

UNIVERSITY OF MOUNT UNION
HUSTON-BRUMBAUGH
NATURE CENTER

Discover the Wonder of Nature's Ever-Changing Story



SPRING
2025

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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.

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Cali Granger

Horticulture and Facility Coordinator

Michael Greiner

Site Manager

Jason Smith

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Bonnie Twaddle

Community Outreach Coordinator

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From the Director

Jason A. Smith, Ph.D.

I know I say this no matter what year it is, but it's hard to believe it's 2025. That said, we have a lot to be thankful for and a lot to look forward to. As I reflect on 2024, I am reminded of the hard work and dedication of the Nature Center staff that has made this such a successful year. We are truly blessed. I also think about our determined and steadfast volunteer network who have delivered so many hours of service to our programs, activities and facilities needs during the past year. The Nature Center is only what it is because of you!

2024 was a phenomenal year for participation by UMU faculty, staff and students – which by all accounts, was at an all-time high at the Nature Center. The trails were bustling with students during field trips, the indoor classrooms and bird observatory were seemingly in constant use for labs and other instructional activities, and the pavilion and other areas were frequently in use for clubs, faculty, and other groups during the year. As we put the final touches on our strategic plan (which many of you participated in), we look forward to its implementation in this next year. I look forward to sharing our progress. The momentum we saw in 2024 is fuel that adds to what we have planned in 2025 and beyond!



23rd Annual Photo Contest

Amateur nature photographers are invited to enter their photos in the Nature Center's 23rd Annual Nature Photography Contest and Exhibit on Sunday, February 23, 2025. 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 an 11x14 photo mat (not under glass or in a frame). Photos must be the original work of the photographer. Photographers must be amateurs who take photos for pleasure and not for financial gain.

Photos will be accepted for the following categories: Wildlife – Vertebrates, Wildlife – Invertebrates, Wild Plants, Landscapes, Seasons, Mount Union Campus & Nature Center, Black & White, Youth (photos by children 12yrs 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 23 through March 9.

Photo submissions will be accepted by Nature Center staff in the Visitors Center during normal operating hours beginning February 1st. 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. Same rules apply to youth participants. Deadline to submit a photo is 5 p.m. on Sunday, February 16. 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 23, 2025, from 1-5:00 p.m. Photographers, friends and the public are invited to attend. The exhibit runs through March 16. Questions regarding the contest and exhibit may be directed to Adam Zorn, Program Manager at 330-829-8988.

Paul Hobe, Volunteer of the Year

By Bonnie Twaddle

Our annual Founders Day/Volunteer Luncheon, held November 10, 2024, was a delightful gathering of the Huston-Brumbaugh Nature Center supporters and Volunteers! Experiencing and observing the “sense of place” that everyone conveyed this afternoon during the celebration by their words and actions was utterly astonishing! The smiles, laughter, conversations, shaking hands, pats on the back, hugs, and the lack of tension and awkwardness was a snapshot of all the wonderful people that make up and support the Nature Center community. There was a reassuring bond that we belong here and are all welcome here. It is a joy and a privilege to be a part of this group of people!

According to the International Encyclopedia of Human Geography, sense of place equals the emotive bonds and attachments people develop or experience in particular locations and environments; used to describe the distinctiveness or unique character of localities and regions; can refer to positive bonds of comfort, safety, and well-being created by place, home, and dwelling. Our Volunteer of the Year, Paul Hobe, exemplifies a sense of place at the Nature Center. Paul has hiked our trails for many years for his personal well-being. He has volunteered for many years as a Trail Guide for Pre-K through 5th grade student field trips to the Nature Center. His knowledge of our trails and the natural environment provides an educational experience, as well as a sense of safety for these students who may be hiking through a forest for the first time.

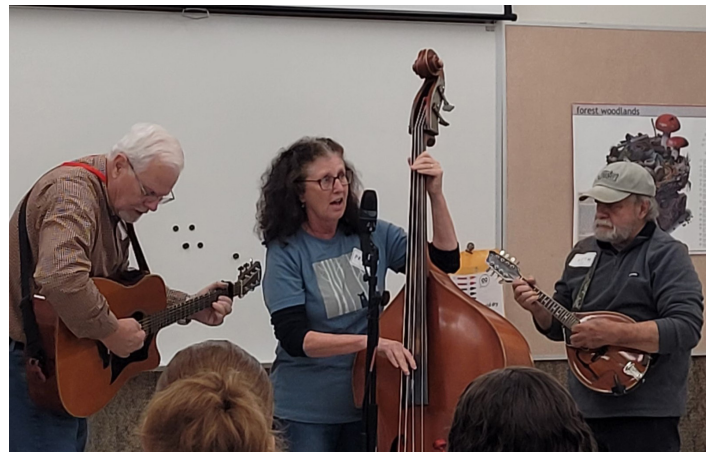
Paul also leads hikes for the Hilltop Hikers, of which he is a member, multiple times a year. Knowing this audience, Paul adapts his hikes according to the ability and comfort level of the members that show up to hike with him. Thank you, Paul, for creating bonds of comfort, safety, and well-being at the Nature Center, not only for yourself, but also for the countless positive experiences you have provided for our visitors!

“From the Heart” awards recognize exemplary acts of kindness that come from the caring heart. This year’s recipients came to the rescue two days before the luncheon! Days before the luncheon, the scheduled entertainment had to cancel! I called Ann Hendel who organizes the Acoustic Jam sessions that play together once a month here at the Nature Center. I asked if she and some of the Acoustic Jam folks could possibly provide entertainment for the luncheon. After some phone calls and great thought, she called me back and said she was not able to pull a few together for the event. But, Ann said, “Let me call Priscilla Roggenkamp and see if some of her band members are available.” Two days before the luncheon, I received an email from Priscilla saying that three members of Rock Salt & Nails will come and play for an hour. I was ecstatic! The recipients of the “From the Heart” awards this year are Ann Hendel, Priscilla Roggenkamp, Keith McMahon, and Jim Dutter. Thank you for saving the day!



Shirley DeMaiolo, aka “Nature Center Mom”, was recognized once again for providing the highest number of Volunteer hours this past year! Thank you, Shirley, for your many years of service creating a “sense of place” for our visitors and our staff!

This past year, 76 Volunteers donated 1,070 hours of time in various capacities! We thank you ALL for helping us create a place of comfort, safety, and well-being.



**Have you volunteered or visited recently?
Use the QR code to tell us about your experience.**



Huston-Brumbaugh Nature Center's Schedule of Events

General Information

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

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

Acoustic Music Jam

Sunday, February 2 | 2-4:00 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!

*Breakfast with the Birds

Friday, February 14 | 9-10:30 a.m.

Join Nature Center staff as participants in the Great Backyard Bird Count in the comfort of the Bird Observatory. We'll provide breakfast snacks and warm drinks for participants and full bird feeders for the birds. *Registration is required.

Great Backyard Bird Count

Sunday, February 16 | 1-2:30 p.m.

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

Photography Contest Open House

Sunday, February 23 | 1-5:00 p.m.

Photographers must submit their matted photos by Sunday, February 16 at 5 p.m. to participate in the contest. See page 1 for entry and event details. The open house is the first day the gallery opens, and People's Choice voting begins. The photo contest exhibit will remain on display through March 16.

Maple Madness

Sunday, March 2 | 1-3:00 p.m.

Celebrate maple sugaring season with the Nature Center. See how we turn sap into syrup using some basic supplies. Enjoy a warm drink, hot fire, and sample maple-flavored treats. Takes place in the Visitors Center pavilion.

Acoustic Music Jam

Sunday, March 2 | 2-4:00 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!

*Introduction to Volunteer Opportunities

Sunday, March 16 | 2-4:00 p.m.

Are you interested in volunteering at the Nature Center but do not know where to begin? Join us this afternoon to learn about the mission, history, and staff of the Nature Center, what we do to achieve our mission, and the vital roles that Volunteers provide to help us accomplish this endeavor. There are opportunities available for individuals and families of all ages. No commitments will be requested during this informational program. *Registration is required by Friday, March 14.

Acoustic Music Jam

Sunday, April 6 | 2-4:00 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!

Visitors Center Closed

April 18-20

The Visitors Center will be closed from Good Friday through Easter Sunday. The trails and grounds will remain open from sunrise to sunset.

*Spring Bird Walk

Monday, April 21 | 8:30-10:30 a.m.

Join us 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 trailhead on Pinevale Ave., Louisville, OH. Canceled for inclement weather. Group size limited due to parking constraints. *Registration is required.

*Birds & Blooms Hike

Tuesday, April 22 | 9-11:00 a.m.

An exploration of the forest in search of birds and spring wildflowers on Earth Day. Dress for the weather and seasonal trail conditions. Binoculars and cameras are helpful for viewing birds and flowers. *Registration is required.

Earth Week make-n-takes

Tuesday, April 22-Sunday, April 27

Stop in during Visitors Center hours for earth-friendly make-n-take activities. Activities are free and suitable for all ages.

Bioblitz: City Nature Challenge

Sunday, April 27 | 1-4:00 p.m.

A bioblitz is an intense period of biological surveying to record all the living species within a designated area. Help us bioblitz the Nature Center and contribute sightings to the 2025 City Nature Challenge. Observations are collected using the iNaturalist app on your smartphone or tablet. Explore on your own or with a staff member.

***Spring Bird Walk**

Monday, April 28 | 8:30-10:30 a.m.

Join us 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 trailhead on Pinevale Ave., Louisville, OH. Canceled for inclement weather. Group size limited due to parking constraints. *Registration is required.

Acoustic Music Jam

Sunday, May 4 | 2-4:00 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**

Monday, May 5 | 8:30-10:30 a.m.

Join us 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 trailhead on Pinevale Ave., Louisville, OH. Canceled for inclement weather. Group size limited due to parking constraints. *Registration is required.

***Spring Insect Walk**

Saturday, May 10 | 1-2:00 p.m.

Spring has sprung and the insects are jumping back to life! On this guided walk around the Nature Center, come and release your spring fever as we explore, discuss, catch and identify those early emerging spring insects. *Registration is required.

***Spring Bird Walk**

Monday, May 12 | 8:30-10:30 a.m.

Join us 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 trailhead on Pinevale Ave., Louisville, OH. Canceled for inclement weather. Group size limited due to parking constraints. *Registration is required.

***Enhance Your Homegrown Habitat**

Sunday, May 18 | 2-4:00 p.m.

Discover what you currently provide for wildlife and pollinators (without even realizing it!), and simple steps you can take to make your outdoor space more wildlife- and pollinator-friendly. FREE seeds, plants, pollinator homes and safe water dishes will be available. *Registration is required and opens on Tuesday, April 22 at 9:00 a.m. Attendance is limited to 20 adults only.

Bat Roost Monitoring

Friday, May 30 | 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. Canceled for wind or rain. Optional short night hike afterwards.

Acoustic Music Jam

Sunday, June 1 | 2-4:00 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!

SAVE THE DATES

Join us during National Pollinator Week to welcome back Dr. Olivia Carril, researcher, educator, lecturer and co-author of "The Bees in Your Backyard", and "Common Bees of Eastern North America." With over 20 years of native bee experience, Olivia will instruct The Bees in Your Backyard workshop on **Sunday, June 22, 2025**. A lecture with meet-and-greet hosted at the Nature Center will take place on **Monday, June 23, 2025**.

Bees in Your Backyard workshop is one of three workshops that Olivia will lead across Ohio during National Pollinator Week. The workshop is a perfect opportunity to begin your discovery or to dive deeper into the highly diverse world of native bees. The day-long workshop will be designed with hands-on methods to aid participants in basic bee biology and characteristics, bee identification, collection methods, and learn about the vital role bees provide in their environment. The lecture and meet-and-greet with Olivia will focus on native bee natural history, current research, new developments, and future research plans followed by Q&A, book signing, campfire, hotdogs, and s'mores.

Chronolog Station at the North Woods

Chronolog is a citizen science tool for capturing and cataloging images of landscapes over a period of time. The Nature Center installed a Chronolog station near the entrance to the North Woods wetland construction and field restoration site in May 2024. The station is located near the split rail fence on the north side of Daniel Street. The bracket is placed on top of a wooden post and the instruction sign is mounted below the bracket. A cell phone should be placed into the bracket in a horizontal position with the main camera lens facing the wetland and field landscape. Photos should be taken with 1X zoom (no wide-angle or zoomed in images) to maintain the proper scene with other submitted images.



After taking the photo, open your preferred e-mail app. Use the e-mail address on our Chronolog sign to address an e-mail. Enter the station ID in the subject line. Attach your image to the message. Be sure your image is attached in full resolution, not compressed, so that you are contributing a good, clear image to our time-lapse. A few minutes after sending the e-mail, you will receive an e-mail response from Chronolog thanking you for your contribution. The e-mail will have a link to view the time-lapse with your image contribution.

You can e-mail your image seconds, hours, or days after it was taken. Every photo you take with your phone has a time and date stamp, and the Chronolog site uses that information to slot your picture into the proper order of our time-lapse. You can send the photo whenever you find a convenient time

and/or adequate data connection to send an e-mail.

Anyone can view the time-lapse on our Chronolog web page at Chronolog.io/site/UMU101. The first image was submitted on May 17, 2024. As of mid-December, our Chronolog time-lapse had 44 images from 7 contributors. That is a little over one image per week on average since installation. We would love to see that average continue as we enter the second year of this restoration project. The time-lapse images will illustrate how much the site has changed over time as the wetlands and field are colonized by the 100-plus species of native trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants we introduced in 2024.

Please contribute to our Chronolog during your next visit.

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!

Kim Anderson	Emma Crawford	Kathy Hart	Samantha Lee	Karen Planisky	Madelyn Shields
Joseph Balogh G.M.	Shirley DeMaiolo	Lauren Haynie	Mary Lindsay	Grace Powell	Kelly Slutz
Chloe Banno	Al Eibel	Kaylee Hearn	Joseph Lombard	Lauren Radalia	Jared Smith
Rick Blessing	Gabby Finelli	Sarah Hefferman	Jaime Lopez	Abby Reagan	Olivia Smith
Connie Boller	Evan Fisher	Ann Hendel	Eddy Malone	Anthony Richards	Steven Smith
Nate Border	Dan Foltz	Paul Hobe	Emma Marquis-Kelly	Ruby Robatin	Ryann Snider
Ruthie Border	Reese Fuenfstueck	Blake Howard	Mackenzie Martin	Jessica Roberts	Preston Stuart
Thaddeus Border	Emily Funk	Dalyn Jaskolka	Bernie Miner	Jillian Rymer	Keith Swartz
Patty Bruey	Hamako Furuhashi-Turner	Anse Kee	Cara Mooney	Madelyn Sams	Rowan Tippens
Kennedy Burnison	Sandy Gahan	Arlo Kee	Robert Musser	Grayson Sanwald	Dwight Turner
Megan Carr	Rachel Goebel	Tyler Kohlmann	Anna Ostroski	Jaci Scherb	Reese Vilcheck
Evan Chessey	Sophie Graves	Jack Koontz	Molly Patrick	Bekah Seamans	Stan Vuletic
Kerry Cochran	Aidan Green	Kate Kueter	Mae Pawlikowski	Adam Seefeldt	Cole Watson
Mike Cope	Emma Grell	Trevor Lake	Sarah Piteo	Grace Seefeldt	Anna Weinle
Paula Cope		Jake Laurie	Joe Planisky	Geri Senczyszak	

Special Thanks

We extend a thank you to the Green Raiders students of the University of Mount Union (UMU) for assisting us with our annual Relax & De-Stress Event and to the UMU Physicians Assistant graduate students who provided blood pressure screening pre- and post- any relaxing activities the attendees participated in. De-stressing activities REALLY DO HELP lower blood pressure for most people!

Carolina Wrens on My Mind

By Al Eibel, Master Bird Bander & Nature Center Volunteer

This past December, on several predawn, sub-20°F mornings, I opened the garage door for my wife Lucy. As I walked by the garage's lone window, a Carolina wren (CARW) flushed from one of two old nests behind the window's shutters. I was not surprised. CARW with their distinct white eyebrow, downturned beak, reddish-brown plumage, and flipped tail are heard and seen daily near our house. In past years, they often sheltered behind the shutters in winter.

Carolina wrens (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) are the largest wrens in the eastern United States. Despite their larger body size, they can be susceptible to intense cold, and particularly brutal cold can reduce populations. Once, as their name suggests, the CARW range was limited to the southeastern states, but during the late 1800's and early 1900's, logging eliminated the forests of the northern states, and their range gradually extended northward. CARW need shrubbery, thick undergrowth, and brush piles to locate food, so the removal of dense forests contributed to suitable wren habitat.

CARW are omnivorous, year-round residents in Ohio, often singing during the long, dark days of winter. Because I know CARW use the shutter nests – toasty, well-built, domed structures consisting of leaves, mosses, grasses, and twigs – in the winter, not for incubating eggs, but for shelter, I don't remove them. The birds will refurbish and nest in them in the spring. See the wrens' craftsmanship behind my shutter in the image.

CARW nests in or on our garage have been a yearly feature of its architecture for many, many years, appearing on ladders, behind a snow disk, inside a flowerpot, and who knows where else. Once, I removed a nest from a ladder's step, but within a week it was rebuilt – prime real estate, I guess – so I left it. I'm thrilled with the nests and let the birds raise their families before I remove old nests.



During this past spring and summer, CARW nested three times in or on the garage: behind the shutters, in a plastic bag hanging on a doorknob, and inside the garage on the window's frame. They also nested there three times in 2023 giving me a front row seat to the entire process of egg laying through fledging and the opportunity to band 21 nestlings the past two years in April, May, June, July, and August.

In March and certainly by early April, when the female is ready to lay eggs, the nest cup is lined with grass. I've been surprised by eggs in a March nest that seem threatened by the cold, but they remain viable even though the parents do not begin incubating until the clutch is complete, usually three to five eggs. I've read that CARW use nest boxes, but in my twenty-plus years of monitoring nest boxes, including several on my property, I've never had a CARW use one.

CARW can't compete with the songs of the migrant House wrens, but their "teakettle-teakettle-teakettle" song is loud, distinctive, and pleasant. A variety of other calls include chittering, and a typical wren-like scolding which resembles a Red squirrel. The scolding calls alert me to nest threats such as cats, squirrels, and, once, a mink. Even though the CARW use my garage and have my protection, sometimes, they even scold me.

CAROLINA WRENS AT THE NATURE CENTER

Look and listen for Carolina wrens on your next visit. From late fall through early spring, they frequently visit the bird garden. They eat suet, sunflower pieces, and search the brushpile for insects and spiders.

In spring and summer, Carolina wrens are commonly encountered around the Visitors Center and barnyard where they prefer to construct their nests. They can also be found on the Pond Trail and Spicebush Trail where lots of brush provide nesting and foraging opportunities.



John T. Huston-Dr. John D.
Brumbaugh Nature Center
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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: naturecenter@mountunion.edu
mountunion.edu/nature-center