

CLOSTER NATURE CENTER NEWS

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

By the pond on Ruckman Road

March, 2025

March 2025 Programs and Activities:

Full Moon Hike

March 14th, 8 to 9 PM

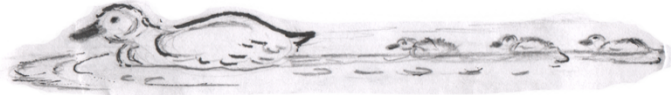
Meet up at our cabin, and explore the forest at night with our naturalist on a full moon hike! We'll search for nocturnal creatures and, if we're lucky, spot some owls. A warming fire (weather and staff permitting) will await us at the end.

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

Register your interest in attending at closternaturecenter.org/events

Music by the Pond

March 16th, 2 - 4 PM



FOLK ROCK BLUES

ACOUSTIC INSTRUMENTS, VOCALS, PERCUSSION

Join us for an afternoon of music and community

Professionals and amateurs alike perform to bring music to quiet Ruckman Pond. End the week on a relaxing note with your family, friends, and others. Stop in, slow down, and enjoy the tunes.

Music by the Pond repeats every third Sunday of each month. Always free!

Report on February Music by the Pond!

On February 16th, the CNC hosted an amazing array of professional musicians, accompanied by locals and friends. Our guests were exuberant participants! Vicki Amitai and her husband Nathan joined us, as well as others. Local artists Rob Horowitz, guitar, Amy Kleiman, vocals, and Rick Dekovessey, drums and vocals, were joined by David Barad of Closter and others on banjo, vocals, and guitar. Musicians from the Montclair area joined in as well! Stay tuned for the March line up.

-Music by the Pond host and CNC Board Member, Adri Lindgren

Natural Resources Committee Report:

The Natural Resource Team has completed a second one-acre, deer exclusion fence in the Orange Trail area. The construction process was preceded by some dead tree culling by **James Hewitt Tree Service**, and the work of setting posts and clearing the site was

accomplished with professional assistance from **Bradbury Landscape Company**. Support for the purchase of construction materials came largely from **Veolia Water Company**, with some additional expenses covered by the **Borough of Closter Open Space Fund**. A group of CNC volunteers worked with the professional crews during much of this work, and put the finishing touches on securing the fence before our anticipated late March planting date.

Thank you to the Sponsors of the Reforestation Initiative!



Naturalist's Notes:

It has been a couple of years, but we've finally had a "real" winter with lots of snow, nights in the teens and many days below freezing as well. It is hard to imagine that life can continue after months of such hardship. When the forest floor is blanketed in snow and ice, the idea that there are a host of organisms champing at the bit to get going is difficult to believe.

One of our most common understory plants, the skunk cabbage, or *Symplocarpus Foetidus* doesn't mind all of that snow and ice.

Not only does melting snow and ice fully saturate the forest soil, pave the way for a glorious spring and benefit all forested wetland plants and animals, the skunk cabbage has a unique adaptation- it creates heat to melt the snow and ice immediately surrounding it.

Like most flowers, the skunk cabbage relies on insects for pollination - not butterflies and bees, or ants or moths, but the lowly fly. Skunk cabbage got its name because of the less-than-wonderful aroma of its leaves, which is nothing like skunks, but more like balloons mixed with mustard. This odor keeps the skunk cabbage leaves off the menu of most herbivores, but the real magic is in its flower.

In the middle of winter, skunk cabbage flowers can be seen popping up through the snow, and its odor is quite different than the leaves; they are more like carrion. The skunk cabbage flowers attract flies that think that they are landing on a dead animal, and look to lay their eggs on that less fortunate but nutritious food source for their offspring.

Instead, they buzz in and around the flower. When they find no suitable site for egg-laying they leave, but not before getting some of the flower's pollen on them. Flies fall for this over and over as they struggle to find a place to lay eggs, and thus spread the pollen from flower to flower, ensuring the chances that skunk cabbage can continue as a specie.

Come hike our trails this March and look for these floor-hugging green and maroon bastions of spring.

Marc Gussen, Naturalist

Cute Kid's Quote:

I asked some kindergarteners about why I brought Strawberry, the box turtle, to the vet when she wasn't even sick. The hands quickly went up, and the bubbly little girl that I called on said, "for a ketchup!"

-Marc Gussen,



Closter Nature Center

154 Ruckman Road, Closter NJ

After-School Nature Program

Winter Session II



Shake off winter and embrace the start of spring with us! This after-school program is a wild ride with animal encounters, thrilling hikes, and endless opportunities for discovery. Join the fun!

Member fee: \$150 for 5 weeks
Non-Member fee: \$180 for 5 weeks

Tuesdays- Pre-K4 and Kindergarten - 3:45 pm to 5:00 pm
Feb 25, Mar 4, 11, 18, 25

Wednesdays- 1st- 3rd grades - 3:45 pm to 5:00 pm
Feb 26, Mar 5, 12, 19, 26

Thursdays- 4th-6th grades - 3:45 pm to 5:00 pm
Feb 27, Mar 6, 13, 20, 27

Register on Community Pass:
<https://register.communitypass.net/Closter>

Questions email info@closternaturecenter.org or call 201-800-2008.