



THE OVENBIRD

PFEIFFER NATURE CENTER & FOUNDATION

From the Director

As the warm embrace of summer makes itself fully known, we are reminded of the importance this season holds for both our community and the delicate ecosystems that surround us. Summer brings with it a vibrant tapestry of colors, sounds, and activities that enrich our lives and nourish the natural world around us.

For Western New York, the summer season serves as a time of connection and celebration. It is a time when we all come together to enjoy outdoor gatherings, farmers' markets, and local events that showcase the beauty of our surroundings. The longer days and pleasant weather create the perfect backdrop for picnics, hikes, and outdoor adventures that foster a sense of unity and belonging among us.

Beyond our own human experience, summer plays a vital role in nurturing the ecosystems that sustain our properties. The warm temperatures and abundant sunlight provide essential conditions for plant growth, allowing our forests, meadows, and wetlands to flourish. This growth, in turn, supports a diverse array of wildlife, from songbirds and butterflies to deer and other native species that call Pfeiffer home.

As stewards of this natural paradise, it is our responsibility to protect and preserve the delicate balance of life that thrives during the summer season. By practicing sustainable habits, such as conserving water, reducing waste, and supporting local conservation efforts, we can ensure that future generations will continue to benefit from the beauty and abundance of our natural surroundings.

So, as we embrace the summer season in our rural town, let us take a moment to appreciate the interconnectedness of our community and the ecosystems that sustain us. Let us revel in the joy of long summer days and the wonders of nature that surround us, knowing that our actions today will shape the future of this precious place we call PNC.

Wishing you a summer filled with beauty, wonder, and a deep connection to the natural world.

From the Nature Desk

An Encounter with a Barred Owl: A Messenger of Wisdom and Strength

A few weeks ago, as I walked along the Eshleman Loop at Pfeiffer with my faithful hound, Bali, we came face to face with a Barred Owl. We first heard her calls, echoing through the trees, and then, there she was—perched in an oak tree about 100 feet away, unafraid and seemingly curious. She looked into my eyes, and I felt a shiver run through my body, like a mysterious draft wafting through my being.

Bali and I sat there, captivated, and chatted with her for quite some time. The encounter felt profound, as if she were sharing a silent communication, imparting a deep sense of awareness and knowledge. Over the past six months, I had gained sharp new insights about people, situations, and myself. The owl's presence seemed to crystallize this newfound wisdom, making it impossible to unsee the truths I had discovered.

I felt a profound realization that I could never go back to the way things were. This awareness brought with it a sense of protection, as if the owl's wisdom was a shield guiding me forward. In her gaze, I felt stronger and more resilient, ready to embrace the future with confidence.

I attribute this Barred Owl to be a helper and a messenger. Her serene presence felt like a blessing, and I felt incredibly lucky to be in her company. As we walked past her, she didn't fly away but continued to watch us, making small, loving vocalizations. It was as if she were reassuring me, a silent nod to the journey ahead and the strength I had gained.

This encounter was not just a chance meeting with a wild creature; it was a moment of connection and clarity, a reminder of the wisdom that nature offers and the inner strength we can find when we open ourselves to its messages.

The Barred Owl is known for its distinctive appearance and haunting calls. They are easily recognizable by their rounded head and absence of ear tufts, setting it apart from other owls like the Great Horned Owl. Their plumage is a mix of brown and white, with horizontal bars across its chest and vertical streaks on its belly, giving it its name. The large, dark brown eyes of the Barred Owl are a striking feature, adapted for excellent night vision.

Continued on next page

From the Nature Desk cont.

One of the most notable aspects of the Barred Owl is its vocal repertoire. Its most famous call sounds like “Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you-all?” This distinctive hoot is often heard echoing through the forests at dusk and dawn. Besides this classic call, Barred Owls produce a variety of other sounds, including cackles, hoots, and screams, which can be eerie in the stillness of the night. In the wild, Barred Owls can live up to 10 years, though some individuals have been known to live significantly longer, even up to 24 years. Their primary threats include habitat destruction, vehicle collisions, and predation by larger owls, such as the Great Horned Owl. Conservation efforts focused on preserving mature forests are crucial for the continued survival of Barred Owls.

Owls are a powerful and complex symbol in many cultures. Owls are universally recognized for their association with wisdom. Native American tribes in Western New York, such as the Seneca and Onondaga, consider the Barred Owl a symbol of knowledge and insight. Its ability to see in the dark is metaphorically linked to seeing beyond the obvious and gaining deeper understanding. It is believed to bring messages from ancestors or to foretell important events.

I have come to personally associate them with swift and significant beginnings, and particularly, endings in life. Owls, with their ability to navigate the darkness, are often associated with transitions, such as the passage from life to death or from one phase of life to another. The Barred Owl can symbolize these significant changes and the journey through unknown territories, both physical and spiritual. I am deeply grateful for the presence of owls, whose wisdom and beauty continually inspire and remind us of the profound connections we share with the natural world.

-Bliss Rodkey, Nature Education Coordinator for Pfeiffer Nature Center



Our Environment at Risk

Trillium grandiflorum, commonly known as the Large-Flowered Trillium, is a striking wildflower native to Pfeiffer Nature Center and the surrounding area. Renowned for its beauty and ecological significance, this plant plays a vital role in forest ecosystems. However, its presence in the wild is becoming increasingly rare due to various environmental pressures.



The Large-Flowered Trillium is a key indicator species in deciduous forests, often found in rich and moist soils. It blooms in the Spring, creating a spectacular white carpeting across the forest floor. This early blooming period is crucial for pollinators, such as bees and ants, which rely on its nectar and pollen. The nutrient-rich seeds produced by this flower are an important part of its relationship with surrounding wildlife, ensuring its seed dispersal and continued contribution to the health of the forest ecosystem.

Despite its importance, *Trillium grandiflora* is facing several threats that have led to its decline in the wild. Habitat destruction is the leading cause to this beautiful wonder's shrinking appearance. Urbanization and logging have caused this flower to lose its home, along with the fragmentation of forests disrupting the delicate balance of their native ecosystems, making it difficult for their populations to survive. The increased population of white-tailed deer have also played a critical role in the decline of this flower. Deer preferentially feed on trillium due to its high nutrient content, leading to the plant's reduced reproductive success. To tag along with habitat destruction, general human disturbance and climate change are also bringing down the population of this flowering gem. The Large-Flowered Trillium does best when left undisturbed by hikers' trampling boots, and in locations that have predictable temperatures and rainfall.



Take this time to raise awareness of this beautiful flower in your own circles and when you're out on our preserves. Helping to combat invasive species will continue to help keep the opportunities present for *Trillium grandiflorum* to flourish. Participate in deer management programs to help curb the population of these flower eaters. Stay on the trails while in the forest to least disrupt the balance needed for local biodiversity. Reach out to local nurseries and botanical gardens to ask for their conservation efforts in propagating for reintroduction into the wild.

Since We Last Spoke!



Wildlife Exhibition 4/28



Trail Sale 5/11



Birding Walk 5/21



School Field Trips 5/23 & 6/5

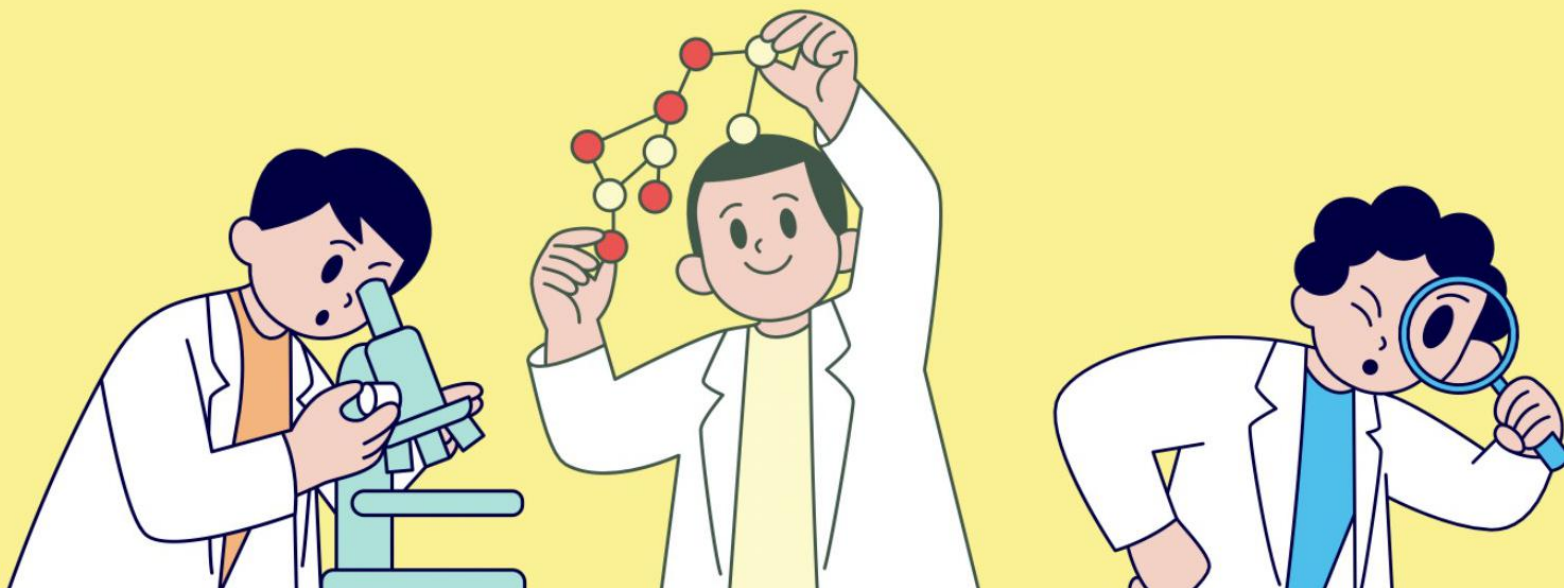


CALLING ALL CITIZEN SCIENTISTS



**Join Pfeiffer Nature Center
in identifying the different
plants and animals on our
two preserves!**

**PNC has 4 different projects to join on
iNaturalist to help keep track of the flora
and fauna found in our nature center. Join
in and help catalog the species that share
this awesome space with us!**



Annual Membership Renewal Time is Here!

Membership Level and Benefits

All members receive a subscription to *The Ovenbird*, our quarterly newsletter.

Student/Senior	\$12	
Individual	\$24	
Family	\$36	
Steward	\$50	
Conservator	\$100	Invitation to Wine & Cheese Reception
Patron	\$250	Invitation to Wine & Cheese Reception
Guardian	\$500	Same as Patron, 1 decorated holiday wreath
Benefactor	\$1,000	Same as Guardian, 1 Adopt-a-Tree Sponsorship
Additional Donation	\$ _____	

All members also receive discounted admissions and gift shop purchases at many other nature centers.

Your contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowable by NYS Tax Law

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Membership Level: _____ Is this a new ___ or renewing ___ membership?

Would you like to become a volunteer? Yes ___ No ___

Send your completed form to:

**Pfeiffer Nature Center
PO Box 802
Portville, NY 14770**

OR

**Sign up/renew online at
www.pfeiffernaturecenter.org**



Pfeiffer Nature Center and Foundation

Where science, art, and nature come together



Moonlight, Summer Moonlight

'Tis moonlight, summer
moonlight,
All soft and still and fair;
The solemn hour of midnight
Breathes sweet thoughts
everywhere,

But most where trees are
sending
Their breezy boughs on high,
Or stooping low are lending
A shelter from the sky.

And there in those wild bowers
A lovely form is laid;
Green grass and dew-steeped
flowers
Wave gently round her head.

By Emily Jane Brontë

SUMMER SOLSTICE 6-20-24

PAGE BY BETH BERGREEN-FROST



CELEBRATE BEES, BUTTERFLIES & HUMMINGBIRDS BY PLANTING FLOWERS TO ENSURE THEIR ESSETNIAL HABITAT OF FOOD, WATER & A PLACE TO RAISE THEIR YOUNG.



Kids Corner

G U B X L I U Z Z I P Z Q P A O S V J Z
T Z F S O V Q R E F H J P U B Z O Y X L
P A I R E D R R T V S M M U A L L Y S A
M R Y D R E H Z J Q J A E A T O S Q Z X
M A B P R U R E B H J Z A F L I T I Y D
O K N D M R F H F U N P D Y L O I C C O
X F P G X A M W D F T A O C D W C E M V
P I C N I C R G D Z M T W N V L E C Q E
M V Z X K O B K T J L A E A X V J R W N
F K X R F R A F E D J P S R X Z Q E A B
I J M L Y Z A Q V T M C E P F J I A T I
R Z U P W I L D F L O W E R S L F M E R
E S E S F E S H I K E Q K T U V Y W R D
C I M D X Z I S X C G O D R M D W L M V
R P F E I F F E R U G V C K M P A D E G
A Y K C E E B K T W S I E Z E F R V L D
C Y F L C F G B L G R S L L R U M H O A
K K T M M C E J T E U V I P X W T G N U
E F J Q C S U N S H I N E Q B Q H D L N
R L G E U E Y C B Z G B S R D B C W H D

Firecracker

Watermelon

Wildflower

Hike

Butterfly

Pfeiffer

Solstice

Owl

Sunshine

Ice cream

Warmth

Market

Picnic

Ovenbird

Summer

Meadow



Solstice Snack

WATERMELON ICE

Ingredients:

- One large watermelon
- Zest of 1 small lime
- Juice of 1 small lime
- Fruit carving knife
- Blender
- 1 Freezer safe container
- (Optional) reusable/compostable serving cups
- (Optional) eco-friendly red, green, and black paint
- (Optional) a paint brush for anyone participating!

Directions:

Chop the watermelon into 1 inch chunks, discarding the rind for your compost pile.

Add lime juice, lime zest, and watermelon chunks into the blender.

Remove mixture from blender into freezer safe container.

Freeze the watermelon and lime mixture.

Paint your best watermelons on your serving cups.

Serve your Watermelon Ice into your cups and enjoy!

Why Pfeiffer loves this recipe:

Watermelon is a classic summer treat that has cooled the tastebuds of generations. Mixing it with the zing of lime and adding the fun of “shaved ice” is a great way to stay hydrated while supporting our local farmers. Watermelon has been known to aid in digestion, improve circulation, and can help protect your skin.

Plus, who can resist painting watermelon colors on your own cups?