



WOODS talk

FEBRUARY 2021
THROUGH
APRIL 2021

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

Land Stewardship a Priority for Asbury Woods

Asbury Woods has been entrusted with the protection and care for 205 acres of property that is visited by upwards of 100,000 people every year plus is home to a variety of native plants, trees and wildlife. Asbury Woods is an oasis of nature in the midst of suburbia but it takes care, protection, planning and balance to ensure we maintain a variety of healthy ecosystems, safe trails for visitors and remain a destination for environmental education. It's a balance that the Asbury Woods leadership recognizes will require a more proactive approach to land management in the years to come.



The last land management plan was done in 2004 while still owned by the Millcreek Township School District and was limited to approximately 40 acres on the east side of Asbury Road immediately adjacent to the Nature Center. At that time, limited resources

and other priorities precluded implementation of much of the prescribed plan. Now under the ownership of Asbury Woods Partnership where stewardship and protection of this property is a primary mission, we are better positioned to create and then follow-through with a multi-faceted and multi-year approach to land management across the entire 205 acres.



The recently adopted strategic plan calls for the creation and implementation of a land management plan that will guide strategies going forward. Examples of the questions we'll be delving into include such things as how do we manage sections of the forests to ensure wildlife habitat while also promoting optimal tree health and growth; are we committed to maintaining distinct meadow tracts which require human intervention to ensure natural succession into forests is staved off; do we favor planting all native species over replacement of non-native trees that were planted by Otto Behrend around the Nature Center; what resources will we devote to combating invasive species such as buckthorn and multiflora rose; are there any threatened species of plants or wildlife that Asbury Woods is uniquely positioned to help thrive and if so, should we manage a portion of the property for that purpose? These are just a few of the big picture questions on the table as we delve into this process of a land stewardship plan.

Visitors might have already noticed some small steps in this direction with restoration of habitat disrupted by the boardwalk construction, removal of some invasive species around the boardwalk by a dedicated group of volunteers who make progress on a weekly basis, and we've been actively applying for some grant funding to continue several land management projects. In the coming years visitors will notice even more evidence of active stewardship practices as we answer the big picture questions to ensure Asbury Woods maintains the balance required to provide a natural outdoor recreation area for visitors, healthy ecosystems for plants and wildlife and living classrooms that provide hands-on, rich environmental education experiences. Our recently updated vision statement says we are striving for Northwestern Pennsylvania to be a place where appreciation for and protection of natural places is a deeply held value. We intend to be a shining example of that value as we actively steward and protect the treasured acres of Asbury Woods.



MAPLE FESTIVAL

Page 3

RACE FOR ALL SEASONS

Page 3



Cross Country
Skiing and
Snowshoeing
at The Woods!

See classes and
Rental information



SUMMER CAMP

Registration Opens
February 15

A NEW YEAR BRINGS NEW OPPORTUNITIES

As the calendar flipped to a new year, Asbury Woods is excited for a host of new projects and initiatives that we'll be tackling. Top of mind is the new strategic plan that was adopted by our board of directors in late 2020. After a year's worth of brainstorming, discussing, analyzing and compiling, our board and staff leadership team has a roadmap of organizational priorities and strategies to carry us forward for the next several years. High on the list are items which help us steward and interpret the property we are charged with caring for. We also have a strong emphasis on financial efficiencies, program evaluation, and supporting the staff and volunteers who make Asbury Woods tick. If you're interested in our strategic goals, use the QR code below to view an overview of our new plan.



Jennifer Farrar, CFRE
Executive Director

In tandem with the new strategic plan, we also have adopted updated vision and mission statements for Asbury Woods to reflect the organization we have evolved into and the directions we are headed. While the words have changed, environmental stewardship and education, nature appreciation and outdoor recreation remain the heart and soul of Asbury Woods. You can read the updated mission and vision statements below. Our team will be using these statements as the lenses through which we determine priorities, plan programs and go about our work.

I'm thrilled to share that this year also brings us a brand new website. As our programs and operations have evolved, a new site to meet current and future needs was in order. Thanks to funding from a grant from the Erie Community Foundation and Preserving a Legacy Campaign donations, the new site will be live in the coming weeks. We hope you find it a user-friendly experience with the information you need to be part of our mission, either virtually or in-person. As a reminder you can find it at www.asburywoods.org.

Thanks for being part of the Asbury Woods circle of supporters.
I hope your new year is filled with the joys and wonders of nature.

From the Woods,



Asbury Woods

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

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 501(c)3 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.

Asbury Woods Staff

Jennifer Farrar
Executive Director

Liza Elias
Bookkeeper

Melissa Goodwill
Education & Program Coordinator

Michael Grandinetti
Facilities & Grounds Manager

Kelley Lang
Director of Education & Community Programs

Sarah Lewis
School Programs Manager

Carissa Snarski
Director of Development & Marketing

Jessica Stefano
Assistant Director of Education & Community Programs

Jeanine Timon
Visitor Services Associate

Sheila Walmer
Constituent Relations Coordinator

Steve Wasiesky
MTSD Environmental Education Coordinator

Asbury Woods Board of Directors

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Charles Walczak

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Maple Festival

April 10 and 11

11:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M. | NATURE CENTER

The annual Maple Festival is a celebration of a heritage unique to our region. Sugar maple trees are a natural resource found only in our region of the world and Asbury Woods proudly partakes in this tradition each year by tapping trees then collecting and boiling sap into pure maple syrup!

Learn more about this fascinating use of one of nature's sweetest renewable resources with an interactive and informative tour and demonstrations. The highlight is a stop in Asbury Woods working sugar shack where the magic of sap to syrup happens!

Due to COVID restrictions on in-door gatherings and food preparation, we will not be offering pancakes this year, but we'll provide you with a sweet maple candy to sample instead. Still want more maple products? Several vendors will be on-site to tempt your taste buds with all manner of maple products.

Tours are approximately 45 minutes long and are geared towards all age levels. Tours are limited to 15 people per tour and will start every 20 minutes between the hours of 11:15 a.m. and 3:15 p.m.

Pre-registration for assigned tour times is required. Registration open March 1, 2021.



J. THOMAS
TREE SERVICE, INC.
"out on a limb for you!"



Tickets

Tour Fee: \$5
Children 3 and under are free

asburywoods.org/events/maple-festival

A Place for All Seasons, 2021 Trail Run Series A Race for All Seasons

Let's try this again! Covid-19 interrupted all our plans, but we are set to go again in 2021.
All safety protocols required at time of race will be observed.



FEBRUARY 14: Run, walk, or snowshoe your way through four scenic miles. This non-timed event is all about enjoying year-round outdoor recreation and fitness on the trails of Asbury Woods.



JUNE 12: The 4th annual Into the Woods 5 Miler will continue to kick your Asbury as you test your mettle on the trails. This highly competitive five mile race is the anchor event, but participants can choose a non-competitive two mile walk. Childcare and a youth fun-run round out this family-friendly event



OCTOBER 16: Wind you way through six miles of trails, fields, and streets to go to the distance in the final race of the series. Enjoy the beautiful fall colors of nature as you race to the finish line.



To learn more please visit
asburywoods.org/events

COVID - 19 GUIDELINES

We must adhere to all Pennsylvania Department of Health regulations on safety during this pandemic and ask for your support as we follow safety guidelines:

Mask wearing is required for all staff.

Attendees must wear masks when social distancing of 6 feet or more cannot take place.

Pre-registration is required for all visitors participating in programming. If an adult is required to attend for a children's program please limit to one adult per child or registered group.

REGISTRATION



Online
www.asburywoods.org



Phone
814.835.5356

YOUTH

Nature Tots

Dates: Wednesdays, February 3 – April 21

Time: 9:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Age: 18 – 36 month olds,
accompanied by an adult

Location: Nature Center

Full Session

Supporting Donor Fee: \$77

Program Fee: \$99

Single Class

Supporting Donor Fee: \$7 per class

Program Fee: \$9 per class

Calling all little explorers! We invite tots along with their grown-ups for nature play and exploration through sensory experiences, hands-on activities and crafts. Outdoor activities and nature walks will be included in most classes as weather permits. Please come dressed to explore outdoors.



Nature Preschool

Dates: Wednesdays, February 3 – April 21

Time: 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

OR 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Age: 3 - 5 year olds,
accompanied by an adult

Location: Nature Center

Full Session

Supporting Donor Fee: \$77

Program Fee: \$99

Single Class

Supporting Donor Fee: \$7 per class

Program Fee: \$9 per class

Big adventures for small explorers begin here at Asbury Woods! Through sensory experiences, guided movement, stories, songs, hands-on activities, and crafts, our preschool-aged explorers will learn to experience the world around them using all their senses. Outdoor activities and nature walks will be included in most classes as weather permits. Please come dressed to explore outdoors.



Kids Night Out

Dates: Fridays, February 12,
March 12, and April 16

Time: 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.

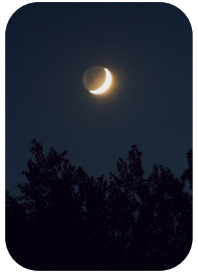
Age: 5 – 11 years old

Location: Nature Center

Supporting Donor Fee: \$15

Program Fee: \$18

Kids Night at the Woods will include age-appropriate indoor and outdoor science activities, nature exploration, and a night hike in the woods (weather permitting). Children will be grouped by age for activities (1:14 adult to children ratio). Children must be fully potty-trained and able to use the restroom without adult assistance. Due to COVID-19 safety precautions, please ensure children eat dinner before they arrive and bring their own snack and drink.



Kids Day Off

Dates: Monday, February 15

Time: 8:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. (program activities from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.)

Age: Grades K – 5

Location: Nature Center

Supporting Donor Fee: \$35 per day

Program Fee: \$45 per day

School may not in session, but Asbury Woods has got you covered! The day includes a variety of outdoor exploration, nature activities, crafts and games. This is a drop-off program that children attend independently.

Participants need to bring a packed lunch, water bottle, afternoon snack, and come dressed to be outside.



Outdoor Club

Dates: Thursdays, February 4 – April 22

Time: 3:30 – 5:30 p.m.

Age: Children in grades 5 – 8

Location: Nature Center

Full Session

Supporting Donor Fee: \$100

Program Fee: \$120

Single Class

Supporting Donor Fee: \$10 per class

Program Fee: \$12 per class

The Outdoor Explorer Club focuses on outdoor recreation, nature exploration and physical activity. Participants in the club should come dressed to spend most of their time outside and ready to experience new outdoor adventures.





Homeschool Field Day – Maple Season!

Date: Tuesday, March 16

Time: 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Age: 4 – 8 years old with an accompanying adult, children 9-13 may attend alone

Location: Nature Center

Supporting Donor Fee: \$12 per child

Program Fee: \$14 per child

Homeschool families are invited for a day of outdoor activities, community connection, and engaging nature-based learning all focused on the maple tree and maple sugaring season. Multi-grade level environmental education lessons, outdoor recreation, and nature connection will fill this four-hour field day. Descriptions of learning activities and certificates of completion for portfolio inclusion will be available at the end of the session. Families are asked to bring a packed lunch and dress for the weather.

Drop-in and Discover

NATURE CENTER

Date: Saturdays,

February 6 – April 24

(no program Saturday, April 10)

Time: 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Age: All Ages

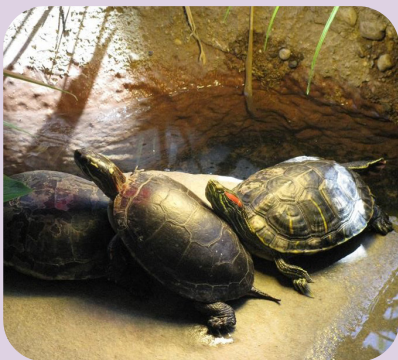
Location: Nature Center

FREE

Looking for something wild to do?

Stop in each week for a new hands-on, minds-on, staff-facilitated educational activity that are free and open to the public. Each week will offer a new experience to discover.

Pre-registration is required.

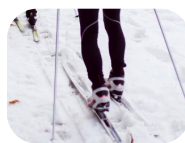


Drop-in and Discover
is presented by

UPMC
HEALTH
PLAN

ALL AGES

Cross Country Ski Clinics



Dates: Saturdays,

February 6, 13, 20, 27

Time: 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Age: Adults and children age 10 and up

Location: Nature Center

Supporting Donor Fee: \$12

Program Fee: \$15

Clinics will teach participants the basics of cross country skiing before going out and practicing on the trails. Each clinic will cover the same material so join us for the date that works best for you. No prior experience is needed and all equipment is provided. There must be at least 6" of snow for the clinic. Large groups should call to request a private program.

Snowshoe Clinics



Dates: Saturdays,

February 6, 13, 20, 27

Time: 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Age: Adults and children age 10 and up

Location: Nature Center

Supporting Donor Fee: \$12

Program Fee: \$15

This clinic will cover the basics of snowshoeing before going out and practicing on the trails. Each clinic will cover the same material so join us for the date that works best for you. No prior experience is needed and all equipment is provided. Waterproof boots are recommended. There must be at least 6" of snow for the clinic. Large groups should call to request a private program.

Great Backyard Bird Count

Sunday, February 14 • 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Age: All Ages

Location: Nature Center

Participation Fee: FREE



Join us at Asbury Woods for the Great Backyard Bird Count. This annual national program is a great way to get into birding and to help scientists to protect native birds. The program will include a short indoor session to learn how to identify birds common to our region during the winter months along with an introduction to the eBird app. Then we will visit feeders and trails around the Nature Center to report our bird counts as part of this citizen science effort through the eBird app. Bring your own binoculars or borrow a pair of ours. It is helpful to download the eBird app to your mobile device and create an account before attending.

The Asbury Woods bird feeders are filled with seed donated by Horstman and Son's Country Store and Bonnie Ginader.

Bonnie
Ginader



Bluebirds in Your Backyard



Dates: Sunday, March 14

Time: 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.

Age: Adults and children 9 and up

Location: Brown's Farm

Supporting Donor Fee: \$14

Program Fee: \$16

Learn how to create an attractive habitat for nesting bluebirds in your own backyard. Program participants will receive a wooden nest box to install in their yard and all the information needed to place and properly care for the nest box, providing much needed shelter to this threatened and native species.

Spring QR Code Hike

Dates: Sunday, March 21

Time: 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Age: Adults and children 8 and up

Location: Nature Center

Supporting Donor Fee: \$4

Program Fee: \$6



Are you curious what the QR code plaques along our trails mean? Join us for a guided hike on the trails to learn more about the amazing Asbury Woods forests, meadows, and wetlands and their inhabitants with our QR Code Hike. An internet-enabled device such as a smart-phone or tablet is required for this hike.



Pond Safari

Date: Thursday, April 22
Time: 7:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Age: All ages
Location: Nature Center
Supporting Donor Fee: \$4
Program Fee: \$6

This program will explore the watery worlds and the bugs, frogs, toads, salamanders, and more that live there using nets, terrariums, and microscopes. This program will include a hike. Please dress for possible muddy conditions. Rain boots and coats are encouraged. Bring a flashlight or headlamp, if you have one.



Build Your Own Rain Barrel

Date: Saturday, April 24
Time: 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.
Age: Adults and children ages 10 and up

Location: Brown's Farm
Supporting Donor Fee: \$60
Program Fee: \$65

A rain barrel is an easy way to be "green" and conserve water at home whether you are an avid gardener or just like to water your lawn. Come to this class and construct a rain barrel from a 55-gallon food-grade container. All supplies are included in the cost.

Spring Night Hike

Dates: Tuesday, April 27
Time: 7:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Age: Adults and children 8 and up
Location: Brown's Farm
Supporting Donor Fee: \$5
Program Fee: \$7



Enjoy the arrival of spring with a night hike at Brown's Farm. This hike will include a one mile hike over uneven trails. Participants are encouraged to dress for the weather, as the entire program will be held outdoors.

ADULTS (Ages 16 & up)

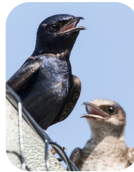
Basics of Maple Syrup Production at Home

Date: Saturday, February 6
Time: 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.
Age: Adults
Location: Nature Center
Supporting Donor Fee: \$20
Program Fee: \$25



Learn how maple syrup was discovered, how to identify and tap a maple tree, how to process maple sap into syrup, and how to can the finished product. Participants will take home a sap collecting kit for use on one tree with a reference book. Fee is per kit so bring the entire family for this learning opportunity.

Attracting Purple Martins



Date: Saturday, March 6
Time: 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.
Age: Adults
Location: online
Supporting Donor Fee: \$5
Program Fee: \$7

A species entirely dependent on human assistance for its shelters, the purple martin is a fascinating bird. Learn more about this native species, how to create beneficial habitat for it, and tips and tricks for attracting purple martins to human-built nest boxes in our online chat with Purple Martin Conservation Association. A Zoom link will be emailed to participants prior to the live online chat.



Starting Seeds Right – Online

Date: Saturday, March 13
Time: 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.
Age: Adults
Location: online
Supporting Donor Fee: \$5
Program Fee: \$7

This live, virtual version of the program will help you get a jump on Erie's short growing season by starting seeds indoors. This class will cover tips and techniques to guide you from germination to transplanting. The class will utilize the Zoom platform and a link to join the class will be sent via email prior to the class date.

Backyard Beekeeping – One Day Workshop



Dates: Saturday, February 27
Time: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Age: Adults
Location: Nature Center
Supporting Donor Fee: \$55
Program Fee: \$65

Join NW PA Beekeeper Association member Robert Howells and learn all of the aspects necessary to be a successful backyard beekeeper. This class is designed to give the beginner background information on honey bees, equipment needed, proper maintenance, and honey harvesting. Registration includes book, *Starting Right with Bees*. Please bring your own packed lunch and water bottle.

Food Waste Composting Program

Date: Saturday, March 27
Time: 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.
Age: Adults
Location: Brown's Farm Barn
Supporting Donor Fee: \$30
Program Fee: \$30

This workshop, offered in partnership with Millcreek Township, focuses on diverting kitchen food waste from the landfill by composting at home. Upon completion of the workshop, each participant will receive a Compost Wizard Jr. bin so you can put your new knowledge into action at home immediately, saving valuable landfill space and producing nutrient-rich soil for your personal use. (One bin per household)



Starting Seeds Right – In Person

Date: Sunday, March 28
Time: 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.
Age: Adults
Location: Nature Center
Supporting Donor Fee: \$5
Program Fee: \$7

Get a jump on Erie's short growing season by starting seeds indoors. This class will cover tips and techniques to guide you from germination to transplanting.





Online Chat – Urban Wildlife

Date: Wednesday, March 31
Time: 7:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Age: Adults
Location: online
FREE

Join us for an online discussion with Asbury Woods, Presque Isle State Park DCNR, and Tamarack Wildlife Rehab Center and other regional local and regional experts as we explore the challenges and opportunities that come when people and wildlife intersect. We will explore this changing landscape, learn about conservation strategies, technologies, research and urban planning, and forest management practices that find solutions that benefit both people and wildlife.

Wildlife Habitat in Your Backyard

Date: Saturday, April 17
Time: 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.
Age: Adults
Location: Nature Center
Supporting Donor Fee: \$5
Program Fee: \$7

Learn how you can responsibly create and maintain a space that is beneficial, enjoyable and meets the criteria provided by the National Wildlife Federation to be certified as a wildlife habitat.



Create Your Own Grapevine Wreath

Date: Tuesday, April 20
Time: 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.
Age: Adults
Location: Nature Center
Supporting Donor Fee: \$16
Program Fee: \$20

Join Jessica Stefano as she guides you to create a natural wreath for your home. Using grapevine, pinecones, dried flowers and other natural elements, participants will create their own tear-drop shaped wreath with the help of step-by-step instructions. All materials and supplies will be provided.



Earth Day 2021: Restore Our Earth

Earth Day Network, the nonprofit which organizes the coordination of Earth Day celebrations worldwide, is focusing on *Restore our Earth* for the April 22, 2021 annual celebration.

According to their press release, the theme recognizes that natural system processes and emerging green technologies can be utilized to restore ecosystems and forests, conserve and rebuild soils, improve farming practices, restore wildlife populations and rid the world's oceans of plastics. The *Restore Our Earth* theme seeks to highlight the interconnectedness of global environmental degradation and human health. To read their full announcement, visit www.earthday.org.

Real and sustainable change takes massive coordination between scientists, non-profits, business and governments to move the needle. As an individual, it can be difficult to imagine how you can make a difference. Here's a couple ways you as an individual or a household can be part of the solution to *Restore our Earth*.



Be Informed, Be Curious

Awareness of the problem helps you be part of the solution. Find trusted news sources, follow science-based agencies on social media and research environmental issues. Podcasts offer an engaging way to learn more about environmental

issues and scientific topics. Here are some of the favorites of the Asbury Woods staff:

Living on Earth: <https://www.loe.org/>

Sustainably Geeky: <https://www.epicallygeeky.com/sustainably-geeky>

Threshold: <https://www.thresholdpodcast.org/>



Make Incremental Personal Changes

Use this Carbon Footprint Calculator <https://www.conservation.org/carbon-footprint-calculator/#/> to assess your personal carbon impact on the environment, compare to U.S. averages and get tips on how you can reduce your impact. Remember, small incremental changes often add up to bigger long-term impact than drastic changes that you can't sustain. For example, changing to an entirely vegan diet might be unrealistic but committing to a few days per week of a plant-based diet could be sustainable for you.



Participate in a Citizen Science Project

The interconnectedness of what happens on one side of the planet to what happens globally couldn't be more apparent after witnessing the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Scientists trying to solve massive global climate and environmental problems rely on hundreds of thousands of people around the world collecting and recording data to help spot trends, identify emerging crisis and to even to celebrate progress. Citizen Science projects are exciting ways to contribute to the environmental issues that capture your passion. These resources can connect you with some of the many projects currently underway:

<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/idea/citizen-science-projects/>

<https://www.citizenscience.gov/#>

<https://science.nasa.gov/citizenscience>

<https://www.epa.gov/citizen-science>



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4105 Asbury Road
Erie, PA 16506
814.835.5356

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Embrace Erie's Winter



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AND
Snowshoe Rentals
AVAILABLE**

To learn more about rental times,
prices, and other details visit:
www.asburywoods.org
or scan the QR code



What Will Be Your Legacy?



Carry your love for nature, the outdoors, and environmental stewardship forward to the next generation with a Legacy gift to Asbury Woods.

Planning now to include Asbury Woods in your will, trust or other estate plans can ensure Northwestern Pennsylvania is a place where appreciation for and protection of the natural world is a deeply held value. Your forethought will provide countless children with the opportunity to be inspired by nature, fostering lifelong connections to our environment.



If you have already left Asbury Woods in your estate plans and would like to be recognized as part of our Otto Behrend Legacy Society, please contact Carissa Snarski at 814-836-6179 or csnarski@asburywoods.org.

NATURE CENTER:
Saturday and Sunday
12:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Closed Monday through Friday

TRAILS:
Open Dawn to Dusk

**THE SQUEAKY FROG
GIFT SHOP:**
Hours same as Nature Center