

# CLOSTER NATURE CENTER NEWS

P.O. BOX 80, CLOSTER NJ 07624 [closternaturecenter.org](http://closternaturecenter.org)

By the pond on Ruckman Road

FEBRUARY, 2022

## **The CNC Mourns the Passing of Long Term Board member, Ed Rogan.**

Former CNC Board President and Trustee Mary Mayer spoke about Ed Rogan at our recent Board meeting, saying that Ed was a true gentlemen and a kind person; a man who gave you his full attention. His great integrity was such that he could be both the Closter Borough Attorney and work on the CNC Board in dealings with the town. Ed was a person of joy. It is the level of his integrity that will be hard to replace, and his ability to do work with grace and kindness that will be long remembered.

## **BOARDWALK RENEWAL SPRINGS FORWARD IN DEAD OF WINTER**

With a lot of help from our friends, the CNC's boardwalks are being renewed and restored. To learn how a group of dedicated individuals and organizations are accomplishing this, scroll down, read the full story below, and head to our website (<https://closternaturecenter.org/project/trail-restoration-project-2020-2022/>) for photos!

## **February After-School Programs**

Come join Nature Marc at the Closter Nature Center for some outdoor science fun! Please dress for the weather, as we will be outside for most of

the sessions. We will move into the cabin for severe weather. Masks will be required when inside the Nature Center building.

**Tuesdays** – Feb. 8th and 15th  
Kindergarten 3:45 - 5:00pm  
**Wednesdays** – Feb. 9th and 16th  
1st - 3rd 3:45 - 5:00pm  
**Thursdays** – Feb. 10th and 17th  
4th - 6th Gr. 3:45 - 5:00pm

\$50/ 2 week program for Members - \$60/ 2 week program Non-members

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](mailto:admin@closternaturecenter.org).

### **Cute Kid's Quote**

While out stomping through the snow with the after-school class, a boy who is new to the program, looks up at me with big smile and says: **"This is better than the weekend!"**

## **Winter Break Science Program**

Need something fun and educational for the kids to do during the Winter break? We'll have four days of nature exploration and discovery here at the Closter Nature Center! It is imperative that kids dress appropriately for the weather, as we plan to be outside as much as possible. Mask wearing is mandatory if we go inside the Nature Center building.

### **Monday, February 21st – Thursday, February 24th**

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

**1st-7th Grades:** \$100/week for members, \$120/week for non-members  
**Kindergarten:** \$80/week for members, \$100/week for non-members.

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](mailto:admin@closternaturecenter.org).

## Naturalist's Notes:

The surface of Ruckman Pond might be frozen, but life down below is going on strong. Even with a covering of ice, enough light often makes it into the water for many of the plants to do photosynthesis and produce food and oxygen for the pond's varied inhabitants. While some of the pond's major players like turtles, snakes, and frogs close up shop and hibernate for the winter, fish and many insects remain somewhat active. Many fish feed all winter in preparation for early spring spawning. There is no summer bonanza of food choices, but with the young of the year fish, (fish born last spring), and a variety of insects and plankton, no one is starving. Although there might be ice on the surface of the pond and air temperatures below zero, the water under the ice is quite a bit warmer.

The density of water varies with temperature in funny ways. When water freezes and becomes ice, it becomes less dense than liquid water and it floats. Freshwater is at its maximum density when it reaches 38 degrees. This dense water sinks and replaces warmer deeper water until the whole pond is all 38 degrees- and then with low air temperatures, the water at the surface gets colder and starts to freeze. It's easy to be misled by that coating of ice and think that pond life is "frozen" until spring, but a lot can happen down below at a balmy 38 degrees.

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

## **March After-School Programs:**

Come join Nature Marc at the Closter Nature Center for some outdoor science fun! Please dress for the weather, as we will be outside for most of the sessions. We will move into the cabin for severe weather.

Masks will be required when inside the Nature Center building.

**Mondays** - March 14th, 21st and 28th  
1st- 3rd Gr.....3:45 - 5:00pm

**Tuesdays** – March 15th, 22nd and 29th  
Kindergarten .....3:45 - 5:00pm  
**Wednesdays** - March 16th, 23rd and 30th  
1st - 3<sup>rd</sup> .....3:45 - 5:00pm  
**Thursdays** – March 17th, 24th and 31st  
4th - 6th Gr.....3:45 - 5:00pm

**\$75/ 3 week program for Members - \$90/ 3 week program Non-members**  
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](mailto:admin@closternaturecenter.org).

## **BOARDWALKS BEING RESTORED!**

### **The Story of a Community Effort**

A major renovation of the boardwalks along three of the Closter Nature Center's trails--the Blue, Red and Green--was completed on January 13th and 14th, thanks to significant help from the **Closter Department of Public Works and Bradbury Landscape**.

Planning for this project began in 2020 when Trustee Mary Mayer, who participated in the original construction of our boardwalks nearly 20 years ago, saw that some planks were beginning to fail. The black locust planks were installed to make walking in the woods possible in all seasons by bridging particularly wet, muddy areas along sections of five trails. The wetlands nature of our forest can leave sections of the trails exposed to flooding and mud during heavy precipitation.

Mary developed a sketch depicting the various sections of trails that have boardwalks, highlighting which boards required replacement. Tom Golodik translated the sketch into an Excel spreadsheet, providing each plank with a number and a condition.

Continued monitoring showed that, of almost 600 boards, 80 boards of varying lengths needed replacement: 15 percent of the total. As the CNC Board moved to begin the needed work, Mary and her husband, Gay Mayer then provided a substantial donation to fund a portion of the \$8,000 needed for the purchase of suitable lumber.

Following a lengthy search for a timber supplier, Tom made contact with Lifetime Locust, a firm located in Broadalbin, NY, near Saratoga, who were able to provide what was needed. The new

planks were delivered to the Nature Center on Dec. 29, with unloading assisted by Closter's DPW.

Todd Bradbury, of Bradbury Landscape, a Closter resident and great friend to the CNC who has been involved in many improvements, quickly agreed to assist in the plank replacements. Just prior to the start of installation, Closter Public Works Superintendent William Dahle offered a crew and trucks to move the new planks, that had been delivered to the Boy Scout cabin, to needed locations along the trails, carry out old planks that had been removed, and dispose of them.

Enough planks remain for repairs to the Orange Trail, which starts at the bridge off the White Trail and runs through the swamp and phragmites. Planning for that work is underway now.

The generous offers of professional help turned what seemed to the Board to be a months-long project into a two-day effort!

**Our tremendous thanks goes to the wonderful community of people who came together to see this project through from an idea to reality.**