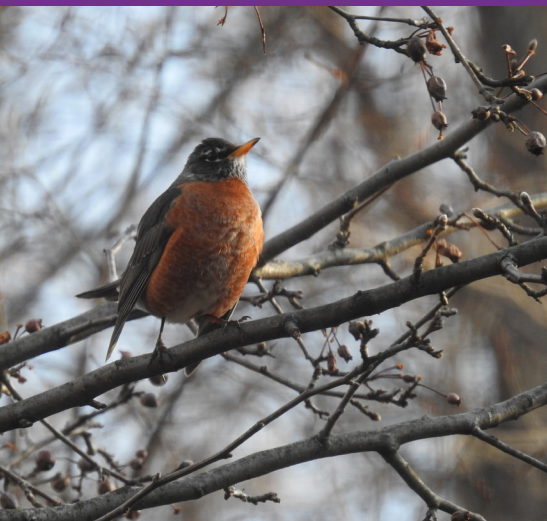




UNIVERSITY OF MOUNT UNION HUSTON-BRUMBAUGH NATURE CENTER



2022 Spring Newsletter

Discover the Wonder of Nature's Ever-Changing Story

Nature Almanac

February

- 5..... Gather supplies for maple sugaring season
- 16..... Full Snow Moon
- 27..... Look for flocks of American robins returning to forests and lawns

March

- 1..... Hibernating insects begin to emerge on warm, sunny days
- 18..... Full Worm Moon
- 20..... Dandelions begin to bloom in lawns

April

- 3..... Spring Beauty flowers begin to carpet the forest floor
- 16..... Full Pink Moon
- 22..... Earth Day

May

- 1..... Bird diversity peaks with resident and migrant species filling the landscape
- 16..... Full Flower Moon
- 22..... Turtles and snakes are commonly observed basking in sunny locations

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
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
16146 Daniel St. NE
Minerva, Ohio 44657

Contact:

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Instagram: @UMUNatureCenter



20th Annual Photo Contest

Photo credit: Amy O'Donnell

Amateur nature photographers are invited to enter their photos in the Nature Center's 20th Annual Nature Photography Contest and Exhibit on Sunday, February 27. 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 behind and 11x14" photo mat (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 12 years old and under), and Open. The 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 27 through March 13.

Photo submissions will be accepted by Nature Center staff in the Visitors Center during normal operating hours beginning in February. Photographers are limited to five entries in total and three 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 4 p.m. on Tuesday, February 22. 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 Sunday, February 27 from 1-5 p.m. Photographers, friends and the public are invited to attend. People's Choice balloting begins during the open house and runs through March 13. The exhibit runs through March 20. Questions regarding the contest and exhibit may be directed to Adam Zorn, program manager at (330) 829-8988.



Bobcats at the Nature Center?

Adam Zorn

The Huston-Brumbaugh Nature Center is home to dozens of species of mammals from the diminutive shrew to the comparably gigantic deer. There are fossorial moles, arboreal flying squirrels, and other species occupying everywhere in between. There are even predatory mammals like coyote and red fox occupying territories on Nature Center grounds. But are there bobcats?

Biology student Ryland Black '22 set out to answer that question during the summer of 2021. He researched which landscape features bobcats find attractive and identified locations where he might successfully document the first occurrence of a bobcat on Mount Union-owned property. He deployed ten motion-activated cameras across 28 different locations at the Nature Center from June through July. Ryland's efforts recorded over 60,000 photographic records of a couple dozen mammals and birds. But there were no bobcats.

Though Ryland couldn't document the Nature Center's first modern-day record of a bobcat, the forests here have likely seen bobcats in the past. The giant beech, maple, and oak trees in the 20+ acres of old-growth forest here very likely had bobcats roaming across the forest floor. In the 1700's and early 1800's, Ohio was home to several predatory mammals including the gray wolf, mountain lion, black bear, and bobcat. Around 1850, all were considered extirpated from the state due to persecution.

While gray wolves and mountain lions are unlikely to reestablish populations in Ohio, black bears and bobcats have been able to do so. Remnant populations in neighboring states of Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Kentucky have rebounded and expanded thanks to protections afforded by wildlife laws. Bears and bobcats do not observe arbitrary boundaries such as state lines, so expanding populations have immigrated into Ohio over the past several decades. Observations of both species were reported again in the mid-1900's.

While the black bear remains an endangered species in Ohio, bobcat populations have rebounded almost exponentially since the early 2000's. Bobcats reintroduced themselves to southern Ohio and have since expanded their range northward. They were removed from Ohio's endangered species list in 2014 but are still protected from hunting and trapping.

Since Ryland's summer-long search concluded, we have continued to operate cameras. Persistence eventually paid off in early December when a camera recorded five images of a bobcat passing by at the Ball Research Forest – our first documentation of a bobcat on Mount Union property. We have also collected credible reports of bobcats in eastern Stark County in the last few months of 2021 – all were in a six-mile radius from the Nature Center! Two of the three reports were accompanied by



photos and the other observation was a road-killed specimen. Unfortunately, when wildlife species become more common, road-killed specimens are more frequently encountered.

With an increase in bobcat observations in our area, do we have anything to worry about? The short answer is no. Bobcats are generally reclusive organisms that typically avoid humans. Their diet is comprised primarily of small mammals, and dietary studies indicate that Eastern Cottontails are their preferred prey. White-tailed deer also comprise a surprising component of their diet during the winter months, though there is uncertainty about how often deer are hunted versus scavenged in the winter.

If the presence of a bobcat makes you feel uneasy, know that the usual precautions to avoid conflict with wildlife apply here. Normal precautions to avoid wildlife conflict are: feed and house domesticated animals indoors, supervise domesticated animals when outdoors, secure livestock in appropriate enclosures, remove garbage, bird feed, and other foods that may attract prey species to your property (especially before dark). These proactive steps will not prevent a bobcat from visiting your property but will keep them from becoming a regular visitor or nuisance in search of food.

If you see a bobcat at or near the Nature Center, we want to know about it! Observations with photos are preferred, but you can drop us a note in person, via email, or a direct message on social media. You can also report observations at <https://apps.ohiodnr.gov/wildlife/speciessighting/> to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Reports support a better understanding of the extraordinary rebound of Ohio's bobcat population.

Huston-Brumbaugh Nature Center's Schedule of Events

***Walk with a Naturalist**

Wednesday, February 2 | 10-11:30 a.m.

A guided walk searching for early signs of spring as well as animal tracks and traces left behind by local wildlife. Wear sturdy shoes. Cameras and binoculars are encouraged.

***Registration is required.**

***Great Backyard Bird Count**

Friday, February 18 | 9-11 a.m.

Sunday, February 20 | 1-3 p.m.

Monday, February 21 | 9-11 a.m.

Join Nature Center staff as participants in the Great Backyard Bird Count in the comfort of the Bird Observatory.

***Registration is required.**

Photography Contest Open House

Sunday, February 27 | 1-5 p.m.

See page 2 for entry and event details. Photo submission deadline is Tuesday, February 22 at 4 p.m.

***Walk with a Naturalist**

Wednesday, March 2 | 10-11:30 a.m.

A guided walk checking the sugarbush and listening for sounds of spring. Wear sturdy shoes. Cameras and binoculars are encouraged. ***Registration is required.**

***Ohio's Wildlife History**

Sunday, March 6 | 1-3 p.m.

An overview of the decline and resurgence of Ohio's wildlife species from statehood to present day. We will explore a timeline of events during an indoor presentation. Then we will venture outdoors to view evidence of Ohio's changing landscape and wildlife on the Nature Center's property. Dress properly for the weather and trail conditions. The trail walk is moderately strenuous and optional. ***Registration is required.**

***Introduction to Volunteer Opportunities**

Sunday, March 13 | 2-4 p.m.

Are you interested in volunteering at the Nature Center but do not know where to begin? Join us to learn about the mission, history, and staff of the Nature Center and the vital roles that volunteers provide to help us fulfill our mission. There are opportunities available for individuals and families of all ages. No commitments will be requested during this program.

***Registration is required by Friday, March 11.**

***Night Hike**

Friday, March 18 | 7:30-9 p.m.

We'll explore the trail system after sunset. Dress for the weather and seasonal trail conditions. Bring a flashlight! This is a moderately strenuous walk suitable for older children and adults. ***Registration is required.**

***A Natural History of the Honeybee**

Sunday, March 20 | 2-4 p.m.

The western honeybee has a unique and special relationship with humans that is thousands of years old. Ohioans have a particularly rich history with beekeeping. Join Dave Noble of Red Beard Bees for an exploration of the first 80 million years of honeybee natural history before focusing on honeybee domestication and modern beekeeping.

***Registration is required by March 18.**

***Early Spring Wildflowers**

Sunday, March 27 | 1-3 p.m.

An exploration of the forest in search of spring's first wildflowers. Dress for the weather and seasonal trail conditions. Binoculars and cameras are helpful for viewing specimens up close. ***Registration is required.**

Open House: New Educational Signs

Sunday, April 3 | 1-4 p.m.

Join us to celebrate the installation of 10 new educational signs thanks to generous donations from the friends and family of Linda Montgomery. See page 6 for more information about Linda and the donation made in her memory.

***Walk with a Naturalist**

Wednesday, April 6 | 10-11:30 a.m.

A guided walk searching for spring wildflowers. Wear sturdy shoes suitable for muddy trails. Cameras and binoculars are encouraged. ***Registration is required.**

***Night Hike**

Friday, April 8 | 7:30-9 p.m.

We'll explore the trail system after sunset. Dress for the weather and seasonal trail conditions. Bring a flashlight! This is a moderately strenuous walk suitable for older children and adults. ***Registration is required.**

***Spring Wildflowers**

Sunday, April 10 | 1-3 p.m.

An exploration of the forest in search of spring wildflowers. Dress for the weather and seasonal trail conditions. Binoculars and cameras are helpful for viewing specimens up close.

***Registration is required.**

***Earth Day Bird Hike**

Friday, April 22 | 9-10:30 a.m.

Celebrate Earth Day with the beauty and diversity of bird life residing at the Nature Center. Several species of birds may be returning from their wintering grounds while our resident species are gearing up for the breeding season. Bring binoculars. Dress for the weather and seasonal trail conditions. Canceled for rain. ***Registration is required.**

***Trillium Hike**

Friday, April 22 | 1-2:30 p.m.

What better way to celebrate the beauty and fragility of our Earth than a search for trillium? Large-flowered and red trilliums should be in bloom alongside several other species of wild-flowers. Dress for the weather and seasonal trail conditions. ***Registration is required.**

Bioblitz: City Nature Challenge

Saturday, April 30 and Sunday, May 1 | 1-4 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 2022 City Nature Challenge. Observations collected using the iNaturalist app.

***Walk with a Naturalist**

Wednesday, May 4 | 10-11:30 a.m.

A guided walk searching for neotropical migrants – birds migrating from Central and South America to Ohio and points north. Wear sturdy shoes. Cameras and binoculars are encouraged. ***Registration is required.**

***Mother's Day Insect Walk**

Saturday, May 7 | 2-3 p.m.

Celebrate insect moms on this Mother's Day walk! Spring has sprung, and insect mothers are back to work raising their young and constructing their homes. On a guided walk around the Nature Center, we will explore, discuss, and give recognition to all those hard-working insect moms.

***Registration is required.**

***Evening Hike**

Friday, May 20 | 7:30-9 p.m.

We'll explore the trail system on a late-day hike. Dress for the weather and seasonal trail conditions. This is a moderately strenuous walk suitable for older children and adults.

***Registration is required.**

***Backyard Pollinator Habitat**

Sunday, May 22 | 2-4 p.m.

You would be surprised by how much your outdoor space provides for pollinators already! We will discuss what you currently provide for pollinators (without even realizing it!), and simple steps you can take to make your outdoor space more pollinator-friendly. FREE seeds, plants, pollinator home and safe water dish will be available for those that want to add any or all of these.

***Registration is required and opens on Tuesday, April 26 at 9 a.m. Attendance is limited to adults only.**

***Bat Roost Monitoring**

Friday, May 27 | 8:30-9:45 p.m.

Bats are a critical part of our ecosystem and an important component of the agricultural economy. As the main predator of night-flying insects in Ohio, bats keep insect populations in check and reduce impacts on humans. Bring a lawn chair and assist the staff in counting bats that leave the roost in the Huston Barn. ***Registration is required.**

***Walk with a Naturalist**

Wednesday, June 1 | 10-11:30 a.m.

A guided walk searching for pollinators, specifically bees and butterflies. Wear sturdy shoes. Cameras and binoculars are encouraged. ***Registration is required.**

Recurring Programs

Acoustic Jam

February 6, March 6, April 3, May 1, June 5 | 2-4 p.m.

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!

***Spring Bird Walk**

April 18, 25, May 2, 9, 16 | 9-11 a.m.

Join Naturalist Adam Zorn on the Nickel Plate Trail in Louisville, OH 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. Group size limited. ***Registration required.**

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. For registration or inquiries, call (330) 823-7487 or email naturecenter@mountunion.edu.

Events may be canceled due to prescribed COVID-19 protocols.



Montgomery Family Donation

Visitors this spring will notice new, educational signs installed in several areas along the Huston Farm Loop, Pond Trail, and Maple Trail this spring. New benches were installed at the pond and an additional bench was added near the vernal pool as well.

Funding for the educational signs and benches was provided by friends and family in memory of Linda Montgomery. Her family also assisted Nature Center staff with the installation of signage along the trails. Linda joined the Mount Union community in 1995 as a member of the Physical Plant staff, serving first as a housekeeper and then moving into a coordinator role. At the time of her retirement, she was serving as the administrative assistant in the University of Mount Union's Dewald Chapel.

Linda loved camping and being outdoors, bird watching, and spending time with her family. She loved visiting the Nature Center and passing on her love of the outdoors to her children and grandson. The signs and benches are in remembrance of Linda and her love of the outdoors.

Join the Nature Center for an open house on Sunday, April 3 from 1-4 p.m. to celebrate the addition of these beautiful and educational signs and the comfortable new benches which will enhance visitor experiences at the Nature Center for many years to come.



Nurture Native Landscapes

Flowering plants (angiosperms) are the foundation of most terrestrial ecosystems. They provide some of the most essential components needed to sustain wildlife and humans on this planet – oxygen, food, shelter, and medicines to name a few. The diverse array of trees, shrubs, wildflowers, and grasses are critical components of the most remote ecosystems and those dominated by human influence. Unfortunately, humans have a penchant for cultivating and nurturing only a select few plants for food and aesthetic purposes.

Despite our fondness of turfgrass, ornamental plants, and the appearance of neatness, there is room for native plants in our lawns and flowerbeds. Backyard, neighborhood, and community landscapes can be comprised of traditional favorites and an extraordinary array of native plants: tulips and trout-lilies, boxwood and blueberries, Japanese maples and joe-pye-weed, hostas and hop hornbeam, roses and rattlesnake master. It's not about choosing one or the other (unless the traditional plant is also invasive). Our backyards and community spaces can be dynamic, connected areas of native plant diversity while simultaneously satisfying our addiction to aesthetics.

If you are unfamiliar with or overwhelmed by the assortment of native flowering trees, shrubs, and wildflowers available to add to your home's landscape, do not be discouraged! You are likely playing host to several species already, and we can help you make your space even more diverse. We have scheduled several events this spring with a focus on native plants and pollinators where you can be introduced to some of the species commonly residing in our area. On Sunday, May 22, the Nature Center's own Bonnie Twaddle, a certified Ohio Pollinator Advocate, will present "Backyard Pollinator Habitat," where you can learn more about incorporating native plants into your home's landscape!

In addition to Nature Center programming, we also have free native seeds available in the Visitors Center. Packets of common milkweed, rattlesnake master, buttonbush, and Indian grass are located on the front desk in the lobby, so you can begin to nurture native plants in your landscape right away!



Best of Luck, Jamie!

Dr. Chris Stanton

All of us at the Huston-Brumbaugh Nature Center are sorry to announce that Jamie Greiner—our sustainability and campus outreach manager—will be leaving us at the end of 2021.

Jamie has accepted a new managerial position in environmental and health safety at a nearby manufacturing company. Although we are excited for her and her new opportunity, we will miss her energy and organization! Luckily, she will remain local, so we plan to see her from time to time around the Nature Center property.

Jamie joined the Nature Center staff in August of 2015 and since then grew multiple programs at the University of Mount Union. She was responsible for the incredible success of the student sustainability assistants (known as the “Green Raiders”), leading the Sustainability Management Advisory Committee (SMAC), organizing the District 13 Science Day each year, as well as other sustainability initiatives.

Jamie also developed the new sustainability minor and taught both the first-year and capstone courses in sustainability. There is no doubt that she is leaving huge shoes to fill.

When asked about her time at the Nature Center and the University of Mount Union, Jamie said, “My favorite moments at UMU were those spent working directly with students, especially the Green Raiders, on such things as trail clean-ups, football game recycling challenges, and programs at the Nature Center!”



We wish Jamie the best of luck in the future but know that she will be very successful in her new endeavor. Congratulations on everything you have accomplished here, Jamie, and thank you for all of your hard work!

Volunteer Recognition

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

Rick Blessing	Mark Clough	Gina Hoffman	Emily McNeal
Adrianna Border	Mike Cope	Allison Hrovat	Franey McNeal
Katriel Border	Paula Cope	Anse Kee	Larry Miller
Ruth Border	Shirley DeMaiolo	Arlo Kee	Harley Smith
Thaddeus Border	Joseph Haas	Mary Lindsay	Caitlin Thouvenin
Hannah Botzman	Liza Harris	Rachel Lowell	Kylie Thouvenin
Lori Bowman	Ann Hendel	Hayley Maher	Larry Thouvenin III
Shannon Bowman	Paul Hobe	Karen McKinstry	Stan Vuletich

A SHOUT OUT to our Volunteers, visitors, and friends who continue reaching out to us for ways they can help to maintain this beautiful facility during this COVID-19 crisis! We have observed an increase in foot traffic during this pandemic as people search for safe outdoor spaces. Your help and concern have not gone unnoticed by the Nature Center staff and we thank all of you!



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

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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