

Wissahickon Nature Club



Polly Shaw

SPEAKER

November 8, Thursday, 7:30 pm. **Polly Shaw** will present **Making of Moraine - the Creation of a State Park.** This program describes the time period from 1946 when Preston and Arthur met, until 1970 when the new park was formally dedicated. Moraine State Park has been characterized as a great achievement in environmental engineering achievement so we'll look at how the land use was changed from one of coal mining, oil drilling, farming, and swamp land, into today's 16,725 acre park with a 3,225 acre lake.

Don't miss our next program. On December 13, Join **Don Weiss** at the **Wissahickon Nature Club** as he shares the beautiful sites and stories of his time at **Glacier National Park** during the first week on September. It is a lovely time of year to be in the park, with many mountain views and beautiful lakes. Although the fires and smoke the park was experiencing blocked many of the dramatic views, they did add their own photographic possibilities. There was plenty of wildlife in the National Bison Range, about 2 hours South of the park. Many birds and even a few flowers.

Also, our traditional annual Holiday, Christmas Cookie party will follow their presentation. Bring cookies. Eat cookies. Take home cookies. Bring a friend. What a wonderful way to introduce your friends and families to our Club.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

TREASURER'S REPORT

ACCORDING TO TREASURER,
DIANNE MACHESNEY

Balance as of Sept. 13,	\$1238.43
Expenses	- 0 -
Deposit of dues	55.00
New balance:	\$1293.43

FOR CURRENT AND PAST NEWSLETTERS AND MUCH MORE, VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT: WWW.WISSAHICKONNATURECLUB.COM

INPUT

WE LIKE TO SEE WHAT OUR MEMBERS ARE DISCOVERING. IF YOU HAVE A PHOTO OR A NATURE ANECDOTE TO SHARE, PLS. EMAIL IT TO MYWINTERMOON@VERIZON.NET

WORTH REPEATING

WE ARE THE ONLY SPECIES WITH THE POWER TO DESTROY THE EARTH AND ALSO THE CAPACITY TO PROTECT IT.
DAHLI LAMA

THANK YOU

TO **PAT TRUSCHEL** FOR CRAFTING OUR HOLIDAY PARTY FAVORS THIS YEAR.

PROGRAMMING CHAIR IS NEEDED FOR NEXT YEAR. IT'S NOT THAT HARD, AND WE WILL BE HAPPY TO HELP.

Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania

Loree Speedy 724.518.6022 loreespeedy@gmail.com
<http://www.botsocwpa.org/>

Fern Hollow Nature Center

Sam McClain-Capezuto, Director
412.741.6136
<http://www.fhnc.org/>

Outside My Window Outings Kate St. John 412.421.1566
www.birdsoutsidemymwindow.org/events/

Three Rivers Birding Club
Bob VanNewkirk, President
412.366.1694
www.3rbc.org

Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club
wpamushroomclub.org

**What to look for:
Trick or treaters, Turkeys
and Tundra Swans**

A Phenologic perspective:

October 30 through
November 27, 2003

Phenology: a branch of science dealing with the relationship between climate and periodic biologic phenomena (as bird migration and plant flowering)

By Chuck Tague

Enjoy the sudden openness of the forest. Look for bird and squirrel nests. Take in the fragrances of late fall. Listen to distant sounds on crisp evening walks.

After the frost – look for Indian Summer, a period of mild, clear weather that occurs after the first killing frost and the leaves have fallen from the trees.

Most of the leaves have fallen now. The trees and shrubs are bare, and all that remains of many of the grasses and wildflowers are stalks and seed heads. The new openness in the fields and forests reveals many well-hidden secrets. The skeletal forms of the tall trees, so thoroughly disguised by the summer foliage, are now laid bare. The autumn openness reveals the intricate network of branches and twigs. Large rocks, old stumps and well-worn trails of small animals are suddenly visible. Man-made flaws in the landscape are again painfully obvious.

November is the time to reacquaint yourself with the landscape. In addition to nests and seeds, you can also find many other interesting aspects of nature.

Keep your eye out for:

Woodpeckers. Without the leaves, these amazing birds that were so elusive all summer, are again very visible. Most of our local woodpeckers will remain in western Pennsylvania all winter. Also, look for Woodpecker holes.

Winter buds. Examine the twigs of the trees and shrubs. You can easily find the scale covered bundles that contain next spring's new leaves, flowers and twigs. The buds of each species of tree are unique and provide important clues to identifying the tree after the leaves have fallen.



Asters. Often called frost asters, several species of these tiny, mostly white, daisy-like flowers continue to bloom through November.

Squirrels, White-tailed Deer, and tracks of other animals in the first snow.

Migration will continue in western Pennsylvania into the new year. In November, watch for large flocks of blackbirds. In addition to Common Grackles, Red-winged Blackbirds and Brown-headed Cowbirds, watch for flocks of American Robins and European Starlings. In wooded swamps, look for Rusty Blackbirds. These residents of northern bogs often stop in western Pennsylvania on their way to their winter quarters in the south.

Tundra Swans. Each year, thousands of these large, long-necked, white waterfowl pass through western Pennsylvania, headed for the brackish marshes of the Chesapeake. Waterfowl migration is its most exciting in November!

Common Loons. Two good places to look for these goose-sized diving birds are Presque Isle in Erie County and Moraine State Park in Butler County, but they may turn up in any large body of water.

Not a migrating bird, but a perfect bird to look for in late November is the Wild Turkey. The population of these magnificent fowl continues to increase and expand.

Listen! Whistling winds, rustling leaves, chirping birds. . . Without the leaves, distant sound carries farther. After dark, listen for the call of the Great Horned Owl. On calm, cold mornings when the temperature first drops below freezing, singing ice can often be heard on lakes and large ponds. Currents in the water bend and distort the ice, causing it to vibrate and make an eerie, high-pitched sound.

Check stands of pines and spruces for signs of owls, Northern Saw-whet Owls and Long-eared Owls.

Without the leaves, woodland animals like squirrels, chipmunks and cottontails become more vulnerable. This is when the Red-tailed Hawks move south. At the Allegheny Front look for Red-tail big days and Northern Goshawks. Where are the Golden Eagles? Their migration has been slow and late. A big push is due very soon.

Frost: Morning frost will soon be common. Watch for its delicate patterns on windows and windshields, grass and tree branches.

Look for the next issue of the Nature Observer News before November 27, 2003. When you receive your next Nature Observer, winter will be about three weeks away. Trees will be bare and ponds icy. Happy Thanksgiving.