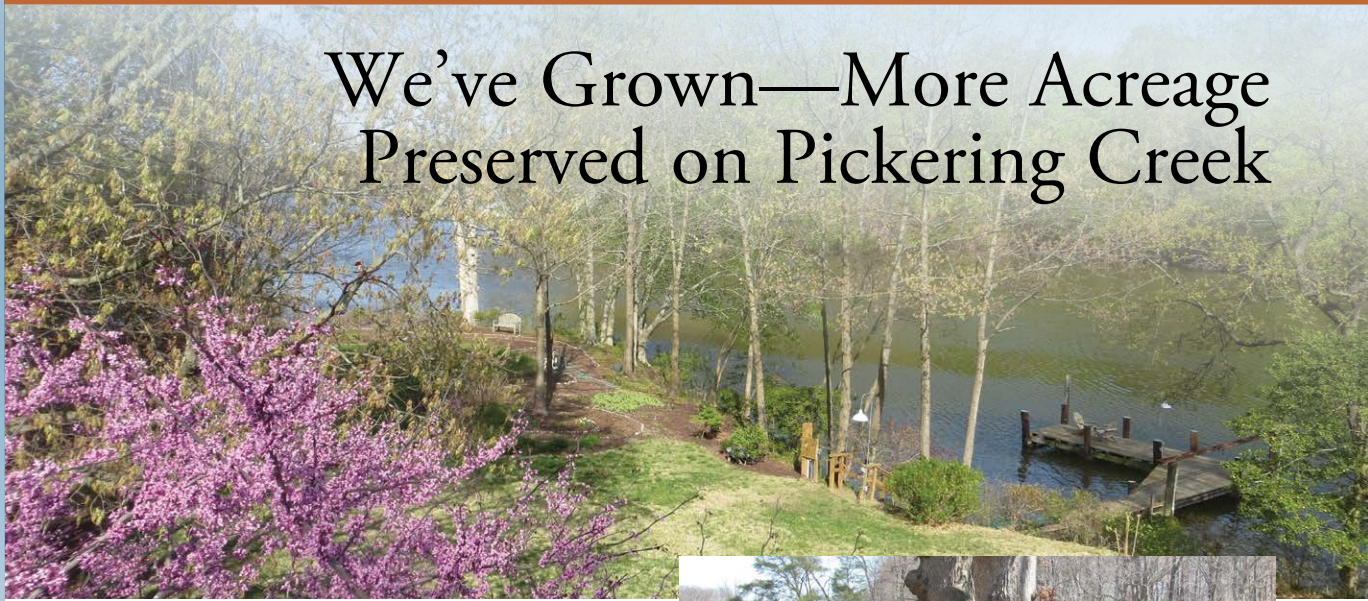


We've Grown—More Acreage Preserved on Pickering Creek



Pickering Creek Audubon Center recently added 10 acres to the 400-acre footprint of the Center, thanks to a gift of property from George and Catherine (Cemmy) Peterson and their family. Cemmy and George have spent the last twenty years enjoying Pickering Creek through many seasons, hearing children squealing with delight across the creek as they experience the wonders of nature, which was one of the leading inspirations to donate their property. Both nature enthusiasts, Cemmy served as a Trustee and past president of the Pickering Creek Board of Trustees and George is an active volunteer at the Center.

Through 2013, the Center board and staff worked on creating a Master Site Plan that both addressed infrastructure needs at the Center as well as improving bird habitat in the larger landscape of the Center's neighborhood. With forests as a high priority habitat for bird conservation for Audubon, a portion of the Master Site Plan for Pickering Creek seeks to knit together the forested parts of northern Talbot County to improve the area for forest interior dwelling birds. In addition to broader conservation goals, the Center also sought to find additional places it could use to explore nature with students, both young and old. The Petersons heard that call, and were a terrific part of creating that vision four years ago. In what can only be described as an awesome selfless act, they took the lead this past December by donating their ten acre property and three bedroom home immediately across Pickering Creek from the main campus of the Center to the Chesapeake Audubon Society. "We are honored and awed to receive such a thoughtful and generous gift," said Mark Scallion, Pickering Creek Audubon Center's Director. The parcel, which debuted it's first program with youth this past



George & Cemmy Peterson overlooking the Pickering Creek boat house

May, will be known as Peterson Woods at Pickering Creek Audubon Center.

George Peterson reflects, "We always felt that the Audubon Center shared Pickering Creek with us. We were only a hundred yards away, across an arm of Pickering Creek, and shared everything from wildlife to the excited shouts of summer campers on Pickering's trails and the equally loud shouts of our grandchildren (who went on to become Pickering campers).

Cemmy remarks, "Over the years, we have had opportunities to take part in the life of the Center in many ways. We are ever impressed with the acumen and dedication of its staff, and the programs they create for thousands and thousands of children. Knowing that their efforts have brought the Center into a position of conservation leadership on the Eastern Shore, we entrust our land to their care. Perhaps our gift will encourage others to consider conservation easements or outright gifts of property to further the Center's mission."

Although not open to the public, a selection of the Center's programs offered to the public will be held at Peterson Woods. Keep an eye on the Center's program calendar at www.pickeringcreek.org to take advantage of an opportunity to visit this gem.

*Dedicated to
Community-Based
Conservation
of Natural
Resources through
Environmental
Education
and Outreach
on the Eastern
Shore of the
Chesapeake Bay*

Fourth Graders Take Action on Climate Solutions

The 2016-17 school year brought a unique opportunity to Talbot County fourth grade students and teachers: a chance to learn the science of climate change and how to participate in solutions.

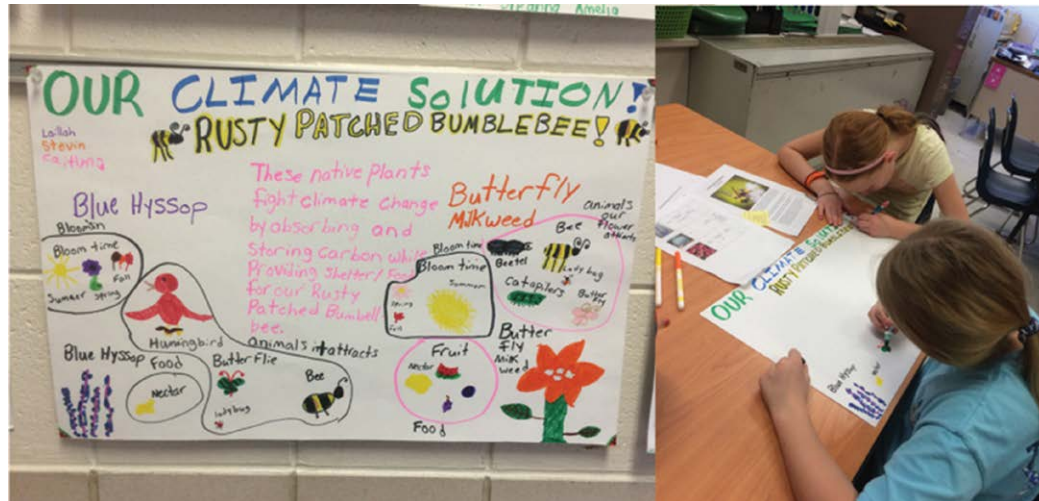
With the support of Chesapeake Audubon Society, Pickering Creek educators and Talbot County teachers and administration met in the summer and fall to plan the program curriculum. Every fourth grader in Talbot County would participate in a series of in-school lessons, led by Pickering Creek educators and supported by Talbot County teachers that covered the basic mechanism of climate change, as well as general impacts on habitats and ways that students can play a role in the problem-solving responses to this global phenomenon.

Beginning with a lesson led by the classroom teachers, students learned about the role and movement of carbon around the Earth. Acting as carbon molecules, students bounced between stations in their classroom labeled “Plants,” “Ocean,” “Animals,” “Atmosphere,” and more. At each stop, students rolled a die to find out where to go next, and how they got there.

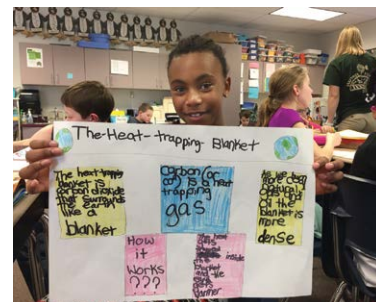
Over the course of three follow up lessons, Pickering Creek educators visited classrooms to teach about the impact of burning fossil fuels on the Earth’s atmosphere. During one game, students acted like the atmosphere, and layered “heat-trapping blankets” on themselves as more and more fossil fuels were burned and carbon dioxide was released.

Students applied their new knowledge to habitats they have studied in school. In small groups, students conducted grade-level research on how climate change is impacting the animals, plants, and weather patterns in the Chesapeake Bay, forests, deserts, the ocean and in the Arctic.

With partners, students talked about how people can help with such a large problem. Some classes wanted to share



Climate solution projects promote native plants and reducing fossil fuel use



their knowledge with other students by presenting their research, making morning announcements and designing informative and colorful posters. Others decided to plant a “carbon sink” on their school grounds with native plants that provide food to some Maryland species that face threats from climate change. The solutions projects were a way for students to think creatively and positively about how they can help.

Participating students took part in an assessment of their knowledge of climate change both before and after the lessons. Through that assessment, it was determined that correct answers grew from around 36% before the lessons to nearly 78% after. Especially exciting was students growth in understanding the difference between weather and climate, how carbon dioxide acts in the atmosphere, and in naming solutions in which they can participate.

“The way it was taught allowed the students to have a very clear understand-

ing of climate change,” commented, one teacher. “They could share the information they learned.” In addition to the work with fourth graders, Pickering Creek educators had an opportunity to train elementary science teachers on the science behind climate change. As more Maryland schools implement the Next Generation Science Standards, climate change will become a topic revisited by students throughout their academic years. Introducing the topic early helps teachers to effectively hit those standards, and creates a foundation of understanding for young learners before they reach middle school.

Going forward Pickering Creek will be working with Talbot County teachers to continue and strengthen the lessons and climate stewardship opportunities in the 2017-18 academic year. Incoming fourth graders will have the chance to share why they care about our climate and why they want to protect habitats for animals, plants and people. If you’d like to help support this program please contact our office.

Paddling Adventures on Pickering

On a beautiful early evening in June, exclamations of adventure from children and their mentors filled the air on the shores of Pickering Creek as they paddled in the shallow waters around the Center. Thanks to generous funding from the Miles River Yacht Club Foundation, six local community groups, including Talbot Mentors, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Chesapeake, VisionQuest, and the Easton High School B.E.S.T. program, among others, enjoyed guided canoe programs on the Creek over the last year. One hundred people, many who might not otherwise have had the opportunity, experienced the wonder and joy of paddling on Pickering Creek.

For many of the mentors, this was a unique opportunity to share a bonding experience of a new skill while exploring nature with their mentees. For some of the adults, as well as most of the children, canoeing was an entirely new experience. Each program focused on basic paddle instruction, enjoyment of the Creek and wildlife, and an introduction to program opportunities at the Center. Beyond canoe instruction, participants experienced the magic of simply being on the water—



eagles, kingfishers, ospreys and herons soaring overhead or sneaking nearby; skates flapping their wings in the creek; fish flopping in and out of the water; and the quiet peace of Pickering Creek’s calm waters. Some of the participants, now acquainted with Pickering Creek Audubon Center, have become repeat visitors at the Center, joining in on public programs and lending a hand during volunteer events.

Pickering Creek Audubon Center strives to remove barriers to outdoor experiences; we believe that everyone has the right to develop meaningful relationships with the natural world. It is our hope that the impact of these positive paddling experiences will continue to ripple into

the future by increasing our community’s confidence to continue exploring the natural world by foot or by canoe.

Pickering Creek is free and open to all from dawn to dusk daily for exploration and enjoyment. Guided group programs are scheduled regularly throughout the year. Like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/pickeringcreek to get public program updates!



Teachers Investigate Human Impacts by Land and Sea

“Every time I do a workshop with Pickering Creek it’s always diverse, interesting, and hands-on,” Cathy Bornhoeft, Environmental Science teacher at North Caroline High School, said after participating in the two-day Audubon Watershed Experience teacher professional development workshop in July 2017. Now in its fifteenth year and funded in 2017 by Chesapeake Bay Trust, the Audubon Watershed Experience (AWE) program, has connected thousands of high school biology and environmental science students to local conservation efforts on the Eastern Shore through hands-on and investigative in-class lessons and field experiences at Pickering Creek. Although the students are the focus of this successful program, another equally important and engaged group at the center of the program are the teachers – partaking in their own exciting and experiential AWE program this summer.



staff on projects to help local salt marshes adapt to a changing climate.

With strong coffee in hand, the teachers started Day Two at 6:00 AM for a trip to the Chester River Field Research Station in Chestertown to experience bird banding up close. Maren Gimpel, Field Ecologist for Washington College’s Center for Environment and Society, led the group around the 228-acre Chino Farms migration banding station; demonstrated how birds are caught, banded, and released; and shared research findings from the banding station’s records. Similar to Pickering Creek Audubon Center, Chino Farms has a long history of agriculture and a recent history of conservation and restoration efforts to improve and protect bird habitats. Using data collected from the banding station, teachers practiced a lesson investigating the impacts of weather, land management, and local habitat changes on Northern Bobwhite Quail and Grasshopper Sparrow populations.

Following their morning at the banding station, the teachers boarded Washington College’s research vessel *Callinectes* for an afternoon on the Chester River. Emily Harris, Watershed Coordinator for the Chester River Association (CRA), demonstrated water sampling techniques for fresh and brack-



ish water; discussed restoration, behavior change, and policy initiatives to reduce pollution; and introduced projects CRA works on with landowners, homeowners, and legislators to improve local water quality.

Teacher professional development workshops with Pickering Creek not only introduce teachers to new activities, resources, and lessons for the classroom, and connect them directly with scientists working in the field—most importantly they remind teachers of the rich learning experiences the outdoors can provide. When asked what they found most valuable about the two-day workshop, one teacher commented, “Interacting with the scientists and hearing first-hand the importance of the experiments they were conducting. This allows me to better explain these things to my students and show actual work.”

The Magic of Summer

by Mary “Frost” Chiarella

Weekday visitors to Pickering Creek can usually expect to find a moderate degree of commotion. None of the schoolyear bustle, however, comes close to the happy chaos of summer.

From the moment you arrive on the property you can sense a change. Telltale signs of campers abound: no fewer than three bottles of sunscreen, two bug sprays, a water bottle, two towels, and a single pink sneaker decorate the walkway of a classroom. A swarm of pre-teens straggles across the office parking lot, dripping wet and clutching towels, while a group of impossibly tiny kids sprint after a counselor, brandishing sponges and cackling hysterically.

This is summer at Pickering Creek. The days are long, bright, and busy. The fireflies are out in glittering clouds across the meadows, and frogs are singing around the wetlands. But it is EcoCamp that really characterizes summer. Pickering Creek’s popular nature camp has been a summer staple for over 20 years, annually drawing in kids from Talbot County and beyond. Campers, ranging in age from four to twelve, spend the days exploring Pickering’s wetlands, constructing forts in the forest, splashing and paddling the Creek, playing games, and making new friends.

As an EcoCamp counselor, my world—at least for the six crazily active weeks of camp—consisted of mud, laughter, lost shoes, and found toads. Though I had worked as a Pickering educator during both of the previous two school years, this was my first taste of summer camp. Camp is an entirely different can of worms.

I spent much more time with my campers than with those students I taught during the school year. Camp groups are small, typically just twelve or thirteen kids. Spending the week with this same dozen



Science is best when it is hands on

allowed me to get to know them well. I spent hours each day listening to stories, discussing super heroes and favorite pets, watching my campers make new friends and try new things.

Likewise, campers get to know their counselors well over the course of a week or more. I frequently fielded questions about whether I would be a counselor again next year, and about where counselors from last year had gone, and did I know those counselors because “they were amazing.” Our EcoCamp staff—which consists of one indomitable director, three adult counselors, and twenty-some teen junior counselors—is amazing. And while the counselors change from summer to summer, it’s rewarding to know that the kids still remember them as a crucial part of the camp experience.

Summer camp is a time when experiences somehow seem more vivid. It’s a season when sensations are intensified, and when everything at Pickering Creek—the scaly texture of a newly caught perch, the fragrant crunch of pine needles underfoot, and the mouth-puckering tartness of wild blackberries—appears more striking. And because campers typically arrive with a change of clothes, there’s not any reason

that they can’t throw themselves (often literally) into an experience or activity. The best days at EcoCamp are often the muddiest or wettest, and the best memories made while exploring with all of our senses.

I leave EcoCamp with a trove of new memories: of my campers, my fellow counselors, and of the amazing nature moments only witnessed during the summer at Pickering Creek-- a July snowstorm of shredded cattail fluff, crazy summer rainstorms, skates hovering in the Creek, a dark woods brighten by thousands of fireflies.

EcoCamp is a special time at Pickering, and I loved it. Come visit; don’t be discouraged by the groups of over excited kids along the lane, or the shrieking and giggly laughter. Drive on, park, and step out into Pickering summer. You can sense something in the air—apart from the lingering cloud of insect repellent and shredded cattail fluff. There’s a feeling of wild excitement, of frenzy. And of the freedom to be silly, get dirty, and learn while doing it.

EcoCamp registration begins in February of 2018. Keep your eyes on your email, Facebook and pickeringcreek.audubon.org to be sure your young loved ones don’t miss out!

Advance registration required for all programs
by calling 410-822-4903.

Harvest Hoedown

Sunday, October 8, 2017

11am – 4pm

Fun for the whole family at the annual “open house” event. Bluegrass, food, kids activities, artisans, boat rides and more! Visit pickeringcreek.audubon.org for more information.

Fall Foliage Paddle

Thursday, October 12, 2017

5:00 – 6:30pm

\$15.00 per person

Cruise along Pickering Creek while taking in the colorful sights of autumn on this guided canoe paddle. Admire nature’s art as red, orange, and yellow leaves shimmer and reflect off the water’s surface. Spy for fall migrants, breathe in the crisp autumn air, and meander through the bends and turns along the shoreline. Canoes, paddles, PFDs, and guided tour provided. Please wear shoes securely attached to your feet (no flip flops!).

Ponding Around at Pickering

Wednesday, October 18, 2017

4:30 – 5:30pm

\$5.00 per person

Explore the pond at Pickering and discover how large the animals grew over the summer! We will be dip netting and walking seine nets through the water to catch tadpoles, frogs, catfish, crawfish, turtles, and much more. Come see what the waters are hiding! Please dress in water-proof boots.

Introduction to Bird Language

Saturday, November 4, 2017

9:00 – 11:00am

\$20.00 per person

Discover the language of birds and listen in on what they tell us about the world around us during this fun morning at Peterson Woods. Sharpen your observation skills and uncover the keys to

understanding unique patterns behavior common to birds through guided instruction and outdoor activities. You’ll see birds and the world we share with them in a whole new way.



Hoot and Holler Owl Prowl

Friday, November 10, 2017

5:30pm – 7:30pm

\$5.00 per person

Escape the Waterfowl Festival crowds in town and use your senses to discover night life on an evening hike at Pickering Creek! Listen for Barred Owls calling, “Whoooo cooks for youuu,” identify the rambunctious hoots of the Great Horned Owl, and awe at the whinnies coming from our smallest, the Eastern Screech Owl.

Tiny Tots: Totally Turkeys!

Thursday, November 16, 2017

10:00 – 11:00am

\$5.00 per child

Let’s talk turkey! Bring your 3 to 5 year old to Pickering Creek for a morning of turkey tales, outdoor exploration, and a craft. We’ll start with a fall-theme turkey story before adventuring outside in search of turkey habitat! Your tiny turkey will leave with a fun and creative turkey craft.

EcoCamp Survivor Village: Winter Edition

Friday, January 26, 2018

8:30am – 5:30pm

\$60.00 per child 5th -7th grade

Winter months bring new ways to explore the wooded trails and test your survival knowledge. Participants will practice teamwork, navigational, shelter-building, and fire-building skills while experiencing a different kind of day outdoors. Survivors should pack a lunch, snack, and be prepared to be outside. Limited to 20 participants, call to learn more.

**Optional limited Transportation from Kohl’s in Easton for an extra \$10.00 per child. Pick-up at 8:00am, drop-off at 6:00pm.*

Beginner Birding Basics

Saturday, February 10, 2018

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

\$20.00 per person

Interested in learning how to bird, but not sure where to start? Join Pickering Creek staff and knowledgeable birders for a fun and engaging morning honing your birding skills at Peterson Woods. We’ll start our day indoors before heading out in the field. You’ll leave with a greater understanding for identifying birds in the field by sight or sound, as well as a plan for continuing your birding education! Binoculars and field guides provided. Wear comfortable walking shoes and dress for the weather.

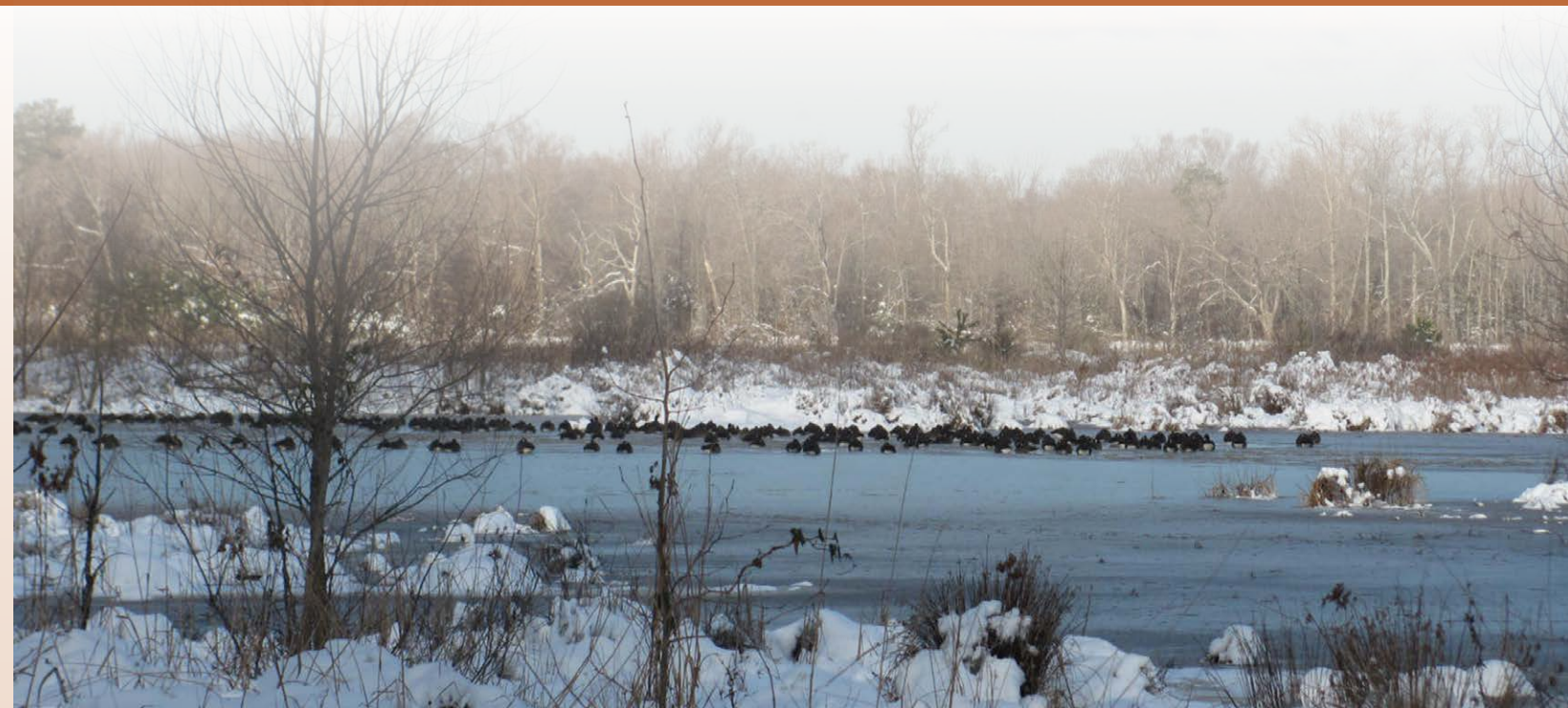
Animal Olympics: Day Off EcoCamp

Monday, February 19, 2017

8:30am – 5:30pm

\$60.00 per child

Is your 2nd–4th grader off school for President’s Day? Do they love the Winter Olympics? Send them to Pickering Creek for a day of Olympic-style animal investigations and outdoor explorations! Can you flap your “wings” as fast as a hummingbird, sniff out your food as quickly as a fox, or fly from South America to Canada? Olympians should be dressed for the weather, pack a lunch and snack, and be ready to discover their inner animal!



Space is limited to 20 participants.

**Optional Limited Transportation from Kohl’s in Easton for an extra \$10.00 per child. Pick-up at 8:00am, drop-off at 6:00pm.*

Tiny Tots: Winter Wonderland

Wednesday, February 28, 2018

10:00 – 11:00am

\$5.00 per child

Though the cold may keep us inside—many animals stay active all winter long! Explore the outdoors with your 3 to 5 year old and Pickering Naturalists as we discover our winter forests. We’ll learn to identify winter birds and mammal tracks and go home with a fun craft!

Flight of the Timberdoodle

Tuesday, March 13, 2018

7:00 – 8:30pm

\$5.00 per person

As winter breaks and spring begins to emerge the timberdoodle awakens. At dusk the male woodcock spirals into the sky, creating a trilling sound with its wings. Then he descends, fluttering, warbling and zigzagging back to the spot he began. This unusual mating ritual will take place in Pickering Creeks’ warm season grass meadows provide ideal habitat for this annual late winter event.

Paddling at Prime Hook

Saturday, April 7, 2018

Depart Pickering at 7:30am,

Return at 5:30pm

\$35.00 per person

Join Delaware Nature Society and Pickering Creek Audubon Center Staff on a paddling adventure in Delaware’s Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge. This winding, 7-mile paddle takes you through freshwater marshland into the open brackish waters nestled behind Prime Hook Beach. Ospreys, Belted Kingfishers, herons & egrets, eagles, beavers, turtles, shorebirds, and waterfowl abound! Plan for a 4-5 hour paddle; pack a bagged lunch and water. Van Transportation and paddling equipment from Pickering provided.

Planting for Birds

Saturday, April 14, 2018

10:00am – 12:00pm

\$20.00 per person

Do you enjoy watching hummingbirds hovering in the flower bed or finches at the bird feeder? Invite feathered friends to your yard with plants that provide birds with what they need. Planting native plants is a great way to enhance the beauty of your yard and help birds and other wildlife at the same time. Find out how native plants help birds and get tips for incorporating them into your yard and garden in this informative evening program.

Boats, Birds, & Brews

Saturday, April 21, 2018

2:00 – 8:00pm

\$75.00 per person

Unwind on a Saturday. Start the afternoon with a Springtime paddle—we’ll explore the wetland inlets as we make our way to the open waters of Wye River. Paddle back to Peterson Woods and relax on the lawn as the nocturnal creek life starts to wake. Challenge your friends to a few lawn games with some local brews and other refreshments by your side. Unwind further with a provided dinner and s’mores over a campfire. Space limited to 12 people, ages 21+ only.

Wetland Wandering

Thursday, April 26, 2018

5:30 – 7:00pm

\$5.00 per person

Discover the slippery, slimy, and scaly creatures that call the wetlands at Pickering Creek home! Equipped with chest waders, boots, and large seine nets, we’ll spend the evening exploring and investigating a mysterious, wet, and watery world filled fish, frogs, and plenty of mud!

Introduction to Bird Language

Tuesday, May 1, 2018
10:00am – 12:00pm
\$20.00 per person

Discover the language of birds and listen in on what they tell us about the world around us during this fun morning at Peterson Woods. Sharpen your observation skills and uncover the keys to understanding unique patterns behavior common to birds through guided instruction and outdoor activities. You'll see birds and the world we share with them in a whole new way.

Tiny Tots: Birds of a Feather

Wednesday, May 9, 2018
10:00 – 11:00am
\$5.00 per child

Spring and Summer is the time for birds! Bring your 3 to 5 year old to a fun morning of learning about our backyard birds, going on a bird hike, and searching for early nests. The little explorers will go home with window clings to help keep our local birds safe while living among us in our neighborhoods.

Birds and Climate Change

Saturday, May 12, 2018
10:00am – 12:00pm
\$20.00 per person

Curious about the climate impacts to the beloved birds found in Maryland? Join us at Peterson Woods to learn about

Audubon's Birds and Climate Report and study the shifting ranges of 314 North American birds. Find out how Audubon is working both locally and nationwide to build climate resiliency and monitor changes in bird populations and ranges. Be a part of our climate solution—get involved!

Spring Birding with Citizen Scientists

Saturday, May 19, 2018
10:00am – 12:00pm
\$20.00 per person

Calling all early birds! Join Pickering Creek naturalists along the pathways at Pickering Creek Audubon Center for a close look at two closely monitored bird species: Eastern Bluebirds and Wood Ducks. Citizen scientist volunteers adopt trails and monitor birds each spring and summer as they build nests, lay eggs and raise their young. Learn about the process of monitoring built bird habitats and appreciate some of nature's cutest animals: baby birds!

Tour, Toast & Taste

Saturday, June 9, 2018
5:30 – 8:30pm

Explore one of Talbot County's rarely seen estates, enjoy cocktails, heavy hors d'oeuvres and bidding on unique items during the annual gala event to support of Pickering Creek Audubon Center's education programs. More information available in April 2018 at www.pcacevents.org

Summer Solstice Night Hike

Thursday, June 21, 2018
8:00pm – 10:00pm
\$5.00 per person

Explore the evening skies on the longest day of the year with Pickering Creek naturalists! As the sun sets, set your senses free while walking the trails of the 410-acre wildlife sanctuary and listening for the sounds of the nocturnal world. Test your night vision by looking for owls, bats, opossum and fox under darkening skies. Catch fireflies and gaze at the stars to kick off a summer full of wonder!



Summer Wetlands

Tuesday, July 10, 2018
6:30 – 8:00pm
\$5.00 per person

Share our summer campers' favorite activity with your whole family! Summer is the best time to find newly hatched turtles and tadpoles of all shapes and colors—or, just play in the mud! Come in water shoes and shorts and be prepared to get muddy.

Schoolyard Habitats Flourish

Soil covered hands, featherless fledglings in nest boxes, and students carefully tending small plants—these were some of the scenes in local schoolyard habitats this spring and summer. Since 2010, Pickering Creek Audubon Center has worked with local schools to assist with the design, implementation, and maintenance of schoolyard habitat gardens to benefit pollinators, birds, and other wildlife. These small habitats filled with native plants not only serve as a network of resources for local birds—like a quilt with patches of food, water, shelter, and space—they are also important outdoor classrooms for students and teachers.

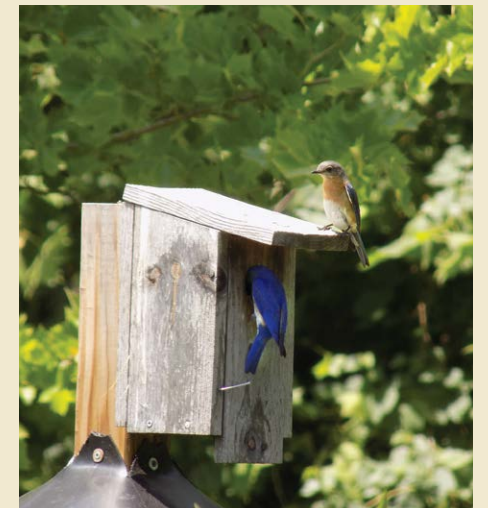
First planted in 2012 by fifth grade students, the square patch of native plants off to the side of the Easton Elementary School parking lot is today home to an active Eastern Bluebird nest box. For the past three summers, high school volunteers in the Audubon Conservation Action Corps (ACAC) have worked tirelessly to maintain this patch of habitat. The students earn service-learning hours for their time and effort in the garden. In addition to weeding, planting, and mulching, the ACAC students participate in activities learning about community habitat restoration, bird watching and nest box monitoring, and the benefits of native plants.

Three new habitats joined the Pickering Creek schoolyard habitat family in 2016, and continued to grow and thrive in 2017. Mace's Lane Middle School, South Dorchester K-8 School, and North Dorchester Middle School installed habitats in May 2016 as part of the Audubon Conservation Team 4 Birds (ACT 4 Birds) program. Investigating birds and bird habitats since 2014, sixth grade students in Dorchester County planned, designed, installed, and now, with the ongoing assistance of Pickering Creek, maintain their habitat gardens for birds and pollinators.

"My students now have an outdoor space (garden) that they can use in science class. We can continue adding to the native plants that are planted in the garden. We can conduct real world experiments—soil testing, rain gauge, tempera-



North Dorchester Middle School and Audubon Conservation Action Corps pictured in front of new habitats



ture, growth and development—and the students can study actual species in their natural habitats," commented Sherry Todd of South Dorchester K-8 School regarding her students' habitat garden.

More than just providing resources for local birds and wildlife, these habitat gardens provide outdoor learning environments where students and teachers study native plants, conservation, and wildlife. Schoolyard habitats also help students develop skills like gardening, plant selection, budgeting, and wildlife identification. Habitat gardens, like the ones found at Easton Elementary School and the Dorchester County Middle Schools, offer quiet, outdoor places for reflection, jour-

naling, observation, and opportunities for data collection and citizen science.

Angela Bozman, sixth grade teacher at Mace's Lane Middle School, believes that these gardens provide benefits beyond academics. "This program offers students the opportunity to stop for a few minutes and think about something other than themselves, their peers, or the stress of middle school. While taking my students outside to journal, I have seen wonder on their faces when they take a minute to sit, be silent, and take in their environment." If you'd like to help the team maintain one of these gardens contact Samantha Pitts at spitts@audubon.org.

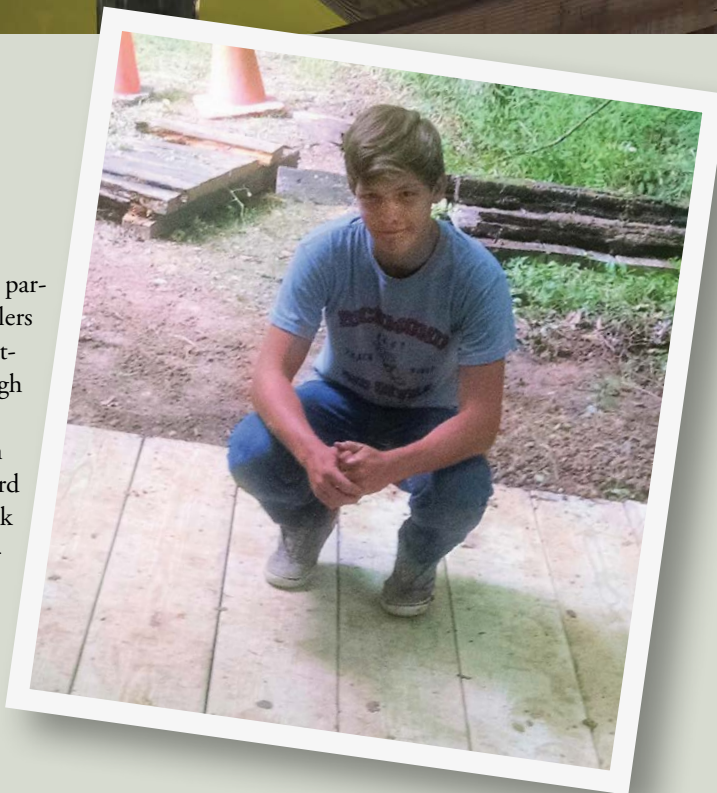


Youth Giving Back to the Community

Junior Naturalists aren't required to do projects as part of their participation in our no cost program for Middle and High Schoolers interested in nature, however, this year Pickering Creek benefited from two projects that two of our Junior Naturalists did through their participation in other community groups.

Junior Naturalist Julie Ireland fixed and repainted the sinks in our Waterman's Shanty on the dock for her Girl Scout Silver Award for Troop 742. She research native bay animals to paint on the sink surfaces—many have mistaken the skate as real! Daniel Kulp stabilized the drainage path into the pond at Pickering and built a new bridge on our trail for his Eagle Scout project for Troop 190.

Projects like these are invaluable to Pickering Creek—they help keep our trails safe, protect our habitats, and aid in our educational programs. The staff at Pickering thanks them for their dedication and hard work in the community!



Sharing Lessons Along the Flyway

Imagine a classroom of excited young students – outside their door is a unique habitat that many of their families depend on for income and recreation. The habitat is full of singing birds yet many students can only identify a few. Educators are working to familiarize the students with their local birds by studying their songs, feathers, beaks, feeding, and other behaviors. The educators know that to improve conservation efforts they must first connect the public to their local environment. And what better way then to focus on the dynamic bird population that is accessible to all – from outside a classroom window to deep in the forest.

Now imagine that these same lessons are being taught in Northern Guatemala near the Mayan ruins of Tikal and in Talbot County Maryland on the edge of the Chesapeake Bay. Pablo Najarro has made this a reality.

As part of National Audubon's International Alliance's Program, Pablo was selected as one of their international interns in Fall of 2016, stationed at Pickering Creek. As an intern he shadowed and taught programs for preschool students through adults. Pablo was always quick to snap a picture or take a note that he could later share with the members of his Peten Birders Club, of which he is a founding member. For years the club has offered birding trips for tourists but recently it started engaging with local students. The majority of the students' families earn income through their local National Parks and Pablo and his fellow birders know that if they connect the public to their local birds they will see how supporting bird conservation will directly protect the livelihood of many in the community.

Pickering Creek uses birds to connect people of all ages to the unique Chesapeake Bay. Pablo is working to adapt many of Pickering's lessons to the tropical forests of Guatemala. Though the language, culture and ecosystems are very different, a shared population of migrating birds connects our education and conservation efforts. It is amazing how quickly a 2,000 mile separa-



tion can shrink when you realize students in Maryland and Northern Guatemala may walk their forests or look out their windows and feel the same excitement and desire to protect their local environment when hearing the sounds or catching a glimpse of the SAME birds such as Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Great Crested Flycatcher, or many of the other birds that transcend our borders.

Pablo Najarro and members of the Peten Birders Club



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Cemmy Peterson, *Honorary Member*
Peter Stifel, *Honorary Member*

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*Summer Camp Director and
Teacher Naturalist*
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Morgan Bench,
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Seasonal Educator '17
Jamie Ehrler,
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Meghan Tait,
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PICKERING CREEK
Audubon CENTER

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Harvest
Hoedown
Sunday October 8, 2017
11 am - 4 pm

Make *your* Mark from the Heart

Just as each field trip to Pickering Creek leaves its mark in the hearts and minds of each student who is awed by catching a frog, or seeing an eagle soar overhead, ***your support*** of these experiences in nature over the years leaves an indelible mark on Pickering, and thus in the hearts and minds of thousands and thousands of students. As a recipient of this newsletter, you are likely a loyal supporter of Pickering Creek Audubon Center's work to help kids develop a lasting curiosity for and awareness of the natural world and the understanding that their actions matter to its health.

As you make giving plans this season, please plan to protect our conservation future. See your generosity in action! If you are 70½ years old or older, you can take advantage of a simple way to benefit Pickering Creek and receive tax benefits in return. You can give up to \$100,000 from your IRA directly to a qualified charity such as Audubon without having to pay income taxes on the money. This law no longer has an expiration date so you are free to make annual gifts to our organization this year and well into the future.

Contact your IRA custodian today to find out how you can transfer your desired gift amount to Pickering Creek Audubon Center (Audubon EIN 13-1624102) today.

