

THE CLOSTER NATURE CENTER NEWS

P.O. BOX 80, CLOSTER NJ 07624 closternaturecenter.org

By the pond on Ruckman Road

APRIL 2021

APRIL ACTIVITIES and EVENTS

Volunteer Alerts!

***The Closter Environmental Commission will be sponsoring its annual clean-up day on **April 24th**. The Closter Nature Center cabin is one of the main sites to meet up! Get cleaning with a group or, go it alone!

ALSO:

The snow has melted, leaving behind trails of trash, especially on the edges of the Nature Center. If everyone pitches in and picks up a single bag, we could clear the way for Spring and new growth, **even before April 24th!!**

Nature Fun for Little Ones

Toddlers and Preschoolers and their caregivers are invited to join Mrs. Wonderwhy for fun and educational outdoor adventures! Fridays starting April 9th — **one spot left**. For more information visit: www.closternaturecenter.org

Spring Break Science Program

Need something fun and educational for the kids to do during the Spring break? We'll have four days of nature exploration and discovery here at the Closter Nature Center! It is imperative that the kids dress properly for the weather, as we will be outside for the full program. **Be sure your child is wearing layers, if it is a warmer day, layers and warm boots if it is cold, or**

layers and full rain gear if it is raining. We are keeping our class size to a maximum of 10 kids, and of course, mask wearing is mandatory. If severe weather is predicted, we may need to reschedule or cancel a class.

1st-7th Grades: \$100/week for members, \$120/week for non-members

Kindergarten: \$80/week for members, \$100/week for non-members.

Monday April 12th - Thursday April 15th

9:00 am - 10:30 am 1st - 3rd grade

11:00 am - 12:30 pm 4th - 7th grade

1:30 pm - 2:30 pm Kindergarten

3:00 pm - 4:30 pm 1st - 3rd grade

To register please go to: <https://register.communitypass.net/Closter>, and you will be taken to Community Pass, our online registration and payment system.

If you have any questions please call Naturalist Marc Gussen at (201) 750-2778 or email admin@closternaturecenter.org.

April After School Programs

Come join Nature Marc at the Closter Nature Center for some outdoor science fun! Our afternoon programs are designed to accent school system's half-days and online curricula. We will be keeping our class sizes small and will be adhering to CDC standards.

Masks required. Please dress for the weather, as we will be outside for the entire program.

Mondays, 5th, 19th and 26th

1st - 3rd Gr. 2:00 - 3:15pm

4th - 6th Gr. 3:45 - 5:00pm

Tuesdays, 6th, 20th and 27th

1st - 3rd Gr. 2:00 - 3:15pm

Kindergarten 3:45 - 5:00pm

Wednesdays, 7th, 21st and 28th

4th - 6th Gr. 2:00 - 3:15pm

1st - 3rd 3:45 - 5:00pm

Thursdays, 8th, 22nd and 29th
Kindergarten 2:00 - 3:15pm
1st- 3rd Gr. 3:45 - 5:00pm

To register please go to: <https://register.communitypass.net/Closter>, and you will be taken to Community Pass, our online registration and payment system.

\$75/session for Members - \$90/session Non-members
If you have any questions please call Marc at (201) 750-2778.

Naturalist's Notes:

Another winter has gone by and the magic of spring is here. Tiny pale green oak leaves, the red maple flowers bursting in the sky and the nightly songs of spring peepers usher in the new season. The return of migrant songbirds and the first flight of butterflies are classic signs of spring, but the one that really sinks in deepest with me is when walking the pond on a sunny afternoon I see the first painted turtle of the new year.

Painted turtles are native to the entire continental US and our specie, the eastern painted turtle, is common in just about any body of freshwater in NJ. They usually hibernate from Thanksgiving until April, and once awake in the spring they can easily be spotted sunning themselves on rocks and floating logs. They are beautiful animals with yellow stripes on their legs, neck and tail, and orange splotches on the perimeter of their shells. Painted turtles are omnivores and will eat anything from aquatic plants to fish, with crayfish being one of their favorites. They are important members of the pond ecosystem by being predators, prey, and scavengers of dead fish and birds

In New Jersey and Northward these turtles exhibit a unique life cycle. They mate in the spring, and females leave the water in early summer to dig a hole and lay eggs in sandy soil near by the pond. In September, and sometimes later, the eggs hatch, but unlike more southern painted turtles the hatchlings stay put where they were born, waiting out the winter, and ready to emerge in the spring. Come one sunny day this month, walk the

pond, find a painted turtle, say goodbye to winter and embrace the new year!

See you on the trails...Marc Gussen, Naturalist

Cute Kid's Quote

Searching for a word while looking at frog on a kid's t-shirt, a two year old pointed and barked out "turtle bunny!"

Three New Fishing Points For Pond Fishermen

Walkers around Ruckman Pond at the Closter Nature Center may be wondering why nine new large stones have been placed just off the shoreline on the side of the pond across of the Center's cabin. The stones are a part of a realignment of the Mayer Loop and will offer several wide-open places for local fishermen.

The loop trail had run along the edge of pond there, but following the dredging of the pond bottom a number of years ago, some of the vegetation lining the shoreline along that area was lost. This resulted in the path, which had been fairly level and easily walked, eroding to such a point that it was dangerous to walk there when the ground was wet or muddy.

The Center's board of trustees decided that the best way to address the slippery conditions was to close portions of the trail along the pond and move it ten feet inland. While construction of the new trail has begun, closing the path along the waterline and the slippery and muddy conditions typical of that stretch has presented access problems for fishermen.

Thus, the placement of the new granite stones will form the foundation of three separate fishing pads that will give water access to the new trail where it passes through the forest. Work on the delivery of the stones and their placement was possible thanks to **Todd Bradbury, of**

Bradbury Landscaping in Closter. Todd graciously provided the Center with much time and expertise—sourcing the stones, arranging for their purchase from the supplier, trucking them to the site, and providing and operating the excavator that moved them into position—all of this done within one week of beginning the project with ice on the pond and snow on the ground!

We asked Todd to locate the stones for the pads further out in the water than the original shoreline. This will mean that fisherman will have much less vegetation to contend with when casting, making it less likely that fishing lines will become tangled in surrounding trees and brush-- something particularly dangerous to our avian visitors, requiring naturalist Marc Gussen to remove the tangled lines regularly.

The next phase of work for the pads is the placement of stones donated several months ago by **Gary Wiggers Construction**. These will be installed between the high point of the shoreline and the granite boulders to provide access to the pads without the need for fishermen to get their feet wet. Work will begin shortly, and **volunteers who wish to participate in this project should contact Trustee Tom Golodik at t.golodik@verizon.net for details**. This phase will require sorting stones, moving them to the shoreline and building up the necessary stone surround to retain the crushed stones that will finish it off.
Tom Golodik, CNC Trustee and Trails Chairperson

Special Annual Meeting!

May 11th 2021

You will not want to miss this!
Watch for information about our Annual Meeting, which will be held on the evening of **May 11th**. Details about program and venue will be shared both on our website, closternaturecenter.org, and in the May edition of the Newsletter.