

CLOSTER NATURE CENTER NEWS

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

By the pond on Ruckman Road

SEPTEMBER 2021

“IN THE NEWS”

The Closter Nature Center was recently recognized as “The Greatest Thing...” about Closter by NJ.com !

Go to our website at www.closternaturecenter.org
and look for link at “In the News” .

SEPTEMBER ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS:

New programming in September! **"Drawing at the Pond"** will be offered to students in 6th through 8th grades. Please check website and Community Pass for more information.

September After-School Programs

Come join Nature Marc at the Closter Nature Center
for some outdoor science fun!

We will be adhering to CDC standards. Masks required.

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

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 Marc at (201) 750-2778.

\$75/session for Members - \$90/session Non-Members

ALL SESSIONS WILL MEET OUTSIDE THE LOG CABIN

MONDAYS 1st - 3rd Grades 13th, 20th and 27th
TUESDAYS Kindergarten 14th, 21st and 28th
WEDNESDAYS 1st - 3rd Grades 15th, 22nd and 29th
THURSDAYS 4th-6th Grades 16th, 23rd and 30th

CUTE KID'S QUOTE

I explained the proverbial phrase, "glass half full or half empty", to a couple of 12 year olds and then asked what they thought.

One delightful young girl responded with the best example of a positive attitude I have ever heard:

"I'm just glad I have a glass!"

Naturalist's Notes

One more summer is in the books!

While summer is a favorite of most for many reasons: beaches, vacations, and barbecues, what I love most is the impact the CNC Summer Program has on children. For nine weeks, from the end of June to the last week of August, we have kids from 4-14 years old outside, learning, laughing and enjoying nature.

One special treat this year was that it was the best year in a long time for wood frogs. These wonderful forest amphibians rely on a good snow melt at the end of winter, and steady spring rains to keep their breeding sites loaded with water. This spring gave them perfect conditions for a banner year of producing offspring. What were once thousands of tadpoles in a foot-deep temporary pond became thousands of tiny frogs hopping through the forest.

During each week of summer, we walked to a section of the blue trail near our largest vernal pool to visit these amazing creatures. In just two months, they grew from being the size of a child's pinky nail to the size of quarter.

Not only was this summer a great educational experience for so many kids, but it was an amazing opportunity to see nature rebound and flourish.

Summer Program Thanks!

One of our main goals at the Closter Nature Center is to provide a fulfilling, affordable, and educational summer experience for kids.

This summer's program met and exceeded that goal. It was one of our best yet.

We owe this success to some great programming, a hand full of new activities, perfect weather and an outstanding squad of volunteers.

Thanks go out to my terrific assistant, Donovan, and my wonderful volunteers: Chris, Christian, Elena, James, Jay, Jonas, Josephine, Julia, Luke, Matthias, Rhett and Victoria.

See ya on the trails!
Marc Gussen, Naturalist

CNC FIRE PIT RENEWAL COMPLETE!

The Closter Nature Center's community fire pit, across Ruckman Pond from the center's cabin has had a complete renovation thanks to Boys Scouts in Closter's Troop 63. Led by Rupert Bowen, who envisioned the improvement and pitched it as his Eagle Scout project, the work has completely changed the look and feel of the fire pit.

Rupert, 15, a recent Closter resident, quickly became involved in volunteer work at the Nature Center as part of the public service requirements required to achieve Life Scout rank. He patrolled fenced areas in the preserve, which were erected to monitor and compare the regrowth of native species with unfenced areas, once grazing and antler rubbing by deer were eliminated

"I had done a lot of community work with the Audubon Society in California and wanted to continue once we moved here," Rupert explained. Now working towards the next level in Scouting, Eagle Scout, he needed to complete a project that was of benefit to the community "The project is the final hurdle to earning the rank," Rupert said. "It demonstrates leadership skills and the importance of giving back to the community."

At the start of 2021, Rupert approached Marc Gussen, CNC naturalist and director, to discuss possible projects within the preserve. After a few conversations about construction of a message kiosk and various trail repairs, they settled on the fire pit, which is also utilized by the Scouts. At that time the site was a simple circle of stones and some cinder blocks for seating.

“After some preliminary designs, everything fell into place and I was able to begin sourcing the materials.” Rupert said. He contacted Closter landscape contractor James Crimmins, who owns a sawmill. Discussing the lumber choice with Crimmins, Rupert was able to obtain black locust tree trunks, a highly rot resistant species. These were cut to make round supports, or milled into long boards for the seating surfaces and tables. Crimmins donated the lumber and labor for this portion of the project.

Fund raising, an all-day car wash on 5 June, raised \$600 to purchase the balance of materials needed, the most expensive being the large volume of pea stone needed for under the fire ring, as well as safety equipment for the scouts who participated in the build-out, assorted hardware for constructing eight benches capable of seating 16 people, and two large tables.

Once materials were assembled, work took place on June 20th. Under Rupert’s direction, this involved troop leaders and 20 scouts, who provided the labor needed to move wood into place, dig holes for bench supports, erect tables and benches, and spread pea stone under the larger stones that surround the fire.

Tom Golodik, a CNC trustee on the Natural Resources committee, said Rupert’s project provided a huge improvement to this area of the preserve. “We are trying to add walking paths to the Mayer Loop and provide accessibility to a previously unused area very near the fire pit. Rupert has made the circle an inviting location for group meetings and nature center activities. He’s done a wonderful job and the Nature Center’s board of trustees appreciate the work and effort that went into this.”