

CLOSTER NATURE CENTER NEWS

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

By the pond on Ruckman Road

January 2025 Programs and Activities:

Music by the Pond

January 19th, 2 - 4 PM



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

FOLK ROCK BLUES

ACOUSTIC INSTRUMENTS, VOCALS, PERCUSSION

Join us at the cabin on each **3RD SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH!**

Admission is free; Donations gratefully accepted

Winter Hike

January 12th at 1 PM

Explore the trails of the Closter Nature Center with Naturalist Marc Gussen. Weather permitting, we will have a fire and roast marshmallows. Please dress for the weather. Boards can be slippery in winter -- shoes with rubber soles are a must.

Suggested Donation: \$5 members; \$10 non-members

A Thank You to Our Community!

As the new year approaches, we would like to thank everyone who's supported and connected with CNC over 2025. We appreciate all, whether they be **donors** who generously support our mission, **volunteers** who help us get our work done, or **members and attendees** of programs, who bring community and fellowship to our door. Thanks all and Happy New Year!

The CNC would also like to take this opportunity to thank the generous sponsors of our Reforestation Project: **Veolia, Walmart Spark Good Local Grants, Borough of Closter, and the Mayer Family Foundation**. Thanks to the funding received from these sponsors, Closter Nature Center has made significant progress in restoring our forest and nurturing a sustainable ecosystem. A key achievement is the construction of a one-acre deer-proof enclosure within the Orange Trail area. This enclosure now hosts over 200 native wetland plants. Furthermore, we are actively building another one-acre

enclosure to cultivate and safeguard even more native species, fostering a robust and self-sustaining environment within our grounds. This vital work would not be possible without the generosity of our sponsors, and their continued support will be instrumental in our ongoing efforts to transform our forest into a thriving and healthy landscape.

NEW! REFORESTATION PROGRAM

Say **YES** to our Forest! Your donation plants saplings and helps restore our forest! To learn more and donate scan the QR code or visit

www.closternaturecenter.org/rp



Winter Semester

After-School Nature Program

Enroll your child in a semester of discovery with our After-School Nature Classes! Secure your child's spot and plan ahead with our exciting 10 week offer!

Register early for a 10% discount, (available on semester-long signup only).

Winter semester starts January 7th, and goes till March 27th

Member Fee: \$270 for 10 weeks

Non-Member Fee: \$324 for 10 weeks

Class size limited to 12 children

Tuesdays- Pre-K4 and Kindergarten

Wednesdays- 1st- 3rd grades

Thursdays- 4th-6th grades

5 -week sessions are also available

Member Fee: \$150. For 5-weeks

Non-Member fee: \$180 for 5-weeks

5 -Week Session 1:

Tuesdays- Pre-K and K – 3:45 to 5:00

January 7, 14, 21, 28; Feb. 4

Wednesdays- 1st -3rd grades -3:45 to 5:00 pm

January 8, 15, 22, 29, Feb. 5

Thursdays- 4th -6th grades – 3:45 to 5:00 pm

January 9, 16, 23, 30; Feb. 6



For more information, visit our website at www.closternaturecenter.org or sign-up directly on Community Pass:

<https://register.communitypass.net/closter>.

Cute Kid's Quote:

It's happened again!!!

While talking with some kindergarteners about frogs and toads, I asked them what a baby frog is called. One sweet child said, with both excitement and reservation, "a....Tattletale?!?!"

-Marc Gussen

Naturalist's Notes:

The summer and fall drought of 2024 brought clear skies and dry weather for months. While this was great for sunny days at the beach, hikes and pumpkin picking, it made one of my favorite summer and autumn pursuits impossible. This year was terrible for mushroom hunting.

Mushrooms are the fruit or reproductive structure of certain fungi. They are produced when conditions are right: for some species that is the warm wet spring; for others it is a nice hot summer with enough precipitation to get the fungi into the mood, and some need those cool fall nights and damp soil to complete their life cycles. All require more rain than we got this year and the pickings were slim to say the least.

Now that we've gotten enough rain to saturate the soil, fill ponds and top off the reservoir, mushrooms won't start popping up all over as if the drought never happened, as many species just plain missed their shot. One mushroom that is near and dear to both my heart and my belly and does stand to make a last-minute comeback this winter (if temperatures stay mild) is the oyster mushroom, or *Plurotus ostreatus*. I have found this mushroom in every season of the year and hope to encounter it this winter.

The fungi that make this delicious, common and easy to identify mushroom is a decomposer of wood and can be found on a variety of dead trees. These oyster-shaped mushrooms grow singly or in loose clusters, both near the ground and high up the trunk; sometimes many pounds can be found on one tree! They are one of the mushrooms that we have learned to cultivate, can be bought at the market year-round and are used in the cuisine of many cultures around the world.

Mushroom hunting takes a careful and discerning eye, research, and practice to make sure that you have the right specie. While out this winter I will be keeping my eye out for this wonderful forest treat and look forward to a great meal accented with some oyster mushrooms with butter, white wine and shallots...ummmm...off to the woods!

See you on the trails, Marc Gussen, Naturalist