

2019 RUSHTON NATURE KEEPERS EVENTS

The RNK Mission is to inspire a lifetime of caring about and protecting nature.

Salamanders, Frogs, and Woodcocks

Friday, March 22 | 7:00-8:30 pm | Ashbridge Preserve

Vernal pools are special habitats that some salamanders and frogs seek early in the spring, migrating under the cover of darkness and during the first warm rains. Stay tuned as we watch for the window to observe these fascinating amphibians along with American Woodcocks performing aerial courtship displays.

Sheep Shearing

Thursday, April 18 | 4:30-6:00 pm | Plumsock Farm
920 Plumsock Road, Newtown Square

Join us in a pastoral setting for a sheep shearing demonstration. Children will get to witness and take part in a sheep shearing and learn about the history of domesticated sheep as farm animals and wool as a sustainable fabric.

Songbird Banding Open House and Warbler Walk

Saturday, April 27 | 6:00-10:30 am | Rushton Woods Preserve & Farm

Stop by the region's premier bird banding station at Rushton Farm anytime between the operating hours of 6am and 10:30am (arrive by 9 am) to observe the incredible science of bird banding. You'll see handsome spring warblers and also get to tour the stream where our watersheds experts will have live aquatic invertebrates on display. We'll also offer a bird walk to view and hear warblers and other migrants in their habitat.

Nature Poetry Workshop

Wednesday, May 1 | 4:30-6:00 pm | Rushton Conservation Center

In the merry month of May after the earth has fully awakened, we will explore the preserve looking for birds, wildflowers and other wonders of spring. Then, guided by Villanova poetry professor, Cathy Staples, we will create memorable works of poetry from our observations.

Potato Planting

Wednesday, May 8 | 4:30-6:00 pm | Rushton Farm

Get your hands dirty and help the farmers plant potatoes in the fields of Rushton Farm. Since this farm is sustainable, it provides habitat for myriad living things besides the crops. We'll come across many interesting insects while working in the field and learn about how this farm functions within the surrounding ecosystem.

"The Secret Life of the Little Brown Bat" Book Signing & Workshop

Tuesday, May 14 | 4:30-6:00 pm | Rushton Conservation Center

Participants will each get a pre-ordered copy of "The Secret Life of the Little Brown Bat", a new children's book by Laurence Pringle that follows the first year in the life of a little brown bat named Otis as he learns to hunt, survive in the wild, and find a mate. The artist, Kate Garchinsky, will be there for a reading and "how to draw a bat" art workshop session with her original sketches from the story. **Must pre-register by April 26th to be included on the book order. \$10/book. Bring cash or check to the event.**

Field Trip to the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia

Wednesday, June 12 | 12:30-2:30 pm

Meet at the 19th street entrance of the Academy, Philadelphia
We have a special invitation to visit behind the scenes of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, home to one of the world's largest collections of bird specimens. We will observe ornithologists and see the amazing bird collection.

Solstice Moth Party

Friday, June 21 | 7:30-9:30 pm | Rushton Conservation Center

Children and adults are invited to enjoy a night at Rushton with the moths and fireflies! We will survey what species are here by using mercury vapor lights and blacklights against white sheets. Local naturalist and moth enthusiast, Sheryl Johnson, will help us identify these beautiful night flyers. Refreshments will be provided for the moths.

Stream Walks

Thurs/Fri June 27 & 28 | 4:00-6:00 pm | Ashbridge Preserve

Explore different stretches of the stream at Ashbridge with our watershed experts while learning about the basics of stream ecology. We will also wander the enchanting Hawthorn Forest and get up close with macroinvertebrates that call the stream bed home. Wear shoes that can go in the water! Attend either event.

Meet the Bees and Honey Tasting

Wednesday, July 10 from 4:30 - 6:00 pm | Rushton Farm

Join Rushton's beekeeper, Noah Gress, as he harvests honey from Rushton's busy honeybee colony. We will have the opportunity to extract and taste honey straight off the honeycomb and learn about the importance of honey bees.

Leaf Pack Walks

Tues/Wed July 16 & 17 | 4:00-6:00 pm | Ashbridge Preserve

Learn stream ecology with the Director of our Watershed Protection Program as we focus on understanding food webs and invasive species. Explore the stream for bugs, and investigate "leaf packs". Attend either event.

Arachnids!

Friday, July 26 | 5:00-6:30 pm | Rushton Conservation Center

John Black, Master Naturalist and President of the Native Plant Society of New Jersey, will teach us all about the fascinating world of spiders. They are important creatures that should be appreciated rather than feared. John will show us why they matter and reveal spider secrets, like that some spiders can dance!

Wildflowers and Watercolor Workshop

Thursday, August 1 | 1:00-3:30 pm | WCT Headquarters

Explore the Trust's spectacular wildflower meadow and paint with watercolors in the fresh air! We'll also learn about the importance of native plants for pollinators and what you can do in your own yard to support these insects.

Discover Rushton Mini Camp

Wednesday, August 21 | 9:00 am-1:00 pm | RCC

Spend a day at Rushton exploring the woods and fields, monitoring bird boxes, and making bouquets, forest art, and gnome homes. We'll also work on the farm, harvesting the potatoes you helped plant in May. Snacks will be provided.

Songbird Banding Open House

Saturday, September 14 | 6:00-10:30 am
Rushton Woods Preserve & Farm

Bring a friend to the banding station anytime between the operating hours of 6am and 10:30am (arrive by 9 am) to observe the inspiring science of bird banding, meet field biologists and see beautiful migrant birds up close. Kids will also get to "practice their banding skills" at a demo net.

Harvest Hoopla

Friday, October 11 | 4:30 - 6:00 pm | Rushton Farm

It's time for Rushton Nature Keepers to celebrate the harvest at Rushton Farm! Join us for a fun evening of pumpkin carving and a hayride with Farmer Fred.

Hawk Watch at Okehocking Preserve

Sunday, October 20 | 2:00-4:00 pm
Meet at Rushton Conservation Center

Join veteran hawk counter, educator, and birding instructor, Holly Merker, at the height of the fall migration. After her program about hawks, hawk watching, and hawk conservation at the Rushton Conservation Center, we'll head over to a hawk watch platform at the local Okehocking Preserve. You'll learn all about raptor identification and see migrating raptors like Red-shouldered hawk.

Monster Night

Tuesday, October 29 | 4:00-6:00 pm | Rushton Conservation Center

Observe spooky little stream creatures projected from a microscope onto a screen to MONSTER size! Learn all about which fish are native and which are invasive (the real monsters!). Then get creative designing your own stream bug or fish and making your own "monster" costume.

Northern Saw-whet Owl Banding

Friday, November 8 | 6:00 - 8:00 pm | Rushton Conservation Center

Observe Northern Saw-whet Owl banding at Rushton Farm and experience nature at night. These tiny owls (no bigger than a soda can) travel through Pennsylvania in the fall in search of ideal overwintering habitat. Learn all about their ecology and conservation from our field scientists and hopefully see an owl up-close.

Visit to Chester County Food Bank

Wednesday, November 13 | 4:00 - 5:30 pm

Meet at Chester County Food Bank | 650 Pennsylvania Drive, Exton
Join us for a tour of the Chester County Food Bank facility, which serves the hungry and food insecure of our county. We'll learn all about the problem of food insecurity and the process of food donation. Rushton Farm itself donates about 3,000 pounds of fresh produce annually.

Rushton Junior Naturalist Celebration

Friday, November 22 | 4:30-6:30 pm | Rushton Conservation Center

All Rushton Nature Keepers are invited to this special celebration. Those who have attended 2 bird events, 2 farm events, 2 water events, and 2 habitat events as designated by the icons on the schedule (for a total of 8) will be awarded the Rushton Junior Naturalist title. There will be a fun awards ceremony during which Junior Naturalists will receive their certificates and other special prizes.

Winter Bird Count





Saturday, December 7 | 9:30-11:00 am | Rushton Conservation Center

Enjoy a morning of birding at Rushton Woods with expert birder, Debbie Beer. We will count birds in the tradition of the National Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC), which is the longest running wildlife survey in the world. We'll also learn how to enter our sightings into eBird.

Addresses

Willistown Conservation Trust (WCT)
925 Providence Road, Newtown Square
Rushton Conservation Center (RCC)
915 Delchester Road, Newtown Square
Rushton Woods Preserve and Farm
911 Delchester Road, Newtown Square
Ashbridge Preserve
E. Strasburg Road, West Chester

Program Key

 Birds and Wildlife
 Sustainable Farming
 Watersheds
 Healthy Habitat