

THE PEEPER



Battle Creek Nature Education Society/Calvert Nature Society

www.calvertparks.org

November 2014

American Holly

A Tree for All Seasons

The dull grays and browns of winter become more prominent after the leaves fall off the trees. But fear not, the American Holly tree adds a pleasant burst of red and green to the bleak winter landscape.

A true American native, *Ilex opaca* is found from New England to Florida. As popular seasonal decorations, American Hollies were often overharvested. Hollies trees are generally healthy, avoiding many of the diseases and pests that have affected other trees in our region. Hollies do not tolerate fire or flooding and but do well in the salt air along the coast.

Seasonal Benefits

The holly tree is a tree for all seasons: green-white flowers blossom in the spring, berries from fall through winter, and leaves all year long. In harsh winters, the Hollies offer shelter for songbirds. The sharp, waxy leaves offer cover and make great hiding places from predators and provide protection from storms.

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The American holly (Ilex opaca) grows in the understory of forests in the east-central and southeast United States.

Lending a hand...

Calvert Stewards Spruce Up Our Nature Parks

Over the past year, BCNES and the Natural Resources Division have been developing a stronger volunteer program to involve citizens in our nature parks. As a result, the Calvert Stewards program was developed to encourage the local community to volunteer for a variety of projects in Calvert County nature parks. In 2014, BCNES received grants from the Calvert Environmental Trust for Youth and Cove Point Natural Heritage Trust to support this initiative.

Our long-term goal is to create a pipeline of engaged youth that will continue their stewardship of the parks into adulthood. This will benefit the participants, the parks and the community.

Two events kicked off the program: boardwalk repairs at Flag Ponds and a tree planting at Battle Creek Cypress Swamp (see page 12 for photos). These events were targeted to the youth audience, families, and adults. In addition, freshman from Huntingtown High School began a multi-year project to remove the Russian Olive that has invaded the forests of Battle Creek around the area of the tree planting. As we expand the program, Calvert Stewards volunteer projects will be held at all the nature parks and around the county.

(continued on page 10)

People Power

As BCNES transitions to Calvert Nature Society, I wanted to thank those who have supported the Society.

From our founders and longtime members to the children who come to our parks, every individual who walks through our doors or ventures out to our trails has a impact on our nature parks. Most recently we have seen the power of public opinion in the planning efforts for the new Ward Road property in Dunkirk. A joint effort between the Division of Natural Resources and the Division of Parks and Recreation, the Society and its members have been an integral part of the planning of the park.

There are so many different ways to weigh in. As seen on page 1 of this issue, we have initiated the Calvert Stewards program to care for the resources in our parks. Invasive removal, construction projects, beautification efforts are all ways that we can help out. The parks also support 'citizen scientists' who help staff naturalists with wildlife monitoring efforts.

One new effort, the Master Naturalist program, is accepting applications for the 2015 class. The program provides training for volunteers who want to learn and share their knowledge of the state's natural world. The Calvert County program is based at American Chestnut Land Trust, and BCNES is a co-sponsor. The program focuses on the ecology of the Coastal Plains of Maryland and offers local volunteer opportunities. Class dates are January 26 through May 4. Check www.calvertparks.org for more information.

Communities can help in our parks too. So many local groups offer support via donations and grants, funding great projects in our parks. We recently received a grant from the National Environmental Education Foundation to create a familiarization tour to introduce groups and organizations to the Biscoe Gray Heritage Farm in Prince Frederick.

Together, we can all work to preserve the good, green spaces in Calvert. To learn more about how you can help, go to www.calvertparks.org/volunteer.html.

—Anne Sundermann, Executive Director

CHESPAX: A Silver Anniversary

Every student in grades 1 through 7 from every public school in Calvert County is provided a meaningful outdoor experience via CHESPAX that complements lessons learned in the classroom. CHESPAX is the environmental education program for the Calvert County Public School System.

The Natural Resources Division, along with the school system, Jefferson Patterson Park, Calvert Marine Museum and others, created the program in 1989 to develop curriculum-based field trips that combine classroom activities and hands-on field experiences to help students learn about Calvert County's rich natural heritage.

This initiative was sparked by a program on animals developed in 1988 by Andy Brown. BCNES provided funds to allow schools to travel to Battle Creek Cypress Swamp (the other programs were held at Kings Landing Park). This program demonstrated how local parks and museums could be important resources to teach children about Calvert County.

Since that time, our naturalists teach 1st graders about Animal Habitats at Battle Creek Cypress Swamp and 3rd graders about Terrapins and 5th grade classes about Oysters at Flag Ponds Nature Park. Starting in 2013, half of the 5th grade programs were held at Fishing Creek, along the Chesapeake Beach Rail Trail. Even kindergarten students benefit; naturalists visit the classroom in winter to teach about the animals of Calvert County. Students in other grades participate in programs led by the other CHESPAX partners—Annemarie Sculpture Garden and Art Center, Appeal Landfill, Calvert Marine Museum, and Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum.

In addition to the staff naturalists, the CHESPAX programs depend on a corps of volunteers who are trained to lead the activities and engage the students in learning. Mary Ellen Boynton, Fred Bumgarner, Michele Caram, Julie Cornellier, Nancy Cox, Martha Grahame, Martha Hyde, Dudley Lindsley, Eleanor Prince, Sheri Tardio, Lucy Tonacci, and many others over the years have provided invaluable service by taking on the challenge to engage the students in these activities.

We are always looking for volunteers to help lead CHESPAX activities. If this sounds like your type of job, please contact us about upcoming trainings.

—Karyn Molines, Division Chief

The Battle Creek Nature Education Society/Calvert Nature Society is dedicated to the protection and preservation of Calvert County's natural heritage and the creation of an environmentally literate and aware community. We provide opportunities for appreciation and understanding of our natural world through our outreach initiatives and in support of the mission of the Calvert County Natural Resources Division. BCNES is a 501(c)3 organization.

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Fall 2014-Winter 2015 PROGRAMS



Calvert County Natural Resources Division

Battle Creek Nature Education Society/ Calvert Nature Society

Online Registration

You can now register online for programs at www.calvertparks.org.

Registrations are also accepted over the phone and by mail.

Call 410-535-5327 or email CypressSwamp@co.cal.md.us to register for programs.

NATURE PARK INFORMATION

Mailing Address

Calvert County Natural Resources
175 Main Street
Prince Frederick, MD 20678

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp Sanctuary

2880 Grays Road
Prince Frederick, MD 20678
Office & Reservations: 410-535-5327
Hours: Mon.–Fri., 9:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
Memorial Day–Labor Day
Saturday, 10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.
Sunday, 1:00–6:00 p.m.
Labor Day–Memorial Day
Saturday, 10:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
Sunday, 1:00–4:30 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

1525 Flag Ponds Parkway
Lusby, MD 20657
Park Office: 410-586-1477
Reservations: 410-535-5327
Hours: Memorial Day–Labor Day
Weekdays, 9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.
Weekends, 9:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m.
Labor Day–Memorial Day
Weekends, 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
Mon. & Fri., 9:00 a.m.– 4:00 p.m.

Hughes Tree Farm

1320 Clay Hammond Road
Prince Frederick, MD 20678
Hours: Dawn to dusk

Kings Landing Park

3255 Kings Landing Road
Huntingtown, MD 20639
Park Office: 410-535-2661
Reservations: 410-535-5327
Hours: Memorial Day–Labor Day
Daily, 9:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m.
Labor Day–Memorial Day,
Daily, 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Biscoe Gray Heritage Farm

2695 Grays Road
Prince Frederick, MD 20678
Information: 410-535-5327
Hours: Dawn to dusk

SUPPORT CALVERT'S NATURE PARKS...

JOIN BCNES/CALVERT NATURE SOCIETY

The name is changing, but our high-quality nature programs and beautiful parks remain the same. BCNES/Calvert Nature Society is a 501(c) 3 non-profit "friends" organization that supports the quality environmental education programs offered by Calvert County Natural Resources Division. ***Join or renew today online at www.calvertparks.org.***

BCNES /CALVERT NATURE SOCIETY MEMBER BENEFITS:

Most of the programs listed in this program are free to members. Members receive discounted rates on summer nature camps and special events. "Members Only" activities are scheduled throughout the year. In addition members receive the quarterly newsletter and program schedules in advance of the general public.

PROGRAMS FOR FAMILIES

Families can experience the fascinating natural world found in our area. These programs incorporate activities to entertain learners of all ages. Most programs spend time outdoors: dress for the weather and wear appropriate footwear.

Reservations required. Adult participation required unless noted. Children must be the age indicated for each program.

Fee per program: Free for BCNES members. Nonmembers pay \$8 per family.

Animal Feeding Frenzy

All ages

Every Sunday, 2:30 p.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

Come watch or help feed the frogs, turtles, hawks, and owls. Our exhibit animals need to eat every day, so here's your chance to learn about their behaviors and diet. Free.

America Recycles Day

6-9 years

Saturday, November 15, 2:00-3:30 p.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

Your children can celebrate America Recycles Day by creating some cool recycled crafts to take home with them. Afterwards, they will explore the swamp boardwalk while waiting for projects to dry.

Fall at Flag Ponds Park

18 months to 5 years

Monday, November 17, 2:00-3:30

Flag Ponds Nature Park

National Take a Hike Day seems like a perfect day to go on an outdoor fall adventure at Flag Ponds. Before hitting the trail, children can have fun with some indoor fall activities and a puppet show.

The Christmas Possum

18 months to 5 years

Friday, December 5, 2:00-3:30

Kings Landing Park

The Christmas Possum has hidden candy canes in the park. After some possum-themed indoor activities, the naturalist will lead your children on a hike to find them.

Critter Clues

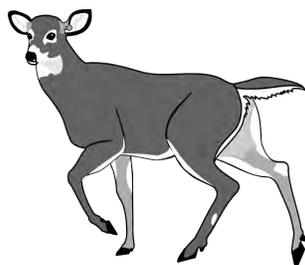
3-5 years

Tuesday, December 9,

12:30-2:00

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Come explore the clues animals leave behind from tracks in the sand to marks on trees.



Compass Skills: Candy Cane Hunt

6 to 9 years

Saturday, December 13, 2:00-3:30 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Children will learn some basic compass skills and will use what they have learned to find candy canes hidden in the park.

The Shortest Day

3-5 years

Thursday, December 18, 1:00-2:30 p.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

The days are short and the animals and plants have been getting ready for winter. Are you ready? We will tell stories, play games, and cook some snacks over a campfire.

Straw Painting

6-9 years, adult participation recommended

Saturday, December 20, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Learn a fun new way to paint as we make paintings of trees.

They Went That-a-Way!

6-9 years

Saturday, January 3, 12:00-2:00 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Discover what tracks animals leave behind as we search the park for clues.

Watch the Birdie

18 months-5 years

Friday, January 9

Session A: 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Session B: 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

After the puppets teach your children about birds in winter, you will help us participate in Day 1 of our winter bird survey for Project Feeder Watch.

Bird Feeder Stakeout

6-9 years

Saturday, January 10, 2:00-3:30 p.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

After making a treat for the birds, your children will stakeout the bird feeder and count birds for Day 2 of the nature center's Project Feeder Watch winter bird survey.

PROGRAMS FOR FAMILIES (cont'd from page 4)

Fee per program: Free for BCNES members. Nonmembers pay \$8 per family.

Where Did They Go?

18 months-5 years

Tuesday, January 13, 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Learn about animals that are great at hide and seek and why it is important for them to be able to blend in with their surroundings.

Amazing Evergreens

3-5 years

Thursday, January 29

Session A: 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Session B: 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Kings Landing Park

We will use our senses to explore the local evergreens-how do they feel? How do they smell? We will also look to see how our swamp animals might use these trees.

Groundhog Day

18 months-5 years

Monday, February 2

Session A: 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Session B: 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

The puppets will tell your children about groundhogs and other animals that hibernate, then take a short walk to see where animals might sleep in the winter.

Snakes

6-9 years

Saturday, February 7, 2:00-3:30 p.m.

Kings Landing Park

Your children will learn about these misunderstood creatures and the strategies they use to survive the winter.

Wade In To Weather

3-5 years

Thursday, February 12

Session A: 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Session B: 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Kings Landing Park

We'll look at some different ways to measure the winter weather and then go for a walk outside to try things out.

Winter Beach

6-9 years

Sunday, February 22,

10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

We'll explore the beach to see what animals call the beach home in the winter time.

We'll end with a warm treat by the fire. Be sure to dress warm!

Swamp Bandits

3-5 years

Wednesday, February 25,

10:00-11:30 a.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

Come learn about the sneaky creatures that lurk in the swamp in the winter. We'll search for swamp bandit tracks while hiking on the boardwalk.

Time to Nest

3-5 years

Tuesday, March 3

Session A: 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Session B: 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

Most of the year, the trees help to hide nests in their branches, but in spring we should be able to find some old nests -and maybe some new. We will begin inside by looking at some of the different nests our swamp animals make and end with an outdoor adventure to see if we can spy any nests!

Seed Bombs!

3-5 years

Thursday, March 12, 10:00-11:30 a.m.

Kings Landing Park

Learn about how plants grow as we make some "seed bombs" that you can plant in your garden. Wear clothes that you can get dirty.

Froggy Night Hike

All ages

Friday, March 20, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Celebrate the first day of spring by hiking through Flag Ponds to look for frogs and other signs of spring. Learn some frog calls and other identifying characteristics too.

Spring Chorus

18 months-5 years

Monday, March 23

Session A: 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Session B: 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Spring is here and the puppets are singing! Children can practice making their best frog calls while they hike to the pond.

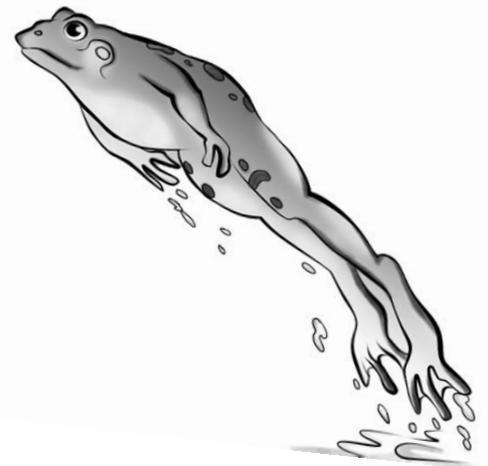
The Great Marshmallow Mystery

All ages

Saturday, March 28, 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

Have you ever wondered where marshmallows come from? We'll teach you about the origin of marshmallows and we will make some of our own!



PROGRAMS FOR 10–16 YEAR OLDS (Including Junior Rangers Corps)

These programs encourage developing minds to appreciate and protect the nature around them. Programs identified by the Junior Rangers Corps logo are designed to create a group of young men and women with a strong, long-term commitment to preserving and protecting the landscapes, waterways, and natural resources of Calvert County Maryland.

Adult participant is not required at these programs. Program fees are noted with description

Nature Photography

10-13 years

Saturday, November 15, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

Saturday, December 13, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Saturday, January 10, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

Saturday, February 7, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Kings Landing Park

Saturday March 21, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Your teen will have fun exploring the outdoors as they take pictures of amazing landscapes and cool plants and animals. Photography tips, themes and locations will vary every month. Free for BCNES members; \$12 per person for nonmembers.

Tree Explorer

10-13 years

Tuesday, January 27,

9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Kings Landing Park

Come to Kings Landing Park to explore some of the activities you can do with sticks and trees in the winter months. We'll make stick sculptures, tree art, play games, and make props to play with! Bring a refillable water bottle. Free for BCNES members; \$12 per person for nonmembers.



Raptors Up Close

12-16 years

Tuesday, January 27, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

Get a behind-the-scenes look at the raptors (hawk and owls) that live here at the nature center. Find out what it takes to be a raptor handler and learn more about these awesome birds. Bring lunch and a snack. Free for BCNES members; \$12 per person for nonmembers.



The Art of Observation

12-16 years

Saturday, February 28, 2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.

Kings Landing Park

A creative journal can be a tool for learning, a place for recording ideas, and a way to help us remember experiences. We will make journals and try out some fun journaling exercises. Free for BCNES members; \$8 per person for nonmembers.



Spotted Safari

10-13 years

Saturday, March 28, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

It's that time of the year for the spotted salamanders to make their move to the swamp. We'll learn more about these awesome animals and head out in search of them in the park. Free for BCNES members; \$8 per person for nonmembers.



Archery

10-13 years

Tuesday, March 31, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Kings Landing Park

Come to Kings Landing Park to practice your archery skills! Never shot a bow and arrow? No problem, we'll have a short lesson for beginners before we start. Free for BCNES members; \$8 per person for nonmembers.



Spring Bio Blitz -Teen Overnight

12-16 years

Wednesday, April 1, 10:00 a.m. overnight through

Thursday, April 2, 9:00 a.m., Flag Ponds Nature Park

Spend part of spring break with friends searching the woods, ponds, and swamps for animals big and small. We will provide dinner, campfire snacks and breakfast. \$25 for BCNES members; \$40 per person for nonmembers.



But wait, there's more ...

**See page 8 for other programs
teens might enjoy.**

SCHOOL'S OUT! ADVENTURES

Why spend a day off from school inside when you can be out in nature exploring, creating, and having fun! For children in the grades indicated, only. Fees are per child as noted in description.

Nature Nuts!

Children in grades 4 -6

Saturday, January 17, 9:00 a.m. to Sunday, January 18, 9:00 a.m. (overnight)

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Just because it is cold doesn't mean that we need to stay inside. Have fun with other nature nuts as we explore the winter woods and beach. After sunset, we will head out into the quiet for a night walk, followed by a campfire and s'mores. This camp includes both indoor and outdoor activities; we will be sleeping inside. Dinner, breakfast, and snacks included. Members: \$75; Nonmembers: \$90.

Snakes, Turtles, and Frogs! Oh My!

Children in grades 1 -2

Wednesday, February 4, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

Get a behind-the-scenes look at the "herps" (reptiles and amphibians) that live at the nature center. We will explore what it takes to keep these captive animals safe and learn why their wild relatives are important. Members: \$20; Nonmembers: \$30.

Nature Detectives

Children in grades 3 -5

Monday, February 16, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Kings Landing Park

How can we tell what animals have been visiting us? Sometimes they leave behind clues that we can discover if we know what to look for. Come try your hand at being a nature detective! Dress for the weather. Bring lunch and a snack. Members: \$20; Nonmembers: \$30.

Mud Monsters

Children in grades 1-4

Monday and Tuesday, March 30 and 31,

9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Feel like you've been stuck inside all winter? This camp will be full of adventures -we will wade into the swamp, use nets to look for amphibians, and, of course, play in the mud. Members: \$40; Nonmembers: \$60.

CAMPFIRES

These are outdoor activities; please dress accordingly.

Registration and adult participation are both required.

Fee per program: Free for BCNES members.

Nonmembers pay \$8 per family.

Winter Wanders

All Ages

Saturday, December 20, 4:30-6:30 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Gather around a campfire as we discuss what animals in our area do during the winter time. Bring a lawn chair and a mug.

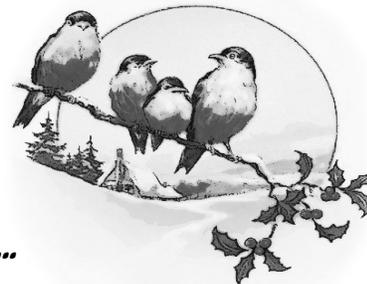
Marvelous Mammals Family Campfire

All ages

Saturday, February 28, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Kings Landing Park

Do you like big furry animals? As we enjoy 'smores around the campfire, we'll learn what all mammals have in common. We'll take an up close look at some bones and skins from our local mammals, and learn what clues these sometimes secretive animals leave behind that we can find.



Join us...

Christmas Bird Count

Date: Sunday, December 28

Time: 7:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Location: Various

For more than 100 years the Audubon Society has conducted an annual nation-wide Christmas Bird Count.

Join birders as they spend the day counting birds at various locations in the southern end of Calvert County. The count day is followed by a tally at a nearby restaurant.

Counters can be partnered with more experienced birders, count for all or part of the day or even report from personal feeders. Free.

Register: Sign up online at www.calvertparks.org, by email or by phone. For more information, contact Andy Brown at 410-535-5327; brownaj@co.cal.md.us.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Take time to learn about and appreciate the natural resources found throughout the County. These programs combine hiking through the parks, while learning more about the plants, animals, and other natural wonders. These programs are geared towards adults and teens. Fees, unless noted: Free for BCNES members. Nonmembers pay \$8 per person

Full Moon and Meteor Hike

13 year-adult, under 18 with an adult

Saturday, January 3, 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

We'll go for a full moon hike down to the beach in hopes of seeing the Quadrantids Meteor Shower.

Winter Greens

16 years-adult

Friday, January 16, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Ward Road Property

We'll explore the forests in search of the ferns, herbaceous plants, and trees that are green in the winter. Co-sponsored with the Maryland Native Plant Society.

Eagle Hike

15 years-adult, under 18 with an adult

Saturday, February 21, 7:30-9:30 a.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

We'll hike down to the Flag Ponds beach in search of these impressive birds.

Stalking the Wild Timberdoodle

13 years-adult, under 16 with an adult

Thursday, March 5, 5:30-7:00 p.m.

Ward Road Property

As the full moon rises we'll stroll along the fields and wetlands listening for the breeding display of the American Woodcock.

Full Moon Hike

16 years-adult

Saturday, April 4,

7:00-9:00 p.m.

Biscoe Gray Heritage Farm

Appreciate the beauty of Biscoe Gray

Heritage Farm at night under the light

of the Grass Moon. This is a moderately strenuous hike of approximately 2 miles at a brisk pace over hilly and uneven terrain for two hours with minimal stops.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Assisting at the parks is a rewarding way to raise awareness of the importance of our natural lands. Use your experience to help preserve our future in Calvert County by becoming one of our Calvert Stewards. Some projects are appropriate for families, and most qualify for the Junior Rangers Corps. Programs are free, unless noted.

Kestrel Box Installation

15 years-adults, under 18 with an adult

Wednesday, January 21, 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

The American Kestrel is our smallest falcon and depends on open fields and sparse woods for hunting. Join us in the American Kestrel Partnership to install some nest boxes around the county.

Barn Owl Box Workday

All ages (under 14 with an adult)

Friday, December 5, 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Various locations

Repair, clean and install Barn Owl boxes at various locations. Come for all or part of the day.

Build a Box

All ages

Saturday, January 24, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

Come with us to Biscoe Gray Heritage Farm to install one of our new boxes for Barn Owls and Prothonotary Warblers and

take a Bluebird box home with you for your yard. Program fee: \$8 per family.

Great Backyard Bird Count

All ages

Friday, February 13, 8:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

The 18th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count begins today. Whether you are a novice or an expert birder, volunteers of all ages are welcome to help identify and count birds. Data will be used by researchers at Cornell and the National Audubon Society.

Salamander Study Orientation

Adults and families with older children

(under 16, with adult)

Wednesday, March 4, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

If you're looking to get more involved with the parks here in the county or would just like an excuse to spend some time in the woods, we can always need to new volunteers to check our salamander traps. This is a great opportunity for home school students interested in the environment.

LIST OF EVENTS, BY DATE

DECEMBER

Friday, December 5, Barn Owl Box Work Day, All ages, varies
 Friday, December 5, The Christmas Possum, 18 months to 5 years, KLP
 Saturday, December 6, Shelter Building, 12–16 years, KLP
 Tuesday, December 9, Critter Clues, 3-5 years, FPNP
 Saturday, December 13, Nature Photography, 10–13 years, FPNP
 Saturday, December 13, Compass Skills: Candy Cane Hunt, 6–9 years, FPNP
 December 18, The Shortest Day, 3-5 years, BCCS
 Saturday, December 20, Straw Painting, 6–9 years, FPNP
 Saturday, December 20, Winter Wanders, All ages, FPNP
 December 28, Christmas Bird Count, 16 years-adult, varies

JANUARY

Saturday, January 3, Full Moon and Meteor Hike, 13 years–adult, FPNP
 Saturday, January 3, They Went That-a-Way!, 6–9 years, FPNP
 Friday, January 9, Watch the Birdie, 18 months–5 years, BCCS
 Saturday, January 10, Nature Photography, 10–13 years, BCCS
 Saturday, January 10, Bird Feeder Stakeout, 6–9 years, BCCS
 Tuesday, January 13, Where Did They Go?, 18 months–5 years, FPNP
 Friday, January 16, Winter Greens, 16 years–adult, WARD
 Saturday, January 17 – Sunday, January 18, Nature Nuts!, Grades 4–6, FPNP
 Wednesday, January 21, Kestrel Box Installation, 15 years–adults, BCCS
 Saturday, January 24, Build a Box, All ages, BCCS
 Tuesday, January 27, Raptors Up Close, 12–16 years, BCCS
 Tuesday, January 27, Tree Explorer, 10–13 years, KLP
 Thursday, January 29, Amazing Evergreens, 3–5 years, KLP

FEBRUARY

Monday, February 2, Groundhog Day, 18 months–5 years, FPNP
 Wednesday, February 4, Snakes, Turtles, and Frogs! Oh My!, Grades 1–2, BCCS

Saturday, February 7, Snakes, 6–9 years, KLP
 Saturday, February 7, Nature Photography, 10–13 years, KLP
 Thursday, February 12, Wade In To Weather, 3–5 years, KLP
 Friday, February 13, Great Backyard Bird Count, All ages, FPNP
 Monday, February 16, Nature Detectives, Grades 3 –5, KLP
 Saturday, February 21, Eagle Hike, 15 years–adult, FPNP
 Sunday, February 22, Winter Beach, 6–9 years, FPNP
 Wednesday, February 25, Swamp Bandits, 3–5 years, BCCS
 Saturday, February 28, The Art of Observation, 12–16 years, KLP
 Saturday, February 28, Marvelous Mammals Family Campfire, All ages, KLP

MARCH

Tuesday, March 3, Time to Nest, 3–5 years, BCCS
 Wednesday, March 4, Salamander Study Orientation, All ages, FPNP
 Thursday, March 5, Stalking the Wild Timberdoodle, 13 years–adult, WARD
 Thursday, March 12, Seed Bombs!, 3–5 years, KLP
 Friday, March 20, Froggy Night Hike, All ages, FPNP
 Saturday March 21, Nature Photography, 10–13 years, FPNP
 Monday, March 23, Spring Chorus, 18 months–5 years, FPNP
 Saturday, March 28, The Great Marshmallow Mystery, All ages, BCCS
 Saturday, March 28, Spotted Safari, 10–13 years, FPNP
 Monday and Tuesday, March 30–31, Mud Monsters, Grades 1–4, FPNP
 Tuesday, March 31, Archery , 10–13 years, KLP

ALL PROGRAMS

are listed at
www.calvertparks.org.

KEY to PARKS

BCCS—Battle Creek Cypress Swamp
 BGHF—Biscoe Gray Heritage Farm
 FPNP—Flag Ponds Nature Park
 HP—Hutchins Pond
 HTF—Hughes Tree Farm
 KLP—Kings Landing Park
 WARD—Ward Road Property

To register by mail, please out this form and mail to Natural Resources, 175 Main Street, Prince Frederick, MD 20678. To be assured of a spot, please register online at www.calvertparks.org.

Adult's Name _____ Email _____
 Address _____ City, State, ZIP: _____
 Daytime Phone _____ Evening Phone _____

We are members of BCNES Join BCNES now (\$30/year) and pay the member's fee. Send a separate membership check payable to BCNES and mail it to Natural Resources, 175 Main Street, Prince Frederick, MD 20678.

Program name	Program Date/Time	Participant's Name	Age / Grade	Fee	Kayak Single or Double

The A-maze-ing Meadow

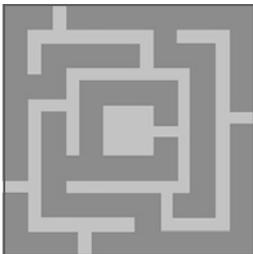
Garden labyrinths have existed since ancient times, and the abundance of corn, hay, and sorghum mazes that can be found in Autumn are testimony to their staying power in modern gardens. Kings Landing Park began construction of a one acre 'Meadow Maze' in March of 2014, and has watched it flourish from a grassy lawn into a manicured labyrinth of asters, milkweed, thistle, and other native meadow flora.

The 'Meadow Maze' was designed to be easy to navigate, with four entrances (or exits, depending on if you are coming or going!) into the maze and one large central destination with benches to take a rest. To build the maze, it was first mown down to the ground and marked with recycled tree stakes. The stakes were tied with orange marking tape to designate areas that would continue to be mown, and areas that would be left to grow naturally. Within a few weeks, the maze began to form and has now become an adventurous destination for park visitors.

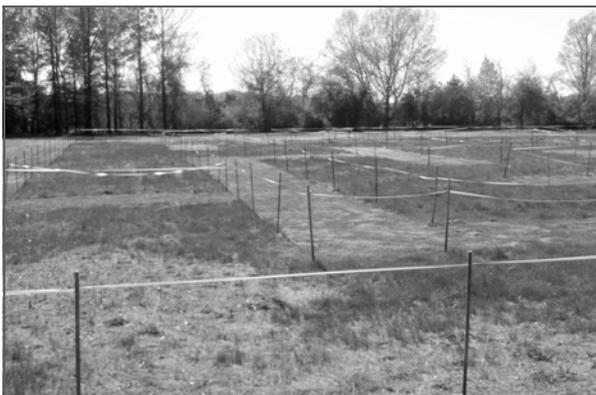
Kids love running through the maze, exploring the different paths and getting caught at dead ends while watching native insects and animals in their natural habitat. There have been sightings of cabbage white butterflies, monarch caterpillars, toads, and groundhogs!

Next time you visit Kings Landing Park, make sure to get lost for a while in the natural surroundings of the 'Meadow Maze.'

—Melinda Whicher, Park Manager



Springtime photo of the Meadow Maze at Kings Landing, under construction. At left is a schematic of the maze. Photo by Melinda Whicher.



American Holly (cont'd from page 1)

The leaves aren't the only benefit for wildlife. Red berries, or drupes, start growing in September and remain on the tree throughout the winter. The berries provide a much needed winter food source.

The drupes are a good food source for deer, foxes, raccoons, rabbits, squirrels, and a variety of birds including Turkey, Bobwhites, Doves, Goldfinches, Cardinals, and other songbirds. When animals eat the drupes, it helps distribute holly seeds. Humans should not eat holly berries—they cause vomiting.

Not all American Hollies produce the drupes, however. Unlike many plants, Hollies are dioecious; that is, they have female plants and male plants. Both male and female produce flowers with small white petals but only the females produce the drupes.

Hollies are typically grown in the shade of other larger trees, like Oaks, Beeches, and Poplars, making it an Understory tree. American Holly trees grow in forests along the East coast from as far north as Massachusetts to as far south as mid Florida and as far west as eastern Texas alongside White Oaks, American Beech, Flowering Dogwoods, Red Maples, Hickory, Sweetgum, Loblolly and Virginia Pine trees.

—Karlene Happell, Intern

Volunteer

It's a great way to help your parks.

www.calvertparks.org/volunteer.html

Calvert Stewards (cont'd from page 1)

Calvert Steward volunteer projects allow students, families and adults to participate in a variety of service projects: trail maintenance, invasive plant removal, native plant gardening, bird nest box monitoring, and habitat enhancement. Workshops and orientations are planned for projects that require specific training such as the salamander monitoring program. We are also partners with several nation-wide efforts to monitor bird, fish, monarch, and bird populations.

Most of the events are open to community groups and the general public. We will also reach out to appropriate grade levels in Calvert's schools via CHESPAX, and through local youth organizations, such as scouts and area churches, to participate.

To learn more about becoming a Calvert Steward, go to <http://calvertparks.org/volunteer.html>.

—Karyn Moines, Division Chief

The Search for the Elusive Siren

A recent discovery of a large primitive salamander called a Siren in Prince Georges County has excited herpetologists state-wide. This salamander is wide-spread throughout the Southeastern United States. It was believed to be extirpated in Maryland and in fact may have not ever occurred here to begin with. There are only a handful of historical records from the State and none have been confirmed. The recent discovery has prompted biologists to revisit these former records and locations to conduct more intensive surveys to see if indeed they may be present. Calvert County has two of those historical records.

In mid September, Naturalists Andy Brown, Tania Gale, Shannon Steele and Gene Groshon along with volunteer Mary Hollinger and DNR biologist Scott Smith installed 9 traps at multiple locations to attempt to capture one of these secretive amphibians. Traps were checked daily for 2 weeks, but unfortunately, no Sirens were found. It is exciting to know that there may be creatures living around us that go undetected for years.

—Andy Brown, Senior Naturalist



The Siren team sets its traps in search of the Calvert County Siren. Photo courtesy of Mary B. Hollinger.

Nest Box Project for Calvert Barn Owls

As the 2014 Barn Owlets mature, our volunteers are ensuring that they have a nest box of their own to raise young in future years.

The barn owl project began in the mid 1990s when numerous nest boxes were placed in suitable habitat throughout Calvert County.

We are currently looking for additional nest box locations.

If you have seen owls in a barn, or believe you have suitable habitat, 25 or more acres of non-row agriculture fields, we would like to place a nest box on your property. Contact Senior Naturalist Andy Brown at 410-535-5327; brownaj@co.cal.md.us.

We are holding Barn Owl Box Workdays, November 7 and December 5. See the website for details.

—Andy Brown, Senior Naturalist



Volunteer Jason Avery helps maintain and upgrade barn owl boxes at a Calvert County farm.

2014 Bluebird Report

This year was an average one for our bluebird trails. Overall production was down by 4%. However, there were several bright spots. Mary Hollinger moved boxes from trees to posts at Twin Shields and as a result had a staggering 169% increase. Charlie Anderson again had a good year after installing predator guards. He fledged a whopping 139 getting oh so close to Lisa Parran's all-time record at Preston of 145. Mike and Julie Gargano continue to have very little loss at the Hance Farm. Ideal box location at that site has enabled them to produce an incredible 5.68 fledglings per box this past year. We added 2 new trails, Ward Rd and Calverton School.

Special thanks to Mary Hollinger for stepping up and monitoring Randle Cliffs this year in addition to Twin Shields. Also, a huge thank you goes out to Liz Sanders at Benedict Metals and Calverton School for providing the material to construct 80 predator guards. Currently 2 scouts are working on making and installing the guards this fall and winter. We would also like to welcome new monitors Alan Christian, Karen Moreland and Karen Anderson.

We will continue to work this winter to make adjustments to trails that are experiencing higher than desired losses by relocating boxes and installing predator guards. We also will be looking for a new location for the Randle Cliffs Trail in the north end of the County. We are still in need of volunteers to monitor several existing trails so, if you have an interest please contact the Nature Center at 410-535-5327 or brownaj@co.cal.md.us.

—Andy Brown, Senior Naturalist

Battle Creek Nature Education Society/
Calvert Nature Society
PO Box 122
Port Republic, MD 20676

Lend a hand, help a park! **Calvert Stewards** www.calvertparks.org/volunteer.html



Repairing the Boardwalk at Flag Ponds Nature Park



Planting American Hollies at Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

