Sunshine Therapy Dogs** who brought sweet and calming dogs to our Relax and De-Stress Event for attendees to enjoy. Thank you to **Michelle Rozich** for her donation of a tree display stand and collection of plush Audubon birds for the Bird Observatory. Thank you to the **Town & Country Garden Club** for decorating our cabin for the Holiday Celebration, and to **Mount Union Mill** for their continuous donations of birdseed.



The John T. Huston-Dr. John D. Brumbaugh Nature Center 1972 Clark Ave. Alliance, OH 44601 Non-Profit Organization U.S. Postage PAID Permit No. 218 Alliance, Ohio

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## **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: nature center @ mountunion.edu

mountunion.edu/nature-center