

UNIVERSITY OF MOUNT UNION
HUSTON-BRUMBAUGH
NATURE CENTER

Discover the Wonder of Nature's Ever-Changing Story



SUMMER
2024

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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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Horticulture and Facility Coordinator

Michael Greiner

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Director

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From the Director

Jason A. Smith, Ph.D.

As we near the end of the 2023-24 academic year, I will be entering my first summer here at HBNC and nearing the anniversary of my commencement as director. What a year it's been! Our wetland construction project is now near completion, and we enter the final phase of planting and trail construction. It is most satisfying to see a project that began with students, faculty and staff coming to life and becoming self-sustaining! In August, it will really look like a wetland, and we can't wait for the first classes to use the site for field trips during the fall semester. We have also begun the process of strategic and master planning for the Nature Center. This began by going back to our roots and examining our history and surveying students on campus to determine where we are and where we need to be. Look for much more about that very soon. I can't wait to share the journey and invite you to join us!



Summer Research

The summer of 2024 will be a busy season of data collection related to several research projects. As per annual tradition, the Brumbaugh Scholars program will host a student and faculty mentor to complete a student-initiated project over a 10-week period from late May to August. This summer, Sage Warner and Dr. Melissa Muller will be using trail cameras to document mammal responses to a variety of self-recognition, problem-solving, and barrier tests. The goal of their research is to gauge the ability of mammal species to adapt to an increasingly human-dominated world. Their research will be presented during the September 22nd Summer Research Showcase.

Nature Center director, Dr. Jason Smith, will be leading the charge on research related to Beech Leaf Disease (BLD) at the Nature Center as part of a grant-funded research proposal. Dr. Smith's proposal, "Delineating disease etiology and management strategies for Beech Leaf Disease", has been selected for funding from the U.S. Forest Service. His goal is to learn more about the annual cycle of *Litylenchus crenatae mccannii*, the nematode responsible for the symptoms associated with Beech Leaf Disease. By better understanding its dispersal and colonization patterns, treatment and management strategies can be adapted to be more effective at preventing the loss of American Beech trees from our forest ecosystem.

Bird banding research continues this summer along the First Energy right-of-way (ROW) that passes through the eastern third of the Nature Center property. Banding will take place from sunrise to 11am at the ROW approximately once every 10 days from late May through early August. Visitors are welcome to observe banding activities and ask questions about the bird species encountered. A temporary banding station will be located where the Beech Trail and ROW intersect on banding days. Email the Nature Center if you would like to be alerted to banding dates this summer.

Eastern Bluebird nestling study continues this summer at the Nature Center and several other locations in eastern Stark County. We are hoping to receive reports of adult and fledgling bluebirds with metal and colored plastic bands on their legs from visitors and area residents. Over 100 young Eastern Bluebirds were banded during the summer of 2023 before they left their nest sites. Some of these birds may reside near where they were born while others have likely dispersed to new areas like your backyard. This is the kind of information we're attempting to gather, but we need your observations! Please submit observations of banded bluebirds to the Bluebird Reporting Form hosted at mountunion.edu/nature-center.

Photography Contest Awards

The 2024 Nature Photography Contest and Exhibit hosted by the Huston-Brumbaugh Nature Center received and displayed 142 photo entries. Formal judging was conducted, and judges recognized many photos with 1st, 2nd, 3rd, Honorable Mention and Best of Show designations. People's Choice votes were tallied with votes from the public via paper ballot from February 25 through March 10. Congratulations to the photographers named below and thank you to all the participants that submitted photos to the contest in our traditional format this year! Everyone's photos make for a great display of Ohio's natural beauty!



UMU Campus & Nature Center:

First Place – Amy O'Donnell, Second Place – Tami McMinn, Third Place – Patty Rickard, People's Choice – Amy O'Donnell

Black & White:

First Place – Bill Roloff, Second Place – Alyssia Kellermier, Third Place – Serenity, Honorable Mention – Eli Burkhart, Lisa Lee, People's Choice – Jack Perry

Landscapes:

First Place – Sarah Curtis, Second Place – Andrew Stem, Third Place – Alyssia Kellermier, Honorable Mention – Matt Hoffman, Tami McMinn, People's Choice – Andrew Stem

Invertebrates:

First Place – Dan Lux, Second Place – Sarah Curtis, Third Place – Bill Roloff, Honorable Mention – Douglas Perry (2x), Dennis Imhoff, People's Choice – Michelle Wittensoldner

Wild Plants and Fungi:

First Place – Amy O'Donnell, Second Place – Dan Lux, Third Place – Bill Roloff, Honorable Mention – John O'Donnell, People's Choice – Jack Perry

Youth:

First Place – Kiera Gregorich, Second Place – Kiera Gregorich, Third Place – Molly Dever, People's Choice – Kiera Gregorich

Seasons:

First Place – Alyssia Kellermier, Second Place – Jack Perry, Third Place – Matt Hoffman, Honorable Mention – Michelle Wittensoldner, People's Choice – Jack Perry

Open Category:

First Place – Dan Lux, Second Place – John O'Donnell, Third Place – Michelle Wittensoldner, Honorable Mention – Michael Grimes, Matthew Hoffman, People's Choice – Andrew Stem

Vertebrates:

First Place (and Best of Show) – Daniel Lux, Second Place – Sarah Curtis, Third Place – Mark Tucker, Honorable Mention – Andrew Stem, Jack Perry, Sarah Curtis, Dan Lux, People's Choice – Michelle Wittensoldner

While you're out and about enjoying summer, be sure to save your best nature photos for our 23rd Annual Photo Contest and Exhibit in February 2025!

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.

Get Wild & Woolly

Sunday, June 9 | 2-4:00 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.

*To Bee or Not to Bee

Sunday, June 16 | 1-2:30 p.m.

What makes a bee a "bee?" How are bees different from flies and wasps? What is the role of bees, flies, and wasps in pollination services? Come and learn about the characteristics of bees, flies and wasps that are unique to each group. We will take what we learn and apply it in the field as we catch/look for bees, flies, and wasps. Open to all ages. ***Registration is required.**

Breeding Bird Blitz

Saturday, June 22 | 8-10:00 a.m.

Over the last 10 years, 81 species of birds have been recorded at the Nature Center during the breeding season. Join us for a leisurely walk around the Nature Center to see how many of these we can see/hear or add new species to the list. Bring binoculars. Canceled in event of rain or high winds.

Butterfly Hike

Saturday, June 22 | 12:00-1:30 p.m.

An exploration in search of butterflies and day-flying moths of the Nature Center. Binoculars and cameras are encouraged to view and document all the species we see. Will be canceled for rain or wind.

*Enhance Your Homegrown Habitat

Sunday, June 23 | 2-4:00 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. Attendance is limited to 20 adults only.**

Summer Serenades

Thursday, June 27 | 6:30-7:30 p.m.

The Canton Symphony Orchestra and Stark Parks team up for the 10th year to bring Stark County the Summer Serenades in the Park Concert Series. Bring your chairs, blankets, and snacks to listen in the Nature Center's pavilion. Canceled for inclement weather. Check for updates the day of the concert at starkparks.com or cantonsymphony.org. Supported by The Mary Wendling Renkert Foundation, Visit Canton, and ArtsinStark.

Forest Health Hike with the Director

Saturday, July 6 | 2-3:30 p.m.

Take a hike along the trails of the Nature Center and learn about forest health with Dr. Jason Smith, HBNC Director. We will explore the roles of pests and pathogens as causal agents of tree mortality and the roles they play in creating habitats for wildlife. We will also discuss the major impact invasive species have had on forested ecosystems as we see examples of non-native invaders affecting the Nature Center.

*Firefly Hike

Saturday, July 13 | 8:30-10:00 p.m.

Join us for a hike in search of fireflies! We're likely to see a few different species, each with their unique flash patterns and color. This is a moderately difficult hike due to distance and changes in elevation to visit various habitats hosting fireflies. ***Registration is required and limited.**

*Introduction to Volunteer Opportunities

Sunday, July 14 | 2-4:00 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. ***Register by Friday, July 12.**

Bat Roost Monitoring

Friday, July 19 | 8:30-10:00 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 rain or wind.

Moth Night Out

Saturday, July 27 | 9:00-10:30 p.m.

Join the Nature Center for an evening of mothing. Light traps and bait stations will be set up in various locations around the Visitors Center and nearby trails to attract moths and other nocturnal insects. This is a self-guided activity from station to station. Bring a flashlight and your phone to upload images of insects using the iNaturalist app. Canceled for rain or wind.

***Bird Watching Workshop**

Saturday, August 17 | 9-11:00 a.m.

Join our pre-Bird Quest workshop to help you refresh or build new bird watching skills before Stark County Bird Quest on September 13-14. Indoor session at 9am. Bird walk at 10am. Bring binoculars. Trails will be suitable for variable mobility levels. ***Registration is required and limited.**

Welcome Back Hike

Sunday, August 25 | 2-4:00 p.m.

Students, faculty and staff (and anyone else!) are welcome to join us for a relaxing hike through the Nature Center's trail system to enjoy the sights and sounds of the forest and kick off the beginning of the fall semester at UMU. We will begin at the Visitor's Center and lead groups along the main trails and provide interpretive hiking experiences, highlighting the flora and fauna of the forest and give everyone an opportunity to enjoy the Nature Center as we begin the new academic year!

***Trail Camera Academy**

Saturday, August 31 | 1-4:00 p.m.

Learn the basics of using a trail camera. Indoor session at 1pm. Off-trail hike to set cameras at 2pm. Off-trail hike will be moderately strenuous due to duration and terrain. There will be exposure to poison ivy and biting insects. Long pants, sturdy shoes, insect repellent and water are recommended.

***Registration is required and limited.**

***Beech Leaf Disease Workshop**

Saturday, September 7 | Save the Date

This workshop aims to bring together professionals, landowners, agencies, and anyone interested in hearing about the latest information on Beech Leaf Disease, a devastating disease affecting American beech trees in our region. The workshop will consist of a session of morning talks/presentations, lunch, and an afternoon field tour in the beech forest at the Nature Center. ***Registration is required and limited.**

2nd Annual Stark County Bird Quest

September 13 & 14

This family-friendly 24-hour challenge has two goals: get people into the outdoors using birds as a catalyst and to accumulate data about bird populations in Stark County. This event is free including resources, guided walks, and the celebration at the event's conclusion on Saturday, September 14. For more information and registration, go to cantonaudubon.org/stark-county-bird-quest.

Summer Research Showcase

Sunday, September 22 | 1-4:00 p.m.

See the work of outstanding University of Mount Union students in this showcase event. The 2024 cohort of summer researchers undertook a variety of projects with University mentors. Each student will make a presentation about their research. Your attendance is appreciated in support of the students, their mentors, and their academic research!

***Off-trail Hike**

Saturday, September 28 | 1-3:00 p.m.

Join our staff for an off-trail hike to explore habitats and check trail cameras. This is a unique opportunity to explore off-trail! Off-trail hike will be moderately strenuous due to duration and terrain. There will be exposure to poison ivy and biting insects. Long pants, sturdy shoes, insect repellent and water are recommended. ***Registration is required and limited.**

Relax & De-stress Event

Sunday, October 6 | 1-5:00 p.m.

EVERYONE needs to manage their stress these days. Stop by at your convenience and enjoy some relaxing activities such as strolling through the peaceful woods, walking the labyrinth, relaxing by the pond, listening to live music, light refreshments, and more. Come alone or bring the family – there is something for everyone!

Recurring Programs listed on Page 5

Recurring Programs

Acoustic Jam | 2-4 p.m.

June 2, July 7, August 4, September 8, October 6

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!

Volunteer Recognition

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

| | | |
|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Kim Anderson | Sandy Gahan | Keith Miller |
| Kody Arntz | Ann Hendel | Liam Murphy |
| Joseph Balogh G.M. | Billy Hreha | Logan Nott |
| Diane Blessing | Anse Kee | Justin Phillips |
| Ruth Border | Arlo Kee | Joe Planisky |
| Thaddeus Border | Kevin Kern | Karen Planisky |
| Kerry Cochran | John Kolar | Mark Quillen |
| Fred Cockrill | Liz Koziarz | Hunter Reich |
| Joel Collins | Jake Laurie | Jaci Scherb |
| Mason Cook | P. J. Lombard | Adam Seefeldt |
| Mike Cope | Kendra Mazzie | Grace Seefeldt |
| Paula Cope | Troy McCracken | Joseph Seefeldt |
| Tim Falter | Amy McElhinney | |
| Hethon Foster | Matt Michalko | |

Special Thanks

A special thank you to Kevin Kern and the UMU Green Raiders Student Organization for helping with the Holiday Open House last December! Once again, we thank DeHoff's Flowers and Greenhouse for their continual support of the Hands-On Children's Gardening Program for providing a free seed packet for every Alliance City Schools' 3rd grader to plant flowers and vegetables at home.

National Pollinator Week

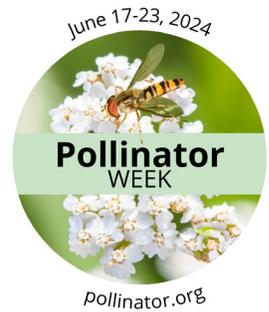
June 17-23, 2024

National Pollinator Week was initiated and is managed by Pollinator Partnership, and sixteen years ago the U.S. Senate's unanimous approval and designation of a week in June as "National Pollinator Week" marked a necessary step toward addressing the urgent issue of declining pollinator populations. Pollinator Week has now grown into an international celebration, promoting the valuable ecosystem services provided by bees, birds, butterflies, bats, beetles, moths, wasps, and flies.

Stop by the Visitors Center during open hours June 18 & 20-23 to make and take items home that you can easily add to your outdoor area to help improve pollinator habitat! Bee blocks, bee-safe water dishes, and small annual plants are typically available for visitors to add to their home landscape to provide nesting, food, and water resources for various pollinators.

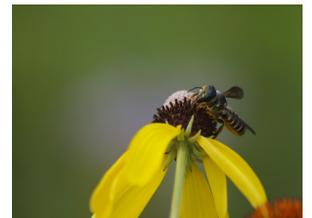
Check out the program listings on pages 4 and 5 for details about pollinator-related programs in June. We are offering a bee ID program on June 16, a butterfly hike on June 22, and a landscaping program focused on pollinators on June 23. Some events require registration, so please check the listings for details.

Pollinators can be observed and appreciated any time you visit the Nature Center. Our flower beds, forests, and fields are teeming with pollinator activity all summer long! To date, we have photographed 46 species of pollinating bees and wasps,



40 species of butterflies, 127 species of moths, 10 species of flower flies, and 44 species of beetles foraging on flowers. Some the best places to look for pollinators are the meadow on Maple Trail, the powerline corridor, the East Meadow, around the ponds, and in the fields at the North Woods.

When we are searching for pollinators, there are a few summer flowers that we look for that will almost always have insects buzzing around them. In June, milkweeds, fleabanes, and daisies seem to be the center of attention. In July, coneflowers, mints, and Wild Bergamot are where many pollinators can be found. When the calendar turns to August, we focus on Joe-pye Weed, boneset, ironweed, and early-blooming goldenrods. As summer turns to fall in September, the pollinators will be all over the goldenrods and asters until the first hard frost. We encourage you to add any of these to your home landscape to help a pollinator near you.



North Woods Habitat Project Update

The North Woods habitat project broke ground in January 2024 and has transformed almost 7 acres of former agricultural land into wetland and field habitat. In our Spring 2024 newsletter, we wrote about the planting plans and installation of seed and nursery stock across the site to establish plant communities associated with marsh, wet meadow, and field habitats. Currently, the site is now host to over 130 new species of plants introduced as seeds, plugs, potted nursery stock, or balled & burlapped trees.

We would not have been able to introduce so many new species of plants to the fledgling site without the assistance of volunteers. Covering most of the site with seeds seems like an arduous task, but the assistance of machinery like UTVs and mechanical spreaders makes application of cover crop and seed mixes a relatively easy task for Nature Center staff. The digging, proper planting, and watering of dozens of trees and shrubs is a task that defies mechanization. It takes a dedicated crew of people to properly site and care for each plant as they are installed. We are very grateful for hours of service offered by the volunteers that participated in our planting days. Volunteers were also instrumental in removing invasive honeysuckle and multiflora rose adjacent to the project site and helping to construct a dead hedge to reuse the carcasses of the invasive shrubs.

A noticeable addition to the site is a Purple Martin gourd rack. The rack has 24 plastic gourds designed to house a colony of Purple Martins. Martins use the gourds for nesting and rearing young from May through June. The colony will roost in the gourds through August until they disperse to other large roosting locations with thousands of other martins before heading south for the winter. The largest of the swallow family, Purple Martins are colonial nesters who spend much of their time hunting insect prey in the sky. They can forage for insects at great heights above the ground. Their hoarse chirps and rattle-like sounds are often heard before the bird is seen, especially when they're singing high overhead. We're crossing our fingers and hoping to attract a few pairs to the Nature Center this summer.

Finally, after all the earth moving and installation of plant materials, watching the soil and waiting for the seeds to germinate and colonize the site, and staring at the reflection of the sky in the new bodies of water, we're beginning to see familiar and new species of wildlife interacting with the site. Deer tracks in the soil have been a common occurrence since the project began, and they've started sampling some of the new plant life. Brown-headed cowbirds and Eastern Bluebirds have been foraging on the mostly barren soil alongside less common bird species like Horned Larks and American Pipits. The water features have been attractive to Killdeer, Wood Ducks, Canada Geese, and a Greater Yellowlegs, a first for the Nature Center. Dragonflies have been seen buzzing about over the water, and American Toads laid eggs in the water in April. Over time, dozens of other wildlife species will make this site their home or use it as a rest stop during spring or fall migration.

Help us track the daily/weekly/monthly evolution of the site at our Chronolog station. Following the prompts on the signage and use your cell phone's camera to take an image in the Chronolog bracket, then email the photo to the email address provided on the sign. All properly submitted images will be compiled into a timelapse sequence for all to view on the Chronolog website. Work on the site will continue this summer to get it opened for exploration, so tracking changes will be important! For example, we need to get some vegetation established on the soil before opening a trail through the site. In the meantime, all are welcome to view the area from the existing gravel portion of the Forest Buchanan Trail.





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