

# Wissahickon Nature Club

## Speaker

Thursday, March 12, 2020, **John Canning will present "Riverview Park & Early Years of Wissahickon Hollow and Nature Club"**. Created in 1894, the park predates the City of Allegheny's annexation to the City of Pittsburgh in 1907. Formed largely from farmland, today's Riverview Park is known for its dense woodlands and steep topography.

<https://www.pittsburghparks.org/riverview>

Program begins at 7:30 pm. Arrive at 7:00 for our Social. Free and open to the public.



Photo by Don Weiss

Don't miss our next meetings:

- April 16 - Jeffrey Hall - Tanzanian Tapestry
- May 14 - Patrick Adams - Civilian Conservation Corps

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### TREASURER'S REPORT ACCORDING TO TREASURER, DIANNE MACHESNEY

Previous balance	\$1440.21
Deposits dues	110.00
New Balance	\$1550.21

**Worth Repeating**  
**When a man moves away from nature**  
**his heart becomes hard.**  
**Lakota**

**In Memoriam George Bercik**

**Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania**  
 Loree Speedy 724.518.6022 [loreespeedy@gmail.com](mailto:loreespeedy@gmail.com)  
<http://www.botsocwpa.org/>

**Fern Hollow Nature Center**  
 Sam McClain-Capezzuto, Director  
 412.741.6136  
<http://www.fhnc.org/>

Bobby Greene [bobbygreene.com](http://bobbygreene.com)

Amanda Haney [https://www.flickr.com/photos/amanda-s\\_birds/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/amanda-s_birds/)

**Outside My Window Outings** Kate St. John  
[www.birdsoutsidemywindow.org/events/](http://www.birdsoutsidemywindow.org/events/)

**Chuck Tague, Nature Observer**  
<http://www.chucktague.com/Welcome.html>

**Three Rivers Birding Club**  
 Bob VanNewkirk, President  
 412.366.1694  
[www.3rbc.org](http://www.3rbc.org)

Don Weiss [www.donweissphotography.com](http://www.donweissphotography.com)

**Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club**  
[wpamushroomclub.org](http://wpamushroomclub.org)  
 Cecily Franklin 412.781.6581 [<cs4wpmc@gmail.com>](mailto:cs4wpmc@gmail.com)

*What to look for: Skunk Cabbage and Baby Skunks by Chuck Tague*

A Phenologic perspective: March 18 through April 8, 2000

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

Weather Outlook: On March 18 at Pittsburgh International Airport, normal temperatures range from a high of 50°F to a low of 31°F with an average temperature of 40°F. Record high and low are 78°F(1903) and 2°F(1877). Normal temperatures range from 53° to 33°F on March 25 and from 55° to 35°F on April 1. The normal low temperature is above freezing for the first time on March 25. In March, 3.58 inches of precipitation is the norm with 8.1 inches of snow. In Western Pennsylvania, the Sun usually shines 44% of the time in March.

Welcome spring! Watch the forest gradually turn green.

Great Horned Owls have young. Bald Eagles are incubating. Great Blue Herons have returned to the heronries. Eastern Screech Owls will soon have eggs.

The Peregrines should return to the Gulf Tower in downtown Pittsburgh. Watch for Osprey on local lakes. Migrant hawks and eagles are passing through the Central Pennsylvania mountains, especially Turkey Vultures, Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks. Male Ruffed Grouse are drumming and early in April the females will find a sheltered place on the forest floor where they will hollow out a slight depression, line it with dried leaves and deposit ten or so eggs.

In brushy fields the American Woodcock continue their incredible courtship display.

In the next two weeks look for more and more migrants to pass through Western Pennsylvania. New species to watch for are Common Loons, Double-crested Cormorants, American Bittern, Blue-winged Teal, Red-shouldered Hawks, Lesser Yellowlegs, Greater Yellowlegs, Pectoral Sandpiper, Common Snipe, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Brown Creepers, American Pipits, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrows, Field Sparrows, Brown-headed Cowbird and Purple Finch. In early April look for Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Rusty Blackbirds, female Red-winged Blackbirds, Hermit Thrushes, Louisiana Waterthrushes, Yellow-throated Warblers, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and Rough-winged Swallows.

In the next three weeks the first of the Spring woodland wildflowers will bloom. Look for Dandelion, Pennsylvania Bittercress, Coltsfoot, Hepaticas, Spring Beauties, Cut-leafed Toothwort, Stone Crop, Purple Cress, Common Blue Violets, Smooth Yellow Violets, Wild Ginger, Bluebells, Blue Phlox, Cream Violets, Pussytoes, Trout Lilies - both yellow and white, Dutchman's Breeches, Trailing Arbutus, Toadshade (Sessile Trillium), Greek Valerian, Large White Trillium, Red Trillium, Spring Larkspur, Early Saxifrage, Serviceberry, Harbinger-of-Spring, Alder, Rue Anemone, Blue Cohosh, Celandine or Wood Poppy, Golden Corydalis, Bluets, Twinleaf, Ramps or Wild Leek and Spicebush.

Because of the warm spell many butterflies have already been observed. Keep an eye out for Mourning Cloaks. These are beautiful dark brown insects with golden-yellow edges on their wings. They overwinter as adults and move around when the temperature approaches 60°F. They often can be observed feeding on maple sap near woodpecker holes, sugar taps or other wounds in the tree. Other butterflies to watch for are Red Admirals, Compton's Tortoiseshell, West Virginia Whites and the tiny Spring Azure.

Look for the first amphibians. Listen for Choruses of Spring Peepers. Watch for Red Newts swimming in the shallows. Wood Frogs should be grunting in a frenzied mass in woodland ponds and puddles. During the next rain sneak up on the mating pools of Spotted Salamanders. This is one of the most spectacular exhibitions of all each spring. Hundreds of these large shiny black creatures with bright yellow polka dots migrate through the forest to vernal pools. Here they come together to perform their courtship dance. On the first days when the temperature rises above 40°F and the warm rains continue after dark head for the woods. With a flashlight covered with red cellophane search the pools and puddles. It's a sight you'll never forget.

Look for Bumblebees, Honey Bees and swarming gnats and flies.

It feels like spring! Today (March 18) the Sun rose at 6:26 a.m. and sets at 6:30 p.m. for 12 hours and 4 minutes of daylight.

Look for the next issue of the Nature Observer on or before April 8, 2000. By then, Louisiana Waterthrush will be singing in wooded ravines and Blue-gray Gnatcatchers will have returned to the bottomlands along rivers in southwestern Pennsylvania. Will the hepatica be in bloom?