The Status of Our Park & Programs

As you all know, we are also experiencing the unfortunate side effects of COVID-19. As of the typing of this newsletter, all programs have been canceled in April, May, and June; the rest of the Summer is pending. We are currently drafting a plan for a phased re-opening. Until then, you can still hike our trails and launch your boats from Selby’s Landing as well as Clyde Watson Boating Area. Additionally, all of our kayak/canoe launches are still open for your recreational/exercising needs.

This Newsletter will look a bit different. We are still advertising our Summer (July and August) programs in hopes they will go on as planned, but please know that all are subject to cancelation out of concern for your safety as well as our staff. Unfortunately, The Great American Campout for this year has been canceled. We hope we will be able to hold it next year and the years to come.

Please continue to monitor pgparks.com, patuxentriverpark.com, our PG Parks Nature Facebook page, and subscribe to text/email alerts to stay informed as to Park and program status. You can also call the park from 8am until 4pm as some staff are coming in to work on a rotational basis.

We hope you enjoy this edition of our Newsletter. We’ve included some special articles! We hope you enjoy them and we also hope to be able to see you in our Park soon!
Summer Programs (Tentative)

**Sunday Boat Tour**
Board a pontoon boat for a leisurely cruise on the picturesque Patuxent River.
Meet at Visitors Center
All ages
Fee: FREE
Sundays: 2:00 pm—3:00 pm
July 5, August 2

**Sunset Boat Tour**
Board a pontoon boat for a quiet, sunset cruise on the picturesque Patuxent River.
Meet at Visitors Center
All ages
Fee: $5 ($7)
Saturday, July 25
7:00 pm—8:30 pm

**Nature Photography**
Go on a nature hike in search of photo shooting examples. Learn tricks of the trade. Bring water, sunscreen, bug spray, and wear appropriate clothing. All cameras welcome, though DSLRs and cameras with adjustable settings are recommended.
Meet at Visitors Center
Ages 13 & up
Fee: $5 ($7)
Sunday, July 5, 9:00 am—11:00 am

**Nature’s Yucky!**
Investigate nature’s “yucky” critters, including slimy amphibians, wiggly insects, funky fungi, and more!
Meet at Visitors Center
Ages 8 & under
Fee: $3 ($4)
Sunday, August 2
10:00 am—11:00 am

**Wetland Trail Hike**
Naturalist-led nature hike along our wetland trail.
Meet at Visitors Center
All ages
Fee: $3 ($4)
Saturdays: 9:30 am-11:30 am
July 11, August 8

**Summer Sunset Kayak Trip**
Explore the natural beauty and cultural history of the river on a guided kayak trip held at dusk.
Meet at Jackson’s Landing
Ages 18 & up
Fee: $25 ($33)
Saturday, August 15
6:00 pm—8:30 pm

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**Parks Direct registration** (www.pgparksdirect.com) required for all programs, unless otherwise noted. Residents of Prince George’s and Montgomery County fees are listed first; non-resident are in parentheses. Private programs are available for groups to schedule in advance. Please call 301-627-6074 for more information.

The Department of Parks and Recreation encourages and supports the participation of individuals with disabilities. Register at least a minimum of two weeks in advance of the program start date to request and receive a disability accommodation.
Meet Our Park Staff!

Brieanna (Breezi) Yon

Q: How long have you been working at PRP?
A: I am coming up on my one-year anniversary in May.

Q: What are your current job responsibilities?
A: I do administrative work, assist with nature programs, and give pontoon boat tours.

Q: What parts of your job are most enjoyable for you?
A: I genuinely enjoy talking to people about the park and all we offer. I love coming to work – it is a beautiful area to work in. I really like my co-workers and being involved with all we have to offer; the wildlife programs, events, and suggesting trails to hike.

Q: What previous jobs or volunteer experiences did you have prior to working at PRP?
A: I worked as a bartender for about 8 years before coming to the park. I had no real job experience in this field previous to PRP. My college degree was based in ecology and organismal biology, which helped me transition.

Q: What are your long term career goals?
A: I would like to become a full-time naturalist and work with education programs as well as research. I know I want to continue in this field as long as I can.

Q: What are your hobbies?
A: I love playing soccer. I love walking my three dogs. I enjoy reading and spending as much time as I can outside.

Q: What is a fun fact about you?
A: I once played in an international soccer tournament in El Salvador.

Monica Stiefel

Q: How long have you been working at PRP?
A: 6 months.

Q: What are your current job responsibilities?
A: I work at the Patuxent River Park Visitor Center - greeting customers, answering phones and emails, and handling rentals. I also work special projects such as updating the Critical Area Driving Tour interpretive signs and helping with the Patuxent Challenge.

Q: What parts of your job are most enjoyable for you?
A: Helping with kayak rentals, the special projects I am working on, and potential new conservation projects.

Q: What previous jobs or volunteer experiences did you have prior to working at PRP?
A: I worked at Merkle Wildlife Sanctuary. I was a member of the Maryland Conservation Corp crew for a year through Americorps. I also volunteered with American Chestnut Land Trust and completed their Master Naturalist course.

Q: What are your long term career goals?
A: I would like to work in ocean and whale conservation.

Q: What are your hobbies?
A: Reading (especially true crime and Jane Austen books). I also like hiking (flat terrain along the water, the PRP brown and green trails, and at Merkle Natural Resource Management Area (formerly known as Merkle Wildlife Sanctuary)).

Q: What is one fun fact about you?
A: I studied abroad in Taiwan for 5 months when I was a junior in college and took Mandarin classes and cultural studies.
The Power of Partnership

By Jenn Raulin, Reserve Manager

The past few years, I’ve been the CBNERR-MD staff member contributing to the Spring edition of this newsletter. I like volunteering for this time slot because there’s a lot of energy and hope that comes in the new year, when Spring “springs” into action. I had decided to write about our 2019 program highlights to demonstrate the impact that a partnership like Maryland’s Research Reserve can accomplish. This was before the state was ordered on mandatory telework and subsequent stay-at-home orders were then put into place. I think the value of partnerships, even if we’re working together while we’re apart, is an even more important message than I originally has intended.

Maryland’s Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve is a Federal, State, and Local partnership that utilizes over 6,000 acres of protected lands and waters as living laboratories and classrooms. Designed to represent three sub-estuaries of the Chesapeake Bay, Reserve component sites are located at Otter Point Creek, where the Anita C. Leight Estuary Center can be found (Izaak Walton League is also a Reserve partner at the Bosley Conservancy), Jug Bay, which spans both sides of the Patuxent River at Patuxent River Park and the Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary, and at Monie Bay which is part of the Deal Island Wildlife Management Area. Collectively, these sites make a huge impact in the state providing public access, educational and volunteer opportunities, and advancing estuarine research and long-term monitoring. In 2019, CBNERR-MD partners:

- Engaged 5,871 students in educational programming
- Trained 41 teachers in field-based, data-driven estuarine science investigation
- Hosted 74,094 visitors amongst sites
- Logged 11,687 volunteer hours

CBNERR-MD supports each site by providing financial, and staffing support, mentoring interns, and providing technical assistance in developing and implementing educational and monitoring programs. In addition, CBNERR-MD is proud to have been working towards:

- Establishing CBNERR-MD as Leaders in Long-Term Monitoring: The Research Reserve is informing restoration monitoring protocols in the state’s Resiliency through Restoration Initiative to advance the science of restoration project resiliency benefits by developing statewide protocols, conducting field training and overseeing monitoring on Deal Island.
- Increasing Knowledge of Marsh Health: CBNERR-MD expanded the network of marsh sites by designing and establishing a long-term monitoring site at Monie Bay. These data will inform the understanding of how marshes are responding to frequent inundation and will contribute to management solutions. The Monie Bay sentinel site joins Jug Bay as a partner in the Chesapeake Bay Sentinel Site Cooperative.
- Fostering the Next Generation of Coastal Scientists: In 2019 the entire Reserve system laid the groundwork to launch the Margaret A. Davidson Graduate Fellowship to connect students with field research and professional skill building. Maryland received three fellow proposals as we look forward to welcoming our first Davidson fellow this Fall.
- Working on solutions with Coastal Communities: CBNERR-MD is a proud member of the Deal Island Peninsula Partnership: a network of community member, government, and non-governmental stakeholders working together to enhance the resilience of the area. Through community
conversations, newsletters, and on the ground projects, the partnership is addressing flooding and erosion while establishing a collective voice for unincorporated communities experiencing environmental change.

2020 so far has certainly been one for the history books. There are things that we can continue to count on though: the strength of our partnerships, the dedicated staff and volunteers that make our sites thrive, and the value that these special places bring to each and every one of us.

Patuxent River Park Facility Manager, Tommy Baden and CBNERR-MD’s Jenn Raulin take Congressional Estuary Caucus staffers on a tour of Jug Bay. Due to the proximity to Washington, D.C., PRP hosts several events to demonstrate the value of these special places.  Credit: C.Weilminster
Typically by now, our Rural Life Museums would be open for free tours on the weekends until October from 1-4pm as well as during the week for tours by reservation (for a fee). Since the main part of the park is closed, so are the museums. In this issue of the newsletter, we would like to offer you a photo tour of the exterior of the museums in hopes it piques your interest and you will want to visit the museums once we are open again. Enjoy!

This hand-hewn cabin was built in Aquasco, Maryland, around 1880 by former slave, Charles Duckett. Prior to working as a farm hand on the Trueman property in Aquasco, Duckett served in the Union Navy (19th regiment of the United States Colored Troops, Company 1) from 1864 until the end of the Civil War. The cabin was occupied until 1920 and in 1970, the Trueman family donated the cabin to M-NCPPC. Restoration was completed in 2002 and great care was taken to use as many 19th century techniques as possible in its restoration and relocation. Fun fact: Notice that the chimney is leaning on a pole. This was a safety precaution adopted in response to frequent chimney fires. The pole could be quickly removed allowing the chimney to fall away from the home, thus saving the house from fire.

The 1923 Sears House was one of many mail-order home kits sold by Sears, Roebuck, and Company. While this particular house was a “Simplex” model (could be put together by one carpenter) and purchased for around $450, others were more complex and would cost more. Once purchased, your house kit would arrive at the closest railway station and have everything you need to build your house (timber, nails, shingles, and paint). A home like this one had one bedroom, a living room, and a kitchen; it did not have plumbing or electricity. If you look closely at the bottom left of the photo, you will see where the bathroom is located (an outhouse).

For thousands of years, humans have harvested the bountiful resources of the Patuxent River. At one time, crabbing, fishing and oystering fueled the economy of southern Maryland. This exhibit tells the story of the people, the resources, and the impact hunting, fishing, and trapping has had on the Patuxent River ecosystem.
This Blacksmith and Woodworking shop is an ode to two invaluable trades. Blacksmithing is the craft of forging and shaping iron with a hammer and anvil. It allowed for advances in transportation and industry, providing tools, weapons, and hardware needed by society. Considered a highly specialized skill in the early 20th century, it has since been diminished with advancements in materials and mass production, but is still practiced in many guilds throughout the country.

Woodworking was and is also a skill needed then and now. The ability to carve and form a piece of wood into a functional tool will be a specialized skill as long as wood continues to be used in various arenas of life. This part of the building showcases how to work wood using more primitive techniques with no aid of electricity.

The Tobacco Farming Museum tells the story of tobacco in southern Maryland from its initial use by American Indians through its continued controversial use today. The exhibits include tobacco-related farming equipment, in particular, a late nineteenth century tobacco press.

The W Henry Duvall Tool Museum houses trade tools, household items and farm implements from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The museum is named for W Henry Duvall, who amassed most of the items found in this extensive collection acquired by M-NCPPC in 1981.
With COVID-19 affecting our typical methods of programming, we (and other facilities in M-NCPDC) are going to be offering a lot of “virtual programming” in the foreseeable future. Follow us (’PG Parks Nature’) on Facebook for updates on Park operations, virtual programs, activity ideas, and cool nature/wildlife photos and facts!

**What Can You Do At Patuxent River Park Right Now?**

You can hike! The Park has over 14 miles of trails journeying through a variety of habitats. Most trails are open to hikers, cyclists, and equestrians. A trail map is available online and posted at trailheads. Please come prepared and follow trail etiquette. You can also fish and launch your personal boats (including canoes and kayaks) from Selby’s Landing.

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<th>Critical Area Driving Tour</th>
<th>Patuxent Rural Life Museums</th>
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<td>The Critical Area Driving Tour is currently closed to vehicular traffic until further notice. Hikers and bikers can continue to enjoy the tour. The four mile route is self-guided and offers a unique opportunity to see and learn about the outstanding natural resources of the Patuxent River through interpretive stops and an observation tower. When the tour reopens to vehicles, it can be accessed on Sundays 10:00am—3:00pm.</td>
<td>These museums are currently closed to the public until further notice. We hope you enjoy their feature article in this season’s newsletter. We also hope you will come see them once we open back up to the public. When we do, they will be open for free tours 1-4pm on weekends from April to October. They can also be opened for fee-based private tours at all other times with advanced reservations.</td>
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**Patuxent Water Trail Remains Open!**
The Patuxent Water Trail is a self-guided paddling trail along the river designed for kayaking and canoeing enthusiasts. It has a series of launch sites and points of interest that allow paddlers to explore the river, experience its beauty, and visit its parks, historic sites, sanctuaries, and refuges. The campsites associated with the water trail are closed and some launch/landing sites might be as well. Please research and plan thoroughly before heading out on the water. For more information, visit: www.patuxentwatertrail.org