

UNIVERSITY OF MOUNT UNION
HUSTON-BRUMBAUGH
NATURE CENTER

Discover the Wonder of Nature's Ever-Changing Story



SPRING
2024

- 1 | Photo Contest
- 2 | Bling on Birds
- 5 | Planting a Wetland
- 6 | Volunteer Recognition

John T. Huston – Dr. John D. Brumbaugh Nature Center

Mission Statement

The John T. Huston - Dr. John D. Brumbaugh Nature Center provides and supports opportunities for enjoying and learning about our natural and cultural heritage.

Staff

Cali Granger

Horticulture and Facility Coordinator

Michael Greiner

Site Manager

Jason Smith

Director

Bonnie Twaddle

Community Outreach Coordinator

Lin Wu

Ecologist

Adam Zorn

Program Manager

Visit

Huston-Brumbaugh Nature Center
16146 Daniel St. NE
Minerva, Ohio 44657

Contact

John T. Huston - Dr. John D. Brumbaugh
Nature Center
University of Mount Union
1972 Clark Ave.
Alliance, OH 44601

Phone

(330) 823-7487

Email

naturecenter@mountunion.edu

Website

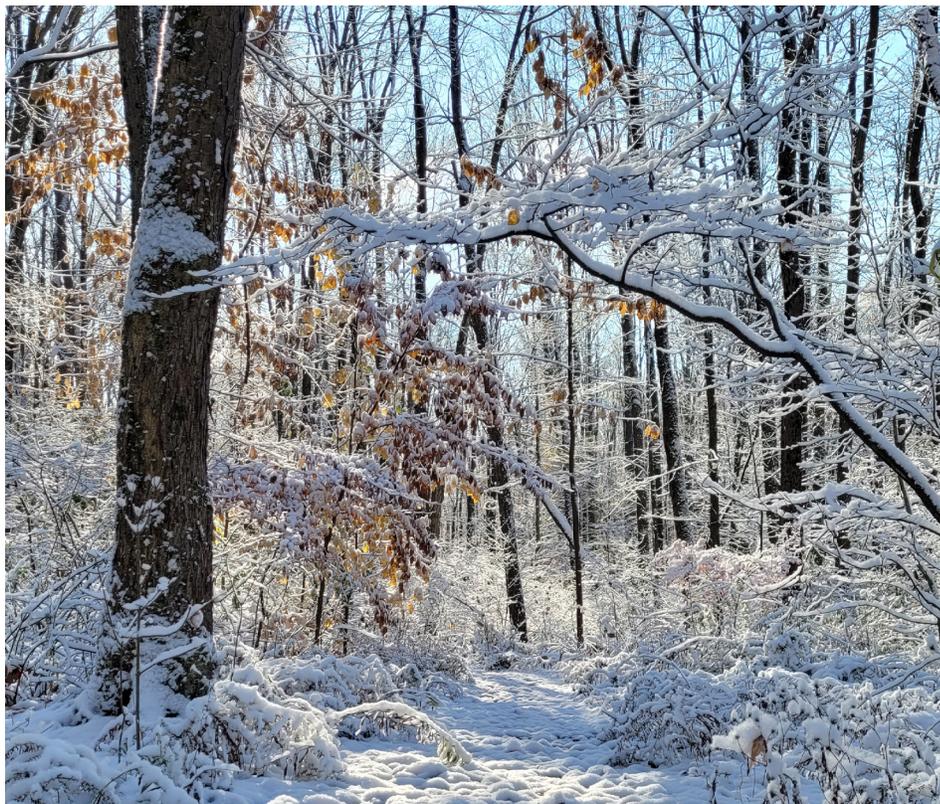
mountunion.edu/nature-center

Facebook

[facebook.com/
HustonBrumbaughNatureCenter](https://www.facebook.com/HustonBrumbaughNatureCenter)

Instagram

[@UMUNatureCenter](https://www.instagram.com/UMUNatureCenter)



22nd Annual Photography Contest

Amateur nature photographers are invited to enter their photos in the Nature Center's 22nd Annual Nature Photography Contest and Exhibit on Sunday, February 25, 2024. Participation is free, but submissions are limited to nature photos captured in eastern Ohio (east of Interstate 71 and Ohio Route 23). Photos must be size 8x10 and securely mounted and matted behind an 11x14 photo mat (not under glass or in a frame). Photos must be the original work of the photographer.

Photos will be accepted for the following categories: Wildlife – Vertebrates, Wildlife - Invertebrates, Wild Plants, Landscapes, Seasons, Mount Union Campus & Nature Center, Black & White, Youth (photos by children 12yrs old and under), and Open. The "Open" category has no geographic range restriction, but the entry must be a nature photo and is available only to participants who are submitting at least one other photo in another category. Ribbons will be awarded for each category. Formal judging will be completed by a panel of judges comprised of professional photographers and naturalists. Judges will also determine one winner of "Best in Show". The public will vote for "People's Choice" awards for each category. People's Choice judging is determined by ballots cast by the public from February 25 through March 10.

Photo submissions will be accepted by Nature Center staff in the Visitors Center during normal operating hours beginning in February. Photographers are limited to 5 entries in total and 3 entries per category, except the Open category which is limited to one entry per photographer. Same rules apply to youth participants. Deadline to submit a photo is 12 p.m. on Monday, February 19. Full details and contest entry forms are available on the Nature Center's website and in the Visitors Center lobby.

An open house/artist's reception will take place on Sunday, February 25, 2024 from 1-5:00 p.m. Photographers, friends and the public are invited to attend. The exhibit runs through March 17. Questions regarding the contest and exhibit may be directed to Adam Zorn, Program Manager at 330-829-8988.

Bling on Birds: Looking for Banded Birds

By Al Eibel, Master Bird Bander & Nature Center Volunteer

Imagine you are hiking in a field and spot the bird in the accompanying photo. With a modicum of birding knowledge, you can probably identify it as an Eastern Bluebird (EABL). However, aside from the species, what else can you determine? The bird appears to be male, but what about its age or where it was hatched?

If you look closely, you might see an aluminum band on the bird's right leg (tarsus). So, it's a banded bird, but was it banded at the Nature Center or is it a foreign bird? We can't tell unless we read the serial number embossed on the band, and that's not possible unless the bird is captured or found dead. On the EABL's left tarsus is a color plastic band. Now, all kinds of avenues open – if we can see the color. Let's pretend that the band is red. That tells us the bird is a hatch year bird (It was hatched this year) from Quail Hollow Park where all EABL nestlings in 2023 were banded with an aluminum band on the right tarsus and a red color band on the left tarsus. We now have lots of critical bits of information: the species of the bird, the age of the bird, and the location it was hatched.

Stark Parks, University of Mount Union's Huston-Brumbaugh Nature Center, and I initiated a project in April 2023 which will continue for at least three years, based on data collection returns. Currently, I monitor approximately 105 nest boxes at Quail Hollow Park, Molly Stark Park, Alliance City Schools' property, and my home site. I also band nestlings at the Nature Center's 22 nest boxes. All nest boxes are in the eastern portion of Stark County, and the sites are distributed from the northern edge of the county to the southern edge.

Initially, I am color-banding Eastern Bluebirds (EABL). Later, we might include House Wrens (HOWR) and Black-capped Chickadees (BCCH). All these species have long legs (tarsi) which makes spotting of bands easier than short tarsus species such as Tree Swallows.

During the spring and summer of 2023, I began banding all EABL nestlings at each site with an identical color band. The 2023 Quail Hollow EABL nestlings received a United States Geological Survey (USGS) aluminum band and a red color band.



Nature Center nestlings received a USGS band and a purple color band. Each of the other sites has its unique color band.

In 2024, all EABL nestlings at all sites will get an additional white band on their left tarsi which indicates the year 2024. So, all Quail Hollow nestlings will receive a metal band and two color bands – red and white. The two color bands allow an observer to determine the fledging site (red = Quail Hollow) and the fledging year (white = 2024). At the Nature Center, EABL nestlings in 2024 will receive a metal band and two color bands – purple and white. If an EABL is observed with a USGS band and a purple band, we know the bird was banded at the Nature Center in 2023. If an EABL is observed with a USGS band and a purple band and a white band, then we know the bird was banded at the Nature Center in 2024. The goal of the project is to provide data on survivability, site fidelity, dispersal, and if adults have an affinity for particular nest boxes.

All banding is conducted with proper training and authorization from the United States Geological Survey's Bird Banding Laboratory. The Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL) "supports the collection, curation, archiving, and dissemination of data from banded and marked birds." (Source: <https://www.usgs.gov/labs/bird-banding-laboratory>). A Federal Bird Banding and Marking Permit is required to conduct all bird banding and/or marking activities according to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and associated Federal regulations. For more information about the BBL and permitting, please visit their website.

Adam Zorn – the program manager at the Nature Center – and I are establishing a community science project to explain the research goals and increase data collection by involving county residents and park visitors. Adam has developed an online form where observations of color-banded birds can be reported. It is a way of collecting additional observational data related to site fidelity and/or dispersal depending on where birds are observed. Observers of the uniquely banded bluebirds are asked to complete the online form to report when and where banded bluebirds were encountered. The form is accessible via the accompanying QR code or you can contact the Nature Center to request a weblink to the online form. Informational signs will be posted at the Stark Park properties and the Huston-Brumbaugh Nature Center.

Keep your eyes peeled for those beautiful EABL and their aluminum and colored plastic bling and let us know when you spot a bird with bands.

Huston-Brumbaugh Nature Center's Schedule of Events

General Information

Events marked with an asterisk (*) require registration. All other events are informal, open to adults and families, and are available without registration. All events begin at the Visitors Center and are held rain or shine unless otherwise indicated.

To register or inquire about events, call (330) 823-7487 or email naturecenter@mountunion.edu.

Unlocking the Healing Power of Stem Cells: Supercharging Heart Repair

Sunday, February 11 | 2-3 p.m.

Embark on a transformative journey into the cutting-edge realm of regenerative medicine with Dr. Keith Miller, Associate Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry at the University of Mount Union. In this lecture, Dr. Miller will delve into the world of stem cell therapies focusing on their current applications in heart repair, but also promising horizons they hold for the future of cardiovascular medicine. Breakthrough studies, clinical trials, and revolutionary techniques will be discussed highlighting the evolving landscape of regenerative medicine.

Great Backyard Bird Count

Friday, February 16 | 9-11 a.m.

Join Nature Center staff as participants in the Great Backyard Bird Count in the comfort of the Bird Observatory.

Birding for Beginners

Sunday, February 18 | 1-2 p.m.

Dive into one of the world's fastest growing hobbies – bird watching, aka birding. We'll cover the basics such as bird identification, where to look for birds, and how to use binoculars. Appropriate for children and adults.

Great Backyard Bird Count

Sunday, February 18 | 2-3 p.m.

Join Nature Center staff as participants in the Great Backyard Bird Count in the comfort of the Bird Observatory.

Great Backyard Bird Count

Monday, February 19 | 9-11 a.m.

Join Nature Center staff as participants in the Great Backyard Bird Count in the comfort of the Bird Observatory.

Photography Contest Open House

Sunday, February 25 | 1-5 p.m.

See page 1 for entry and event details. Photo submission deadline is Monday, February 19 at 12 p.m.

*Introduction to Volunteer Opportunities

Sunday, March 17 | 2-4 p.m.

Are you interested in volunteering at the Nature Center but do not know where to begin? Join us this afternoon to learn about the mission, history, and staff of the Nature Center, what we do to achieve our mission, and the vital roles that Volunteers provide to help us accomplish this endeavor. There are opportunities available for individuals and families of all ages. No commitments will be requested during this informational program. ***Registration is required by Friday, March 15.**

*Birds & Blooms Hike

Saturday, April 6 | 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

An exploration of the forest in search of birds and spring wildflowers. Dress for the weather and seasonal trail conditions. Binoculars and cameras are helpful for viewing birds and flowers. ***Registration is required.**

Bringing Birds to the Backyard

Saturday, April 20 | 1-2 p.m.

Learn how to landscape to meet the habitat needs of native birds. Whether you're a diehard birder or a casual feeder watcher, a few considerations can go a long way to enticing a variety of birds to visit your yard all year round.

*Nestbox Construction

Saturday, April 20 | 2-3:30 p.m.

Make a bluebird-style nestbox for your backyard. Many species of birds like Eastern Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, and House Wrens rely on nestboxes for raising young. We'll also cover how to be a good nestbox landlord. All materials provided. Please bring a claw hammer. ***Registration limited and required.**

*Tiny Bubbles and Other Sundries

Sunday, April 21 | 1-4 p.m.

Join Barbara Lyons (AKA: the She Lyon) and explore the world of handcrafted soap making. She will guide you through the joys of making your own soaps, body butters, body scrubs, lip balm/gloss, and dusting powder. You won't want to miss this fabulous afternoon of learning and laughter. As this will probably be the She Lyons' last hurrah, all those who are interested in the crafts demonstrated will be able to leave with additional supplies selected from her personal supply stash. ***For participants 15 years of age and older. Registration is required and limited. Material fee is \$10 per person. Registration opens on Tuesday, March 26 at 9 a.m.**

***Spring into Fishing**

Saturday, April 27 | 1-3 p.m.

This interactive workshop will introduce the basics of fishing. Topics will include fishing locations, laws and regulations, area fish species, and hands-on tutorials such as casting demonstrations, catch and release techniques, fish handling, etc. will be demonstrated on site. Facilitated by Mount Union Associate Professor of Biology Dr. Christopher Marks.

***Registration is required.**

Bioblitz: City Nature Challenge

Saturday, April 27 | 1-4 p.m.

A bioblitz is an intense period of biological surveying to record all the living species within a designated area. Help us bioblitz the Nature Center and contribute sightings to the 2024 City Nature Challenge. Observations are collected using the iNaturalist app on your smartphone or tablet.

***Enhance Your Homegrown Habitat**

Sunday, May 19 | 2-4 p.m.

Discover what you currently provide for wildlife and pollinators (without even realizing it!), and simple steps you can take to make your outdoor space more wildlife- and pollinator-friendly. FREE seeds, plants, pollinator homes and safe water dishes will be available. ***Registration is required and opens on Tuesday, April 23 at 9:00 a.m. Attendance is limited to 20 adults only.**

Bat Roost Monitoring

Friday, May 31 | 8:30-9:45 p.m.

Bats are a critical part of our ecosystem and an important component of the agricultural economy. As the main predator of night-flying insects in Ohio, bats keep insect populations in check and reduce impacts on humans. Bring a lawn chair and assist the staff in counting bats that leave the roost in the Huston Barn. Canceled for wind or rain.



Recurring Programs

Acoustic Jam

Feb. 4, Mar. 3, Apr. 7, May 5, June 2 | 2-4 p.m.

Join us at the Nature Center for a music jam. Bring an instrument or just come to listen. Beginners are welcome. Make new friends, have fun, and learn a new tune or two!

Get Wild & Wooly

Feb. 11, Mar. 10, Apr. 14, May 12, June 9 | 2-4 p.m.

Bring your spinning wheel, knitting, crochet, needle felts, looms, etc. for a wooly sharing of the fiber arts. Open to all interested in participating or curious to watch and learn.

***Spring Bird Walk**

Apr. 22, 29, May 6, 13 | 8-10 a.m.

Join Naturalist Adam Zorn on the Nickel Plate Trail in Louisville, OH for a morning bird walk. Great for beginners and experienced birders. Level, paved walking surface. Bring your binoculars. Meet at the trailhead on Pinevale Ave., Louisville, OH. Canceled for inclement weather. Group size limited. ***Registration required.**

Quick Facts

- The Nature Center was a gift to the University of Mount Union from Dr. John D. Brumbaugh in December 1986.
- The 4.5-mile-long trail system provides access to 162 acres of wildlife habitat.
- Over 1,200 species of organisms have been identified residing at the Nature Center representing almost 500 insects, over 300 plants, three dozen tree species, almost 200 fungi, 162 birds, 27 mollusks, 26 mammals, 10 reptiles, and 10 amphibians.
- In 2023, staff and volunteers facilitated events for 1,154 event participants and another 1,691 participants in requested programs.
- In 2023, Nature Center facilities hosted 78 groups from the University.
- 9 out of 10 survey respondents have rated their Nature Center experience with five stars. Tell us about your experience using the QR code to the left!

Planting a Wetland

Gardeners know that winter is for planning. Whether you plant annuals, perennials, vegetables, or trees, the winter months are for dreaming and scheming a plan for the upcoming growing season. The same thing is happening here at the Nature Center as we prepare to convert a portion of the North Woods acreage from row crops to habitat. Like constructing a new home, we'll have a blank canvas to work with once wetland construction is complete.

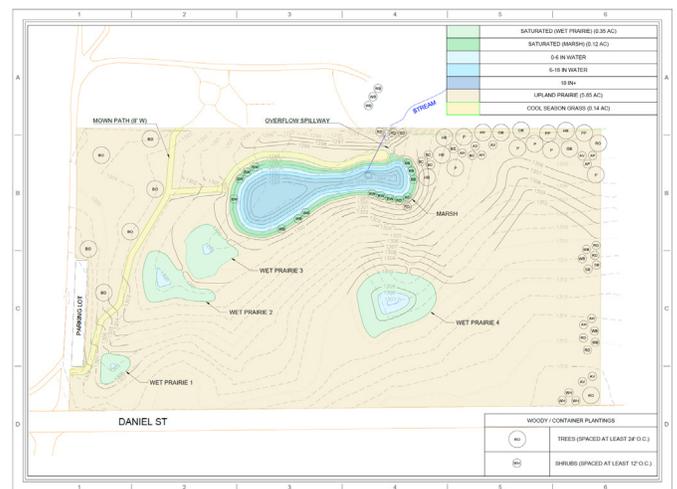
The completed project will include a variety of wetland and upland habitats, each with a community of plant species that are adapted to grow in the new site conditions. Wetland habitats will include open marsh, emergent marsh, saturated marsh, and wet meadow/prairie. Upland habitats will include upland prairie, forest edge, and an intermittent hedgerow. Each of the habitats present novel opportunities to introduce new native plant species to the Nature Center. We are also attempting to blend much of the project area into the existing "neighborhood" by including some of the nearby species of flowering plants and grasses.

Due to the size of the area, much of the plant restoration work will be done with seed mixes designed for habitat types like upland prairie (5.85 acres), wet meadow/prairie (.35 acres), and saturated marsh (.12 acres). Areas of the wet meadow/prairie and marsh expected to be inundated with water will be planted with plugs (small plants with established roots) since seed is easily flooded or washed away. Several species of trees and shrubs will be installed to enhance the structural diversity of the upland prairie and marsh habitats as well as along the forest edge to increase biodiversity and food resources for wildlife.



An intermittent hedgerow on the eastern edge of the project area will provide connectivity between the forests on the north and south sides of Daniel Street and a travel corridor for wildlife.

We are very excited to see the final phases of this project appearing on the horizon. Permitting was approved in December, so excavation of the shallow wetland areas will commence when site conditions allow. Seeding the project area will take place after earth moving is complete. Planting of plugs, shrubs, and trees will take place as soon as the material is available and spring planting conditions allow. If you would like to assist with planting this spring, please contact us to be placed on a notification list!



Bat Houses Installed

Eagle Scout candidate Nick Blasiman from Troop 177 (Alliance) organized a bat house project and constructed two bat houses for the Nature Center's habitat renovation project at the North Woods. The bat houses are two-chamber rocket boxes constructed to the specifications of Bat Conservation International. The two-chamber rocket box has two interior roosting chambers for bats to choose from. The interior chamber is preferred in cooler weather and the outer chamber is preferred in warmer weather. Bats can also move vertically in each chamber as well as horizontally to any of the four sides for better temperature regulation.

Each 1-meter-tall structure is capable of housing over 200 bats. The mostly likely species to take up residence in a bat box are Big Brown bats (*Eptesicus fuscus*). A modest colony of Big Brown bats resides in the Huston barn each year from April through September. Hopefully this colony will grow and expand into the new bat houses. The habitat renovations taking place (see article above) will also help to attract more bats. We look forward to seeing bats darting across the North Woods wetland and fields this summer!

Sandy Gahan, Volunteer of the Year

By Bonnie Twaddle



Our annual Founders Day/Volunteer Luncheon, held November 12, 2023, was once again a joyful gathering of dedicated and generous supporters of the Nature Center! The Nature Center staff can accomplish so much more due to their donations, time, talents, and commitment. The foresight and donations of Dr. John D. Brumbaugh was highlighted to remind us how this Nature Center came to be and how it “provides and supports opportunities for enjoying and learning about our natural and cultural heritage.” A delightful addition to this celebration was steel drum music by Max Dudack, a University of Mount Union student. Max included the interesting history of the steel drum in between songs that he performed. Thanks, Max, for the great entertainment!

Humility = Empathy: Humble individuals genuinely care about the feelings and experiences of others. Respectful: They treat everyone with courtesy and respect, regardless of their background or status. Gratitude: Humble people appreciate the blessings and opportunities in their lives and express thanks sincerely. Humility = Volunteer of the Year, Sandy Gahan. Sandy’s surprised reaction to this award clearly illustrated just how humble she truly is. She was seated in the back row of the room full of people and tentatively made her way to the front to receive the award. She said, “Thank You,” and headed back to her seat before she even received the award. I had to gently tug on her sleeve to keep her at the front to receive the physical award! Thank you, Sandy for the MANY years of trail maintenance you have provided to keep our trails clean and safe for all of our visitors!

“From the Heart” awards recognize exemplary acts of kindness that come from the caring heart. This year, Patty Bruey and Judy Horn each received this award for providing over 10 years of Volunteer service to the Children’s Hands-On Gardening Program for the Alliance area schools’ 3rd and 4th graders. This program is intensive, but Patty and Judy keep coming back to help these students learn how to grow their own food! Thank you both for your commitment to this program, to the students, and to the Nature Center!

Shirley DeMaiolo, aka “Nature Center Mom”, was recognized once again for providing the highest number of Volunteer hours in the past year! Thank you, Shirley, for your dedication to the Nature Center in many different capacities for over 20 years! This past year, 145 Volunteers donated 1,377.5 hours of time! We thank ALL of you for helping us accomplish the mission of the Nature Center. It takes ALL of us to continue the legacy of Dr. John D. Brumbaugh!

Volunteer Recognition

We extend a sincere thank you to our August, September, October, and November Volunteers! Our outstanding Volunteer staff assists us in maintaining high-quality programming and a beautiful facility. Thank you for ALL that you do!

Kaylee Adkins	Sandy Gahan	Olivia Nestor
Kim Anderson	Hannah Greene	Kaitlyn Pasko
Joseph Balogh	Logan Gunderman	Diya Patel
Judy Birmingham	Joseph Haas	Riya Patel
Rick Blessing	Liza Harris	David Patton
Ruthie Border	Ann Hendel	Karen Planisky
Monica Budac	Paul Hobe	Joe Planisky
Jacob Buttar	Anse Kee	Caleb Septer
Regina Cetnarowski	Arlo Kee	Cailleigh Seskey
Mark Clough	Courtney Kehr	Caitlin Thouvenin
Kerry Cochran	Aaliyah Kinnard	Kylie Thouvenin
Mike Cope	Jacob Kraus	Larry Thouvenin
Paula Cope	Brady Lang	Stan Vuletich
Shirley DeMaiolo	Ashley Laurent	Sage Warner
Al Eibel	Mary Lindsay	Vanessa Worley
Claire Fried	Larry Miller	Alyssa Yungwirth
	Farrah Nabulsi	

Special Thanks

We extend a thank you to the Green Raiders student organization of the University of Mount Union for assisting us with our annual Relax & De-Stress Event. Once again, we thank Aultman Alliance Community Hospital for providing “Henry the Hand Handwashing Booklets” for the 4th grade students who participated in the Children’s Hands-On Gardening Program in the fall of 2023. We thank DeHoff’s Flowers, Greenhouse, and Landscaping for their continuous support of donating seed packets to our public programming that encourages planting for pollinators.



John T. Huston-Dr. John D.
Brumbaugh Nature Center
1972 Clark Ave.
Alliance, OH 44601

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 218
Alliance, Ohio

Discover the Wonder of Nature's Ever-Changing Story

Visitors Center and Bird Observatory Hours

April through October
Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday, 1-5 p.m.
Closed Mondays

November through March
Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Sunday 1-5 p.m.
Closed Mondays and Saturdays

Our trails are open from dawn to dusk every day.

**The Nature Center is located six miles south of
the University of Mount Union on Daniel Street, just off Route 183**



Contact us at:

Phone: (330) 823-7487

Email: naturecenter@mountunion.edu
mountunion.edu/nature-center