

Branching Out



During our last fiscal year, Asbury Woods branched out beyond our traditional programming and audiences in a multitude of ways. Our efforts were centered on one of the goals in our strategic plan: to foster diversity among those who participate in Asbury Woods programming. We believe that by branching out and reaching new audiences with our messages of environmental education, nature appreciation and conservation, we are moving closer to our vision that Northwestern Pennsylvania be a region where appreciation for and protection of natural places is a deeply held personal and community value.

This report highlights just a handful of the ways we were able to branch out. Rest assured that we continued to do all our traditional programs as well, from thousands of school kids visiting for environmental education, our annual community festivals, public programs, Monday Music in the Woods, volunteer opportunities for youth and adults and continuing to maintain and improve the buildings and property. It was only possible to add so many new projects while maintaining our traditional ones thanks to the

incredible dedication of our staff members, the leadership of our board of directors who are willing to invest in capacity building and strategic initiatives, the selfless gift of time from our volunteers and the amazing generosity and support of the thousands of donors listed in this report. All these ingredients are necessary for Asbury Woods to flourish in our traditional ways while striving to reach new people and engage them in our mission of environmental education, outdoor recreation, and conservation.

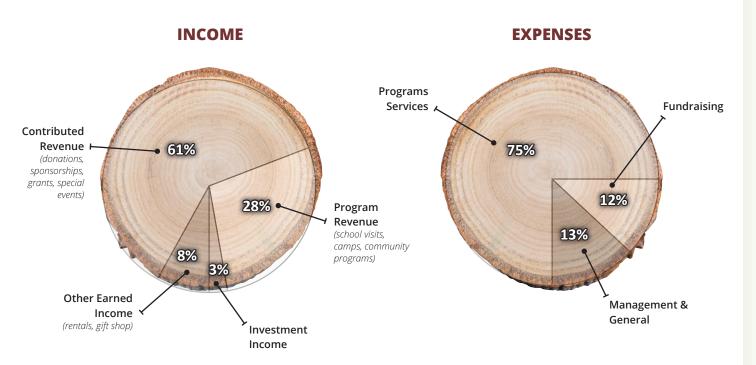
Thank you for being part of Asbury Woods and helping us to branch out and expand our impact. Your continued support, engagement and generosity means that Asbury Woods mission is coming alive for even more people in our community.

With Gratitude,

Jennifer A. Farrar, CFRE Executive Director

Year at a Glance

Audited Financials September 1, 2021 – August 31, 2022



- 5,696 school children participated in environmental education
- 19,297 people participated in an Asbury Woods community program
- 380 volunteers contributed 8,124 hours
- 561 species identified during 7-day City Nature Challenge bio-blitz
- \$63,155 added to Asbury Woods Endowment
- 34 donors have made a commitment to our new monthly giving Sustainer Program

Nature in Your Neighborhood

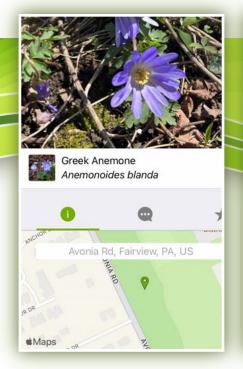
Asbury Woods **Branched Out** geographically during summer 2022 by taking our programming on the road with Nature in Your Neighborhood. For ten consecutive weeks Asbury Woods educators visited parks and community spaces in the City of Erie to offer hands-on nature activities. Activities were designed to be interactive, accessible and to ignite curiosity about the natural world.

Nearly 200 kids and adults visited over the ten weeks, engaging with topics such as seeds, pelts and skulls, monarch butterflies and more. The local nonprofit Hooked on Books joined Asbury Woods at each Nature in Your Neighborhood session and provided each visitor with a nature-themed book to extend the learning experience into their home. Nature in Your Neighborhood was made possible thanks to a community partnership grant from the Erie Community Foundation.













City Nature Challenge

Asbury Woods put the Erie region on the map by **Branching Out** and participating in a global four-day bio-blitz called City Nature Challenge. This citizen science project engages individuals to find, observe, photograph, and identify plant and animal species. Data is collected by individuals, verified, and then used by researchers across the globe for things such as tracking wildlife migrations, documenting health of plant communities, and more. During 2022 more than 40 countries were represented.

Asbury Woods spearheaded the project to have the Erie region participate for the first time. Over the course of the seven days in April, 199 individuals in Erie County logged 2,447 observations which identified 561 different species. Project partners Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Our West Bayfront Neighborhood Association, Presque Isle Audubon Society, Erie County Department of Health, Gannon University and Mercyhurst University, all helped in various ways such as promoting the City Nature Challenge, providing trainings on use of the app and leading walks. City Nature Challenge allowed individuals to observe and document nature from anywhere that was convenient for them, either by themselves or with a group, and to contribute to a major global effort in the process.

Summer Camp Endowment

Investments made this past year to help us **Branch Out** in our summer camp programs will benefit local youth for generations to come. A permanent endowment was established to provide summer camp scholarships each year to children who would not otherwise be able to attend an Asbury Woods summer camp.

After several years of funding a handful of scholarships in a variety of ways, we set out to establish a permanent source of scholarship funding. The endowed donations will annually provide revenue with the goal of being able to fund 10 camp scholarships per year. Asbury Woods summer camp is a quintessential childhood experience that will now be accessible to a broader group of youth in our community, providing them with memories of time spent in natural settings.







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Expanding Adult Programming

Youth programming and school field trips may be what comes to mind when people think about Asbury Woods but we have made concerted efforts to **Branch Out** and enhance our adult programming.

This past year adult program highlights included a new event, Luminaria, an adults-only evening around Valentine's Day; adult lectures on topics like pollinators, trees, mushrooms, and solitary bees; a happy hour hike with adult beverages; and segmenting programs into family versions and adult versions such as our popular owl prowl hikes.

Providing an array of educational and recreational opportunities for adults ensures that Asbury Woods is reaching a broader segment of the community in our efforts to achieve the vision of Northwestern PA being a place where protection for and appreciation of natural places is a deeply held personal and community value.

Homeschool Programs

Last year we **Branched Out** with a big commitment to the homeschool community. We offered 12 programs which drew 264 participants. Themes included Maple Magic, Pond Safari, Animal Mysteries, Yoga in the Woods, Insect Adventure, Snowshoe Hike and a monthly hiking club. The homeschool offerings reach youth and adults outside of our typical school-based curriculum visits.

Programs are tailored to the teaching and learning styles of homeschool students which means age groups are blended, the parents are often present and engage in the activity and activities are designed to offer social connections along with the learning opportunities for the homeschool students. By offering consistent, year-round programming we are helping to meet the educational, recreational, and social needs of homeschool students and families, while also brining new audiences to Asbury Woods.







Engaging a Diverse Base of Volunteers

Asbury Woods has long been a go-to organization for students seeking to fulfill high school community service requirements and retired individuals looking to positively impact the community beyond their working years. Last year we continued to **Branch Out** to provide a broader segment of the community with volunteer opportunities. An example of our broad base of volunteers are the individuals who come weekly from NeuroRestorative. NeuroRestorative provides rehabilitation services for individuals with brain injuries and furnishes a range of community connections and activities for their residents. Their weekly volunteer work at Asbury Woods includes an array of tasks including filling bird feeders, stacking firewood, collecting items like sticks and acorns for education programs, collecting sap from maple trees, clearing the boardwalk, and assembling bee kits.

Similarly, adults involved with the Barber National Institute's Club Erie program come twice per week to help with jobs around the





Nature Center. Club Erie is a service to assist adults with intellectual disabilities to acquire, maintain and improve skills while helping the community, building friendships, and having fun. They come to Asbury Woods to do a variety of things such as wash windows, tidy ski and snowshoe rental equipment, clean and fill birdbaths, stock our kiosk with maps and newsletters, and more. The volunteerism is a win-win, helping Asbury Woods with countless tasks that lead to a big impact while providing the opportunity for these volunteers to reestablish skills, learn new skills, build social interactions, provide a sense of purpose, and improve self-confidence.

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Michael & Ashley Kuneman David Laird & Associates The Launderie Room Lillis, McKibben, Bongiovanni & Co. Lincoln Recycling Kevin & Tricia Louis Luminary Distilling, Eatery, Fuhrman's Cider lim & Jennifer Lyons/ Edward Jones MacDonald Illig Attorneys McCreary Roofing Company Inc. Matthew & Daren McCullough McGill Power Bell & Associates The McVeagh Family Wendy D. Miller MKS Árborist Services Dr. Joseph M. Morris & Dr. Leanne M. Roberts Matt & Mary Myers Robert & Dr. Christine Nestor Michael & Rebecca Okel Paragon Print Systems, Inc. LPL Financial - Kristi Parsons Ross & Eliza Peterson Angelo Phillips Pisano Family Wine Cellar/Cellar 22 Plaza Dental Associates Potratz Floral Shop & Greenhouses **RBC** Wealth Management Rick Weaver Buick GMC Chip & Betsy Riehl Dr. Verel & Sandy Salmon William & Susan Sapone Justin & Maryann Scholl John V. Schultz Furniture/ Ashley Homestore Pete & Heather Scobell Jim & Kathy Sertz Mark & Prudence Shaw Sitter Insurance Ed & Jennifer Smith Marcella Smith & Blair Tuttle Chad & Carissa Snarski Rich & Lori Sobin

Greg Sorce
SpaGo
Bob & Sherri Stout
Jan & Dave Sweny
Roger & Laurel Taft
Tandem Associates
Daniel Welshe & Susan Tesore-Cross
David & Jane Thornton
Dawn & David Tofel
David Uhlig & Patti Williams
Attorney Joseph P. Vendetti
Vino Shares & Beyond Bottle Club
WeissEarley Landscape Design &
Contracting LLC
Doug Yarbenet

Otto Behrend Legacy Society Members

Legacy Society Members have included Asbury Woods as part of their estate plans.

Andrew J. Conner
Suzanne C. Neth*
Esther Soder Patton* Fund
The Charles "Chuck" Rapp* Fund of
the Erie Community Foundation
Susie Shickler
Lauren Steele
Dr. Barrett C. Walker* Fund of
the Erie Community Foundation
The Patricia Yahn* Fund of
The Erie Community Foundation

*deceased Legacy Society members



Board of Directors 2022-23



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Amy Brinling Chair-Elect



David Uhlig *Treasurer*



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Bridget Barber



Chris Dolanc



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Bob Howden



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Becca Turner



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Sarah Bennett
Director of Education
& Community
Programs



Anush Dulgaryan Bruno Visitor Services Associate



Sharon Burton *Visitor Services Associate*



Stephen Engro Director of Development and Marketing



Casey Keating Interpretive Naturalist



Michelle Keck Administrative Assistant



Andrea Krivak Marketing Coordinator



Emma Mader Environmental Educator



Erin Paquette Environmental Educator



Amy Shook Interpretive Naturalist



Jeanine Timon *Gift Shop and Rental Coordinator*



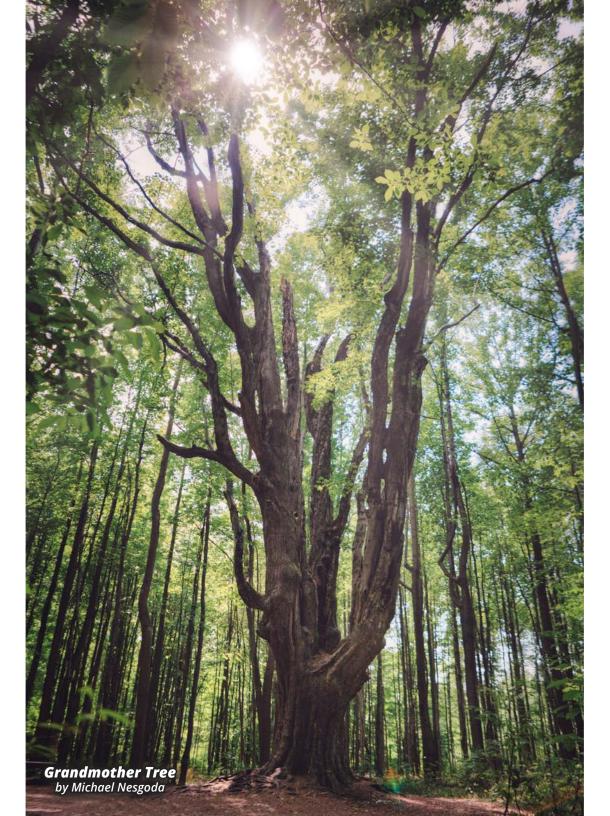
Chelsea Total Visitor Services Associate



Sheila Walmer Constituent Relations Coordinator



Steve Wasiesky *MTSD Environmental Education Coordinator*



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.



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asburywoods.org