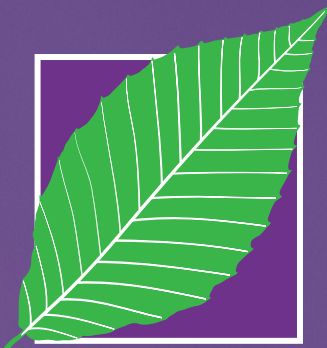




UNIVERSITY OF MOUNT UNION
HUSTON-BRUMBAUGH
NATURE CENTER

Discover the Wonder of Nature's Ever-Changing Story



FALL/WINTER
2026

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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.

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From the Director Jason A. Smith, Ph.D.

Another summer has ended and classes are back in session. It feels good to be starting a new academic year with a lot of exciting new things to show off here at the Nature Center.

New All Persons Trail: Just in time for the busy teaching season, the new All Persons Trail provides an excellent way to welcome students back to the Nature Center. The trail increases accessibility and improves safety while doing so in an aesthetically pleasing way. If you haven't been out to visit the new boardwalk yet, you have a personal invitation from me to do so as soon as possible.

The Forest Listens: We are also very excited to announce that, for the first time ever, the UMU Theatre Department is using the boardwalk and associated spaces in a new production entitled *The Forest Listens: A Theatrical Walk*, on the evenings of October 8, 9, and 10. Join us for this novel event to see talented students perform in an unforgettable setting.

Looking Ahead: It is going to be an exciting and busy fall and winter season for us as we begin settling into our newly purchased Huston House. Long-term plans for the space include housing students and faculty on site, creating meeting and reception spaces, and expanding outreach related to sustainability. These goals connect directly to the Nature Center's mission of supporting education, community engagement, and meaningful experiences with the natural world. Stay tuned for information on our plans as well as potential future volunteer opportunities and open houses. These goals will require raising funds, so your help will be needed to see this vision become a reality.

Reflection: As more and more people grapple with an increasingly digital world and the stresses of daily life, the value of nature cannot be overemphasized. The simple pleasures of experiencing fresh air, blue sky, a kaleidoscope of autumn leaves and sound of a woodpecker don't have a dollar value. They are priceless. Come and enjoy what has been gifted to you so you can have a better life.

HBNC Bench Views

Have you ever wondered what you might notice if you spent a few extra minutes sitting on a trail bench? Beginning in October, we're launching HBNC Bench Views, a new social media series designed to encourage visitors to slow down, take a closer look, and experience the Nature Center from a different perspective.

During the first week of the month, we will feature photos taken from one of the many benches found along our trails. Each post will identify the bench location and invite you to visit the site yourself. While you're there, take in the view, look for wildlife, observe the changing seasons, and capture photos of anything that catches your attention.

We encourage you to share your own images in the comments or on social media and tell us what stood out to you. Your photos might highlight a blooming wildflower, an interesting insect, a favorite landscape, or simply a moment of quiet observation. The same location can look remarkably different from one person to the next and from one season to another. Through HBNC Bench Views, we hope to create a collection of perspectives that showcase the beauty and diversity of the Nature Center throughout the year.

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram and watch for the first HBNC Bench Views post on the first of the month.



Summer Programs Inspire Scientific Discovery and Creative Exploration

This summer, students from across the region gathered at the Huston-Brumbaugh Nature Center for two unique educational experiences that encouraged exploration, creativity, and hands-on learning. Through the Environmental Science Outreach STEM Program for high school students and the Nature to Studio: A Mixed Media Summer Art Camp for middle school students, participants had opportunities to engage deeply with the natural world while developing new skills alongside peers from a variety of backgrounds.

The six-day Environmental Science Outreach STEM Program welcomed high school students each day, representing several school districts as well as homeschool communities. Throughout the program, students worked together, forming new friendships and connections while investigating diverse topics in biology and environmental science. Each session immersed participants in authentic field and laboratory experiences led by University of Mount Union faculty, staff, and environmental professionals.

Students began the program by exploring modern bird science, learning bird identification techniques, and contributing observations to citizen science efforts. They then examined ecological succession at HBNC, studying how ecosystems change over time through observations of plant diversity, forest structure, and habitat development. Additional sessions focused on freshwater ecology, where students investigated pond ecosystems, collected and identified aquatic organisms, and learned how eutrophication can impact water quality and ecosystem health. Participants also explored the geology of the Nature Center, examining rocks, soils, and landforms to better understand the natural history of the region. During the final sessions, students investigated plant diseases and the important ecological roles of insects and pollinators, gaining insight into the connections between environmental health and biodiversity.

Beyond the scientific content, the workshop provided students with valuable opportunities to collaborate, think critically, and experience science as practicing researchers do. The work completed during the program was showcased in a student poster display at the HBNC Visitors Center during the Summer Scholars Showcase on Sunday, September 13.

Creativity and observation took center stage during the Nature to Studio: A Mixed Media Summer Art Camp, which welcomed middle school students for an immersive artistic experience inspired by the natural environment. Students were encouraged to slow down, carefully observe the world around them, experiment with new materials, and discover that creativity often begins with curiosity. Throughout the camp, participants explored drawing, watercolor, photography, cyanotype printing, and mixed media techniques, allowing them to develop new artistic skills while discovering fresh ways of seeing and interpreting nature.

Nature to Studio was designed to provide middle school students with hands-on, professional-level art experiences while fostering an appreciation for both the creative process and the remarkable beauty of HBNC. By combining artistic exploration with close observation of the natural world, the program encouraged students to build confidence in their creative abilities while developing a deeper connection to their environment. Artwork created during the camp was in the Visitors Centers through September.

Both summer programs were made possible through the generous support of the Sansom Foundation, with additional support from the John T. Huston-Dr. John D. Brumbaugh Nature Center and the University of Mount Union Department of Visual Arts & Media. Together, these programs demonstrated how hands-on experiences in science and art can inspire curiosity, build connections, and foster lifelong appreciation for both the natural world and the creative process.



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.

Acoustic Music Jam

Sunday, October 4 2-4:00 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! No registration required.

*The Forest Listens: A Theatrical Walk

October 8, 9, and 10 6-7:30 p.m.

The Forest Listens: A Theatrical Walk invites you to experience the Huston Brumbaugh Nature Center in a completely new way. This immersive performance guides audiences along the Nature Center paths at dusk where theater and the natural world intertwine, opening yourself to a fresh way of connecting with theater and the environment around you. Join us for an unforgettable evening where nature becomes the stage! Performance time is 25 minutes in duration. ***Find additional details and order free tickets at <https://www.mountunion.edu/boxoffice>**

*Rain Garden Crash Course

Thursday, October 15 6-7:30 p.m.

Interested in discovering the list of benefits rain gardens bring to our yards, water quality, and pollinators? Join Stark Soil & Water Conservation District for a crash course on the ins and outs of planning, building, and maintaining your very own rain garden. ***Registration is required.**

*Native Seed Collection

Sunday, October 25 1-3:00 p.m.

Assist the staff with collecting seeds from a variety of flowering plants. Participants will learn how to collect and process seeds for future planting and can take some seeds home. Wear sturdy shoes and long pants. May be canceled for inclement weather. ***Registration is required.**

Acoustic Music Jam

Sunday, November 1 2-4:00 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! No registration required.

*Founder's Day Volunteer Luncheon

Sunday, November 8

The visitors center will be closed for the afternoon as we honor those who have volunteered at the Nature Center over the past year. Learn more about volunteering at <https://www.mountunion.edu/academics/centers/nature-center/volunteer-opportunities>. ***Invitation only.**

*Habitat Restoration Day

Sunday, November 15 1-4:00 p.m.

Join the Nature Center for a community conservation event dedicated to removing invasive shrubs and vines and improving wildlife habitat. Invasive shrubs crowd out native plants, reduce biodiversity, and negatively impact forest health. Together, we can make a difference by reclaiming woodland space for native trees, shrubs, wildflowers, birds, and pollinators. Bring work gloves, water bottle, and loppers, hand pruners, or hand saws (if available). Wear long pants and sturdy footwear. Some tools, gloves, safety instructions, and refreshments will be provided. ***Registration and volunteer waivers are required.**

Feathers & Tiles

Sunday, November 22 2-4:00 p.m.

Join us for a casual Sunday gathering of Mahjong and bird watching. Bring a game set to share or come to learn the game. Beginners and seasoned players are welcome. Enjoy good company, friendly games, and beautiful views from the Bird Observatory.

*Full Moon Night Hike

Tuesday, November 24 4:45-6:30 p.m.

The Full Beaver Moon, also a super moon, rises at 4:45 p.m. Meet at the North Woods gravel parking lot tonight to see the full moon rise. We'll begin the hike at 5:30 p.m. after watching the full moon rise. ***Registration is required.**

Huston House Open House

Sunday, November 29 2-4:00 p.m.

After several decades as a private residence, the Huston House is now part of the Nature Center. Explore the interior and hear about the plans to incorporate the home into the operations of the Nature Center and University of Mount Union. *This event may be canceled if renovation activities do not permit public access.*

Holiday Celebration Open House

Sunday, December 6 1-5:00 p.m.

The Visitors Center and Huston Cabin are dressed up for the holidays. Stop in from 1-5pm to make some ornaments, enjoy acoustic music, drink cocoa, and make s'mores at the Visitors Center. Visit Santa Claus in the Huston cabin from 2-4pm! Free and fun for the whole family.

Acoustic Music Jam

Sunday, December 6 2-4:00 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! No registration required.

Feathers & Tiles

Sunday, December 13 2-4:00 p.m.

Join us for a casual Sunday gathering of Mahjong and bird watching. Bring a game set to share or come to learn the game. Beginners and seasoned players are welcome. Enjoy good company, friendly games, and beautiful views from the Bird Observatory.

127th Christmas Bird Count

December 14 – January 5 All Day

Participate in the Audubon 127th Christmas Bird Count as a volunteer in the Canton, Wilmot, or Quail Hollow count circles. Join a team of volunteers to count birds in the field, or you may be able to participate at home. Visit the Audubon Society online <https://www.audubon.org/community-science/christmas-bird-count/join-christmas-bird-count>.

Acoustic Music Jam

Sunday, January 10 2-4:00 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! No registration required.

Feathers & Tiles

Sunday, January 17 2-4:00 p.m.

Join us for a casual Sunday gathering of Mahjong and bird watching. Bring a game set to share or come to learn the game. Beginners and seasoned players are welcome. Enjoy good company, friendly games, and beautiful views from the Bird Observatory.

***Tick Talk: Ticks in Winter**

Sunday, January 24 2-4:00 p.m.

Who doesn't love a nice hike during the winter, especially on one of those warm winter days that get above freezing? Are you thinking about the risk of ticks on such a day? Probably not. Ticks enjoy a warm winter spell just like many people do. Come and learn about the different species of ticks found in Ohio as we talk about their biology, lifecycle, disease transmission, and tick bite prevention methods. Prevention is key, even in the winter! ***Registration is required.**

***Trail Camera Treasures**

Sunday, January 31 2-3:30 p.m.

Nature Center trail cameras run nearly all year long on over 250-acres of land managed by the Nature Center. Thousands of photos of local wildlife are recorded, and we are looking

forward to sharing some of our recent images and sequences captured on camera. ***Register by January 29.**

Acoustic Music Jam

Sunday, February 7 2-4:00 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! No registration required.

Great Backyard Bird Count

February 12-15

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

Feathers & Tiles

Sunday, February 21 2-4:00 p.m.

Join us for a casual Sunday gathering of Mahjong and bird watching. Bring a game set to share or come to learn the game. Beginners and seasoned players are welcome. Enjoy good company, friendly games, and beautiful views from the Bird Observatory.

Photo Contest and Exhibit Open House

Sunday, February 28 1-5:00 p.m.

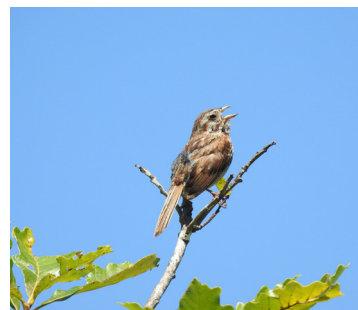
Save the date! Photo submissions begin February 1. See below for preliminary contest details.

25th Annual Photography Contest

Save the Date!

Photo submissions for the Nature Center's 25th Annual Nature Photography Contest and Exhibit will be accepted beginning in February 2027. There is still plenty of time to capture the perfect shot of your favorite subject, season, or landscape. Participation is free, but submissions are limited to nature photos captured in eastern Ohio, including Lake Erie and the Ohio River basin. Photographers must be amateurs.

The contest requires photo submissions being printed at 8"x10" size and matted (no frame or glass). An artists' reception and exhibit opening are scheduled for Sunday, February 28, 2027 from 1-5:00 p.m. Contest details and entry forms will be available by February 1.



Boardwalk Replacement Complete!

The boardwalk replacement project is finally complete! 1700 feet of old, slippery, and rotten boardwalk have been removed and replaced with a wider and safer boardwalk. An elevated design will help extend the life of the lumber and a new decking product has superior traction to help prevent slips.

While the trail is complete, there are still many ways to help with the project. There are still significant piles of old boardwalk that need to be dismantled for recycling and disposal. This may involve removing screws, prying plastic, and removing old deck boards. Contact our staff if you or a group you are in would like to volunteer to help.

We have lots of plastic deck boards that need a second life. While we hope to recycle large amounts of the old plastic, we'd also like to see them used in creative reuse projects. These plastic boards are not structural but may be great for simple benches, a planter, raised beds, bird feeders, a simple bridge deck on your property or anything your creativity can construct. You can make arrangements with our staff to find out more or come collect some of the lumber to take home for your projects. Decking boards will still have screws in them that will need to be removed, bent over or cut off. Watch our social media accounts for inspiration for these kinds of projects.

It's also not too late to donate! Have you been waiting to see how the boardwalk turned out? Know someone that will benefit from this accessibility project and want to honor them? You can still donate to offset the cost of this project so that we can put more funds towards other property improvements. Please contact the Nature Center or mail your contribution to: UNIVERSITY OF MOUNT UNION, OFFICE OF ADVANCEMENT, 1972 CLARK AVE., ALLIANCE, OH 44601. Indicate that your donation is for the Nature Center Boardwalk in the memo line. For online donations, please visit <https://giving.mountunion.edu/pages/home-2696>. Select Brumbaugh Nature Center as the giving destination and complete the remainder of the online form.



Seed Donations Requested

Do you have native trees and/or shrubs in your landscape? The Nature Center may be able to use some of your unwanted seed stock for propagation this winter. Please read carefully if you are interested in making a seed donation this fall!

Donations of seeds/nuts from the following species are requested: White Oak (*Quercus alba*), Swamp White Oak (*Quercus bicolor*), Pin Oak (*Quercus palustris*), Ohio Buckeye (*Aesculus glabra*), American Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) – no BLD symptoms, Sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), and native dogwood tree (*Cornus florida*) or shrubs (*Cornus amomum*, *Cornus racemosa*, *Cornus sericea*).

We only need enough material to fit into a small paper bag. The collected seeds/nuts do not have to be processed. Husks, shells, and/or fleshy fruits around the seeds are fine. Seeds must be collected when dry. If the collected material is wet, damp, or otherwise full of moisture (especially fruit), lay the seeds out in a single layer in the bottom of a box, board, cookie sheet, etc. and permit the seeds to air dry in a weather-protected area. You may need to ensure your collection is inaccessible to wildlife while drying as well.

Once dry, place your collected material into a lunch-sized paper bag. Label the bag with the species of seeds/nuts inside, and staple or tape the bag closed. Please do not package seeds in plastic bags or air-tight containers such as coffee cans, Tupperware, etc. since humidity can cause moisture to accumulate and permit mold to grow. Keep your bag of seeds in a climate-controlled location until you can give it to a Nature Center staff member.

Volunteer Recognition

We extend a sincere thank you to our April, May, June, and July Volunteers! Our outstanding volunteers assist us in maintaining high-quality programming and a beautiful facility.

Thank you for ALL that you do!

Bill Benedetto	Bernie Miner
Judy Blebea	Maia Peck
Ruth Border	Joe Planisky
Thad Border	Karen Planisky
Adrianna Brass	Kylee Puckett
Bryanna Brown	Nevaeh Reed
Mike Cope	Soel Rhie
Paula Cope	Jakob Rusher
Grace DiSalvatore	Abby Schroeder
Claire Fried	Sara Schroeder
Sandy Gahan	Owen Silva
Cathy Hart	Kelly Slutz
Rich Hart	Keith Swartz
Paul Hobe	Alexa Titus
Matthew Honaker	Bonnie Twaddle
Liz Keene	Stan Vuletich
Paul Kuceyeski	Jillian Wagner
Peyton Leinweber	Larry Zank
Mary Lindsay	

Summer Research

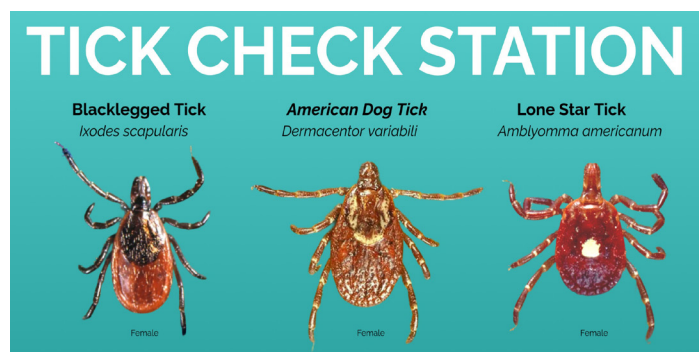
Six undergraduate students from the University of Mount Union conducted research projects as part of the 2026 Brumbaugh Scholars Program. Students worked with a mentor to design, conduct, and present the results of a research project during the months of May through August. The Brumbaugh Scholars Program is a competitive, application-based research program funded by the Nature Center's Brumbaugh Endowment. Each student and mentor were compensated for their work and provided funding to purchase supplies for their research projects.

Mount Union senior Emily Owens (computer science/data science & analytics major) developed The LandLore Initiative: An AI-Guided tour application for land usage information and plant identification. The mobile app is designed to create a personalized, interactive experience for Nature Center visitors. Once published, users will be able to explore points of interest, identify common plant species, and learn more about the land's history. Emily's research mentor was Dr. Julie Butler, Mount Union assistant professor of physics and astronomy.

Senior Alfonso Cruz III (criminal justice major) studied White-tailed Deer movement and feeding patterns at the Nature Center. Alfonso's research was guided by the understanding that deer can influence plant and wildlife populations, soil health, and overall ecosystem balance. Alfonso's research mentor was Dr. Mike Zimmermann, Mount Union associate professor of biology.

Junior Adam Schlarb (biology major) investigated island biogeography of the aquatic macroinvertebrates inhabiting the wetland pools at the Huston-Brumbaugh Nature Center. Using a combination of invertebrate collection and photography, Adam's project contained elements of research and public education. The research component focused on determining colonization rates of the wetland pools based on the McArthur-Wilson model of island biogeography, where the temporary wetland pools are expected to be colonized at different rates based on their size and location relative to the primary wetland pool. Adam's photos are intended to be used to develop educational signage about the diversity of wildlife species residing in the wetland pools. Adam's research mentor was Dr. Mike Zimmermann, Mount Union associate professor of biology.

Three Mount Union students, Emma Welch, Ilani Jones-Wallace, and Lisa Bosley, developed an original play titled *The Forest Listens: A Theatrical Walk*. Emma is a theater and English major, Ilani is a theater and biology major, and Lisa is a theater and music major. The three students combined their talents to write script, evaluate and select trails for scene locations, develop technical effects, create marketing materials, as well as hold auditions, develop costumes, and everything else required to make a theater production come to life. Their objective was for the audience to enjoy and experience a night of serenity and insight through nature's beauty combined with the art of theatre. The Forest Listens will be presented at the Nature Center on October 8, 9, and 10.



Tick Collection Station

Across Ohio, there has been an increase in the number of tick related illnesses like Lyme disease and red meat allergy (alpha-gal). According to the Ohio Department of Health, there were 2,800 reported Lyme Disease cases in Ohio for 2025, which is almost seven times as many cases reported in 2020. Ticks have not always been at the forefront of people's minds when hiking at the Nature Center. To help bring more tick awareness to the visitors of the Nature Center, we have introduced tick collection stations.

These tick stations are designed to serve not only as reminders for the public to check themselves, their families and their pets for ticks after hiking, but will prevent ticks from moving to new locations. These stations will also provide a passive collection method of ticks for the Nature Center, so we can observe what the most common species and life stage of ticks are being found by our visitors per month.

The tick check stations can be found in the parking lot in front of the porta-john and in the lobby of the visitors center. Each station is equipped with tick removers, forceps, and a collection jar. After your hike, and before you enter your car, take a few minutes to scan your clothing, your family, and/or pets for ticks. If you find one, put the tick inside the collection jar found at the tick station. Once you get home, you still must do a thorough check, take a shower, and wash your clothing as a precaution. When it comes to protecting yourself from ticks, prevention is key!



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

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Discover the Wonder of Nature's Ever-Changing Story

Visitors Center and Bird Observatory Hours

Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. - 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**