

CLOSTER NATURE CENTER NEWS

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

By the pond on Ruckman Road

MARCH, 2024

Lecture: Our Forest in Crisis

March 20th, 7 PM at the cabin.

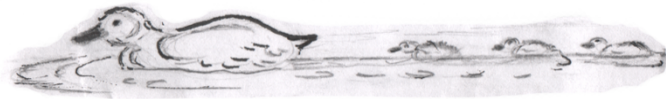
Marc Gussen

Learn about the environmental threats facing our local forests and what your Nature Center is doing to protect the woods we love. Deer overpopulation, the sudden loss of our beech and ash trees, climate change and the rise of many non-native invasive species are just a few of the issues that will be discussed.

Cost: Members, \$10; Non-Members, \$15

Music By the Pond

Sunday, March 17th, 4-5:30 PM, at the Cabin



Musicians, professionals, and amateurs, and friends and family come together to share music.

FOLK ROCK BLUES

ACOUSTIC INSTRUMENTS, VOCALS, PERCUSSION

Donations accepted, not required

Lecture: "Conservation and Foresight: The History of American Parks"

Thursday, March 21st at 7 PM

Listen to Public Historian **Francesca Costa** talk about the history of Environmental Movements and the continuing work of those who want to conserve natural spaces.

In the Cabin, light refreshments will be provided.

Admission by Donation: Suggested donation \$5 members, \$10 non-members

Welcome to our new Executive Director!

Starting mid-January, **Riley Schwengel** has taken on the role of Executive Director of Closter Nature Center. Originally from Rhode Island, Riley graduated from Bucknell University with a Bachelor of Science in Animal Behavior. After college, Riley threw himself into the field of Conservation; first working as an Ecological Contractor in New Zealand and then spending a few years as a Park Ranger with the State Park Services in Rhode Island and Maryland. Riley's most recent position was as a Grant Coordinator with Cornell University. He is glad to be returning to work in conservation with the

Closter Nature Center. Riley lives in Sloatsburg, NY with his wife Aden and enjoys hiking the wonderful natural spaces that surround him.

Cute Kid's Quote:

While teaching some 2nd graders about the life cycle of toads, I explained that the female toads lay their eggs in shallow vernal pools in the forest and that the toad tadpoles are in a race against summer to grow up before the pools dry up.

I asked the kids if anyone knew the science word for the water going up into the air. One excited boy raised his hand and very proudly said, "the water evacuates!"

-Marc Gussen

Naturalist's Notes:

As the days lengthen and the air temperatures warms, nature gives us many signs that spring is on the way. The harbinger of spring that has the most profound effect on me and on my natural history calendar is the first sighting of aquatic turtles. During winter, ponds and lakes don't seem like hot beds of animal activity, but a lot goes on under the ice. Fish of all kinds can be actively feeding and prepping for the spring breeding season. Being cold blooded doesn't stop fish from enjoying winter, but reptiles like our native eastern painted turtles and northern water snakes must hibernate to survive the cold months. The red-eared sliders are the first of our aquatic turtles to make a showing in the spring, with painted and snapping turtles soon to follow. After months of sleeping in the mud, they awaken as the water temperatures rise and they set out to look for their first meal of the new year. On warm sunny days in March they can sometimes be seen sitting en masse on the rocks around Ruckman Pond soaking up some much needed sunshine. I look forward to seeing the first robin and hearing the first spring peeper; but soon, on a warm and sunny afternoon, a little head will pop up and break the water's surface marking the end of winter. See you on the trails. **Marc Gussen, Naturalist**

Coming Soon!

Join Nature Marc for a Season of Nature Fun and Science

CNC Spring After-School Classes, April 2nd through June 9th

We will follow the natural world in April, May and June!

Animals, hikes and exploration will all be a part of this wonderful spring after-school program

.**For more information**, visit our website at www.closternaturecenter.org or sign-up directly on Community Pass: <https://register.communitypass.net/closter>.

Questions? Email executivedirector@closternaturecenter.org . **The Closter Nature Center** is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization – your membership dollars and donations appreciated!