



WOODS talk

Asbury Woods

ANDREW J. CONNER
NATURE CENTER
BROWN'S FARM
GREENWAY TRAIL

Season of Change at Asbury Woods

This year began with the unveiling of a brand-new exhibit, Wild About Wildlife! Discovering Pennsylvania's Native Species, marking the start of an exciting season of change here at Asbury Woods.

Throughout the summer, we've continued to embrace that theme, bidding fond farewells to staff who have retired or moved on to new opportunities, welcoming our dedicated seasonal team, and introducing several new faces to our year-round staff. Rooted in both nature and education, we see every transition as a chance to grow, evolve, and deepen our impact.

You may recall that in May, we shared news of our expanding conservation efforts and introduced Greg Ritson as our new Conservation Stewardship Coordinator. Greg has been hard at work helping us care for and protect the 234 acres that make Asbury Woods such a vital part of this community.

Our educational programming is also entering a new chapter under the leadership of our new Director of Education, Emma Mader. Emma is diving into the new Pennsylvania STEELS (Science, Technology, Engineering, Environmental Science, Literacy, and Sustainability) education standards and collaborating with teachers and administrators to ensure that our lessons are aligned, accessible, and inspiring for students across the region.

Behind the scenes, our new Operations Manager, Jami Manafo, is taking a fresh look at how we work; refining systems and strengthening internal processes to help our team serve the community more efficiently and effectively. In development and outreach, Patrick Miller has stepped into the role of Director of Development & Marketing, working to deepen community engagement and expand support for the mission of Asbury Woods.

Each of these individuals brings deep passion to their work and a strong personal connection to our mission. Jami recently shared that she relishes the opportunity to be part of something meaningful and finds joy in watching children and adults experience awe in nature. Patrick reflected, "My family and I have been hiking the trails, attending programs, and enjoying the beauty of the property for over 30 years. I'm excited to help ensure that even more individuals and families can enjoy all that Asbury Woods has to offer for generations to come."

As this season of change continues, we are thrilled about what lies ahead. This fall and beyond, visitors can expect new and improved trails, fresh programming, and an exciting reimagining of our beloved Winter Wonderland event. These changes bring new opportunities for the community to connect with nature through participation, volunteerism, and generous support.

We hope you'll join us during this exciting time, and as always, we invite you to bring a friend along to experience the wonder of Asbury Woods.



Upcoming Events and Festivals Page 3

**Winnie the Pooh
September 20**

**Scary Creature
Feature
October 9, 10, & 11**

**Trail Run
October 11**

**Winter Wonderland
Every Thursday –
Sunday in December**

September
October
November
December
2025

FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We've had a fantastic, high-impact summer at Asbury Woods! Monday Music brought over 1800 people to enjoy excellent live music and local food, while raising over \$3000 to support our mission. We welcomed 440 campers for day camp to enjoy outdoor adventures and foster a lifelong connection to nature. Over 35 groups visited the Woods for outdoor experiences; and we offered 45 nature-based programs to the public! Much of this high-impact work was made possible by our 5 interns – Haley Matlak, Mia Miraczek, Zachary Seabridge, Miranda Galla, and Tara Hokaj. From internships to Monday Music, these experiences help deepen people's connections to nature and foster our mission.

As we look forward to the fall season, we are invigorated with new ideas and fresh perspectives! Our fall season kicks off with a Trail Talk with Greg Ritson, Conservation Stewardship Coordinator. He'll share his work and vision for conserving Asbury Woods for generations to come. Join him later in the season for a conservation project! We won't be able to do this important work without your help.

Our Year of Wildlife continues through December with exciting Family Nature Nights, a Bug Snug Workshop, a Turkey Talk with the Pennsylvania Game Commission, and Monthly Bird Tours September – November.

Perhaps the biggest change that you will see this season is a new format for Winter Wonderland. The experience will be available every Thursday – Sunday in December. Like previous years, visitors will be able to take a stroll along the boardwalk to see the holiday lights in the woods, visit the Squeaky Frog Gift shop, and see the amazing train display. On Fridays and Saturdays, the experience will be even more exciting with live music and an outdoor fire, and crafts, hot chocolate, and snacks to purchase. There will be something for everyone to enjoy throughout the season.

It has been an absolute pleasure to get to know the organization from the new lens of Executive Director. To see the joy on people's faces during Monday Music; hear the laughter of children attending camp; and learn the stories of families who have visited Asbury Woods for generations are daily gifts that I cherish. Those generational connections are truly the heart of what makes the Woods so special. As our new team develops the vision for our path forward, know that these connections, our history, and our mission are driving every decision.

From the Woods,



Sarah Bennett
Executive Director

Asbury Woods Staff

Sarah Bennett
Executive Director

Mario Bruni
*Marketing & Communications
Coordinator*

Rachel Cherry
Environmental Educator

Anna Cook
Environmental Educator

Melissa Flowers
Visitor Services Associate

Abbie Harrington
Visitor Services Associate

Casey Keating
Environmental Educator

Erika Levy
Public Programs Coordinator

Emma Mader
Director of Education

Ron Maggio
Facilities & Grounds Coordinator

Jami Manafo
Operations Manager

Bailey Merritt
Visitor Services Associate

Patrick Miller
Director of Development & Marketing

Mia Miraszek
Environmental Education Associate

Greg Ritson
Conservation Stewardship Coordinator

Zachary Seabridge
Steward of the Woods Intern

Jake Stush
Environmental Educator

Karina Wismer
Visitor Services Associate

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Asbury Woods

ANDREW J. CONNER
NATURE CENTER
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asburywoods.org | 814.835.5356

Vision Statement: Asbury Woods strives to realize a future for Northwestern Pennsylvania where appreciation for and protection of natural places is a deeply held personal and community value.

The Mission of Asbury Woods is to inspire a greater connection to the natural world by protecting, managing and interpreting our property; providing outdoor recreational opportunities; and offering environmental education experiences.

The Asbury Woods Partnership is a 5013(C) nonprofit charity registered with the Bureau of Charitable Organizations. The official registration and financial information may be obtained from the PA Dept. of State at 1-800-732-0999. Funding for the Asbury Woods Partnership is provided through grants, program fees and the generosity of our members, donors and patrons.

UPCOMING EVENTS & FESTIVALS

Winnie the Pooh | September 20

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Program Fee: \$22

Registration Required

Experience a day of fun and adventure with Winnie the Pooh and his friends! Kids and adults will enjoy meeting life-size characters, exploring each friend's home along a magical walk, dancing along with Tigger, visiting Eeyore's cozy cloud room, entering themed raffle basket drawings, and making wonderful new friends along the way!



Sponsored by:



Scary Creature Feature | October 9, 10, and 11

Time: 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Program Fee: \$9, children three and under are free



This family-friendly event features fun activities, engaging storytelling, and a guided walk through the woods where guests will meet and learn about some not-so-scary nocturnal forest creatures. It's a

wonderful opportunity to explore the woods after dark and take in the cool, crisp air of an autumn evening. Cider and delicious donuts will be available for purchase to make the night even sweeter!

Sponsored by:



Trail Run | October 11

Time: 8:00 a.m. check-in; 9:00 a.m. start

Program Fee: \$35

Don't miss the final race of the 2025 Trail Run Series! Tackle six miles of scenic trails, open fields, and local streets as you push toward the finish line. Take in the vibrant fall colors and crisp autumn air on this unforgettable end to the season.



Sponsored by:



You could give your people
Culligan Water

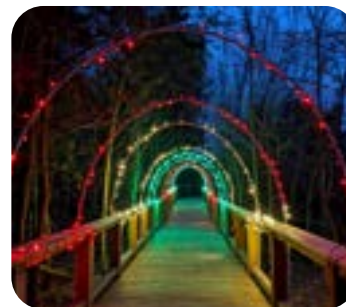
UPMC HEALTH PLAN



Winter Wonderland | Every Thursday – Sunday in December

Time: 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

FREE, open to the public | Donations are accepted




Our beloved Winter Wonderland tradition continues this year in a new format. Every Thursday – Sunday in December the boardwalk beside the Andrew J. Conner Nature Center will be beautifully lit and

we will welcome the public into the Nature Center to enjoy a train display, peruse the gift shop, and visit our exhibit animals. Friday and Saturdays will have added excitement with live entertainment and an outdoor fire. Crafting, hot chocolate, and snacks will be available at an additional cost.

Sponsored by:



FALL PROGRAMS: SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER 2025

Supported through the generosity of 

YOUTH

Homeschool Programs at the Woods



Date: Thursdays, September 11th, October 23rd, and November 13th
Time: 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.
Age: Children accompanied by an adult
Location: Nature Center
Supporting Donor Fee: \$10
Program Fee: \$12

Homeschool programs with pre-lessons and extension activities are back! Sign up for one or all the classes below. All classes meet the PA STEELS Standards, and registered participants will receive a certificate of completion. Parents may drop their children off or choose to stay with them regardless of age.

September – All About Pollinators

Let's take some time to celebrate pollinators! Join us to learn about the life cycle of different pollinators, what they do for us, wildflowers they like and even about how honey is made.



October – Habitat Exploration

Explore different habitats and find everything that makes them different during this curiosity-filled program. We will use technology to help identify plants, bugs, birds, and other creatures that use these habitats while using different tools to investigate the world around us.



November – Preparing for Winter

Learn what plants and animals are doing to prepare for winter through fun and interactive activities. Kids will also explore what's happening outside so be sure to wear warm clothes and boots.



EcoExplorers Club for Middle Schoolers

Date: September 4th, September 18th, October 2nd, October 16th, October 30th, November 13th, November 20th, December 3rd
Time: 6:00-7:30 p.m.
Age: starting 6th – 8th grade this fall
Location: Nature Center
Supporting Donor Fee: \$45
Program Fee: \$56

Are you a middle schooler interested in nature and science? Join EcoExplorers! EcoExplorers work with our animal ambassadors, dive deeper into nature and the outdoors, and conduct hands-on science activities. Previous members and new members are welcome to join us for the perfect blend of learning and fun!

Autumn Sprouts

Dates: Wednesdays, September 10th – December 10th
(Except Oct. 1st & Nov. 26th)
Time: 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. or 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Age: 2-5 years old, accompanied by an adult
Location: Nature Center
Supporting Donor Fee: \$9
Program Fee: \$11

Calling all little explorers, join us for some big adventures at Asbury Woods in our nature class! Classes will include science and nature explorations through sensory experiences, hands-on activities, and crafts. Most weeks include an outdoor activity, so come dressed for the weather. Accompanying adults attend free.

Kids Terrarium Class with Ashton Ferns

Date: Wednesday, October 15th
Time: 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Age: 5 & up, accompanied by an adult
Location: Nature Center
Program Fee: \$25

Create your very own terrarium with Ashton Ferns! Each registered participant will receive a glass terrarium, soil, décor, and tropical ferns. Accompanying adults attend free.

Pumpkin Hunt

Date: Saturday, October 25th
Time: 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. or 3:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Age: 3- 8 years old, accompanied by an adult
Location: Nature Center
Supporting Donor Fee: \$10
Program Fee: \$13

It's pumpkin season! Children and an accompanying adult will participate in fall-themed activities and a pumpkin hunt. Each child will take home a small pumpkin. Accompanying adults attend free.

Kids' Soap Making with Sealed By Nature

Date: Wednesday, November 5th
Time: 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.
Age: 3 & up, children must be accompanied by an adult
Location: Nature Center
Supporting Donor Fee: \$25
Program Fee: \$30

Have you always wanted soap with your own molded creation inside? Now's the time to make it happen with Sealed by Nature! Each child participant will make two 4 oz. soaps of their own creation, and all materials will be provided. The possibilities are endless! Accompanying adults attend free.

Kids Night Out!

Date: Friday, November 7th & Friday, November 21st
Time: 5:30 – 8:30 PM
Age: 5 – 11 years old
Location: Nature Center
Supporting Donor Fee: \$35
Program Fee: \$40

Want to get a jump start on holiday shopping or enjoy a night out? Let your kids hang out with us at the Woods! We'll do indoor and outdoor activities and have a pizza for dinner! Dinner and a drink will be provided.

ALL AGES



Trail Talk

Date: Saturday, September 6th

Time: 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Age: All ages, children must be accompanied by an adult

Location: Nature Center

Program Fee: Free, registration required

Join our Conservation Stewardship Coordinator, Greg Ritson, for a conservation-themed hike. Greg will

discuss the importance of trail maintenance, invasive species removal work, areas of concern at Asbury Woods, and more!

Family Owl Prowl

Date: Thursday, October 23rd

Time: 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Age: Adults and children ages 10 and up

Location: Nature Center

Supporting Donor Fee: \$8

Program Fee: \$10



Prowl the evening at Asbury Woods!

The experience begins indoors, learning about local owls and dissecting owl pellets, then continues outdoors to try to call for owls. Bring your flashlights and your curiosity.

Bug Snug Workshop

Date: Saturday, November 1st

Time: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Age: Ages 10 & up

Location: Nature Center

Supporting Donor Fee: \$10

Program Fee: \$12



Insects are much more important to our way of life than people think. In this class, you'll learn the importance of insects, build 'bug snugs' in Asbury Woods' gardens, then build your own bug hotels to take home. Kids, families and even experienced gardeners can benefit from this class.

Conservation Project

Dates: Saturday, November 8th

Time: 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. or 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Age: Ages 12 & up, children must be accompanied by an adult

Program Fee: FREE, registration required

Roll Up Your Sleeves for the Woods! Join us for a hands-on conservation project at Asbury Woods and help keep our trails safe, beautiful, and open for everyone to enjoy. Bring your energy, your can-do spirit, and be prepared for a bit of good, honest physical work in the great outdoors.

Cacti Class with Ashton Ferns

Date: Wednesday, November 12th

Time: 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Age: All Ages

Location: Nature Center

Program Fee: \$40

Make your very own cactus terrarium to take home! This class includes 2 cacti, a glass terrarium, décor, soil, and the necessary tools to assemble.

Turkey Talk

Date: November 19th

Time: 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Age: All ages

Location: Nature Center

Program Fee: Free, registration required

Join local Game Commission Educator, Heather Flick, to learn more about our native wild turkeys.



September – Fisher Find N Seek

Date/Time: Saturday, September 13th from 1-2:30 PM

Fishers are elusive creatures that are hard to find.

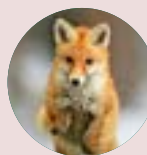
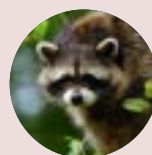
Take a hike through Asbury Woods and see if you can find all 10 hidden fisher photos to win a prize!

October – Raccoon Riot

Date/Time: Friday, October 17th from 6:30 – 8:00 PM

Raccoons have been known to get into some mischief.

Play some raccoon games, make a raccoon mask, and create an animal "treat bag" to take home.



December – Fox Dance Party!

Date/Time: Wednesday, December 10th from 6:30 – 8:00 PM

What does the fox say... at a dance party! Dance the night away at Asbury Woods.

Winter Solstice Night Hike

Date: Sunday, December 21st

Time: 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. or 7:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Age: All ages

Location: Nature Center

Supporting Donor Fee: \$6

Program Fee: \$8

Embrace the long nights of winter as we hike the trails of Asbury Woods on the longest night of the year. The entire program is held outdoors. Be sure to check out the lights at Winter Wonderland before or after the hike!

First Day Hike

Date: Thursday, January 1st, 2026

Time: 10:00-11:30 a.m.

Age: All ages

Location: Nature Center

Program Fee: Free, registration required

Celebrate the New Year at Asbury Woods! Join us on New Year's Day for a 1- 2 mile guided trail hike. Dress for the weather; if there is over 6 inches of snow, we will use snowshoes – bring your own or use Asbury Woods' equipment.

ADULTS



Monthly Bird Tours

Dates: Saturdays, September 13th, October 18th, and November 15th

Time: 7:00 – 8:30 a.m.

Age: Adults

Location: September and November @ Nature Center
October @ Brown's Farm

Supporting Donor Fee: \$5

Program Fee: \$7

Come on out during the fall migration and add to your bird list! Environmental educator, Jake, will lead this monthly bird tour, which will visit a different location on our property each month. Birders can practice their skills and learn about new tools like eBird and Merlin.



Forest Bathing

Dates: Saturdays, September 13th, October 18th, and November 15th

Time: 10:00 – 11:15 a.m.

Age: Adults

Location: Nature Center

Supporting Donor Fee: \$5

Program Fee: \$7

Enjoy a meditative walk using your senses to explore the woods, including a sit spot and a sharing circle. This program will be led by Craig Casler, Certified Instinctive Meditation Teacher and Forest Bathing Guide..

Nature Exploration for Adults with Disabilities

Dates: Fridays, September 19th, October 24th, November 21st, December 19th

Time: 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Age: Adults with a caregiver

Location: Nature Center

Supporting Donor Fee: \$8

Program Fee: \$10

Adults with disabilities and their caregivers will enjoy outdoor exploration on our accessible boardwalk, followed by a hands-on nature activity. There will be a different theme each month. Only one registration is required per adult/caregiver pair.

Mushroom Discovery Hike

Date: Saturday, September 27th

Time: 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Age: Adults

Location: Nature Center

Supporting Donor Fee: \$5

Program Fee: \$7

Learn how to identify a wide range of fungi while strolling the Asbury Woods property with Dr. Matthew Gacura from Gannon University. Asbury Woods does not allow harvesting, so be ready to enjoy the hunt and take home only memories and photos.

Wreath Making with Steph's Sprouts

Dates: Thursday, December 4th

Time: 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Age: Adults

Location: Nature Center

Program Fee: \$50

Join Steph from Steph's Sprouts for a festive and creative workshop where you'll learn to craft your very own evergreen wreath using fresh, locally sourced evergreen fronds. This hands-on class is perfect for beginners and seasoned crafters alike, as we guide you through the steps of creating a beautiful holiday wreath from scratch that you can enjoy throughout the holiday season. Participants are encouraged to bring gloves and garden snippers if available.

Holiday Door Swag

Date: Thursday, December 18th

Time: 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Age: Adults

Location: Nature Center

Supporting Donor Fee: \$20

Program Fee: \$25

Add some holiday swag to your home this holiday season! Participants will use fresh-cut greenery, ribbon, and decorative items to create a door swag for their home. Feel free to bring hand trimmers and work gloves, if desired.

DIY Bath Bomb Class

Date: Wednesday, December 17th

Time: 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Age: Ages 16 & Up

Location: Nature Center

Supporting Donor Fee: \$25

Program Fee: \$30

Indulge yourself with a wonderful evening with Sealed by Nature to create your own bath bomb! Each registered participant will craft 2 of their own vibrant, bubbly bath bombs to take home. All materials will be provided.

**Pre-registration is required
for all programs,
unless otherwise noted**

The Asbury Woods Nature Center is the perfect place to host a holiday party, offering a warm and inviting setting surrounded by the beauty of nature.



Whether you're planning a gathering for family, friends, or colleagues, the Nature Center provides a unique and memorable backdrop for your celebration. To discuss additional requirements and procedures for organizing a facility rental, please contact Jami Manafo at (814) 836-6176.

Asbury Woods Recognizes Outstanding Volunteers

Asbury Woods' volunteers play a vital role in helping us to achieve our goals of conserving the land, connecting people to nature, and inspiring environmental stewardship. We were fortunate to have 1492 individual and group volunteers spend 5228.28 hours of their time caring for the Woods and sustaining our educational programs this past year.

The recipients of Asbury Woods' annual Volunteer of the Year Awards go above and beyond in their efforts to inspire a greater senses of environmental awareness, sustainability and stewardship to visitors. We are proud to announce the distinguished recipients of our annual Volunteer of the Year Awards.



Adult Volunteer of the Year: Debbie Turner

Since joining our volunteer team in 2024, Debbie Turner has brought her enthusiasm, reliability, and love for Asbury Woods to every role she's taken on. After exploring various volunteer opportunities, she found her perfect fit in the Squeaky Frog Gift Shop, but that's just the beginning of her contributions.

From lending a hand at nearly all of our special events to serving on the planning committee for Winnie the Pooh's Asbury Adventure, Debbie has become an essential part of our volunteer family. She is also a friendly and familiar face at Monday Music in the Woods, making visitors feel welcome and ensuring things run smoothly.

Over the past year, Debbie went above and beyond stepping up during staffing transitions, committing extra time, and being available wherever she was needed. Her dedication adds up to an extraordinary **396.65 lifetime volunteer hours** with Asbury Woods, and her commitment to nature and community is an inspiration to us all.

Thank you, Debbie, for the countless ways you've helped Asbury Woods thrive.

New Volunteer of the Year: Steve Timko

Each spring, Asbury Woods relies on dedicated volunteers to tackle the big facilities and grounds projects that keep our trails, buildings, and outdoor spaces in top shape. This year, we were lucky to have Steve Timko step up to the challenge, and he didn't just step up, *he hit the ground running*.

In just a short period of time, Steve contributed an impressive **70.48 volunteer hours**, lending a hand wherever it was needed. From moving tables and chairs to setting up tents, cleaning the parking lot, tending the grounds, and assisting on the trails, Steve approaches every task with humor, a can-do attitude, and a smile as bright as a sunny day in the woods.

Thanks to Steve's hard work, Asbury Woods continues to be a beautiful and welcoming place for our community to explore. We are deeply grateful for his efforts and hope his example inspires others to join in making a difference.



Youth Volunteer of the Year: Wyatt Person

Since joining our volunteer team in 2022, Wyatt Person has jumped in wherever help was needed, but his true talent shines brightest as a Camp Assistant. Whether leading games, sparking curiosity in the Nature Center, or simply making campers feel welcome, Wyatt brings energy, patience, and a big smile to every day.

This summer alone, Wyatt dedicated an incredible **73.48 hours in June and July** to helping with summer camps across all age groups. No matter the program or grade level, he's always ready to pitch in, making each day fun and memorable for our campers.

We are grateful to have such an enthusiastic member of the younger generation giving back to Asbury Woods. Thank you, Wyatt, for your time, energy, and commitment – you've made this summer one to remember!



ANDREW J. CONNER
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Year of Wildlife Animal Spotlights



Each month during the *Year of Wildlife* we will highlight a different native animal. Visit the exhibit hall to find that animal specimen, participate in hands-on learning activities, and look for animal programs in our schedule!

For more details on how to become a *Year of Wildlife Sponsor of the Month*, contact Patrick Miller, Director of Development & Marketing, at 814-836-6179 or pmiller@asburywoods.org.

SEPTEMBER Fisher



OCTOBER Raccoon



NOVEMBER Turkey

Sponsored by Jim Lyons, Edward Jones



DECEMBER Red Fox

Sponsored by Diana & Steve Day



Nature Center

November 1 – March 31:
Monday – Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Sunday 12:00 – 4:00 p.m.

April 1 – October 31:
Monday – Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Sunday 12:00 – 5:00 p.m.

The Squeaky Frog Gift Shop: Same as Nature Center

Trails Open Dawn to Dusk

