

Notes From Nanjemoy Creek

Nanjemoy Creek Environmental Education Center



Charles County
Public Schools

Fall is a Season for Change

NCEEC is looking forward to an exciting year. We are updating and expanding our normal 5th grade program to conform to environmental literacy standards. We also have plans for increasing our outreach programs as well as helping CCPS' middle and high schools create meaningful watershed educational experiences (MWEE's) to help them fulfill the educational requirements of the Chesapeake Bay Agreement. Plans are in the works as well for another fun and educational summer camp opportunity. One of the major changes that took place at the beginning of the year was the loss of Audrey Blackburn from our staff. She left NCEEC to be closer to her family in North Carolina. She will be missed, and we wish her all the best as she starts a new chapter in her life. Taking Audrey's place on our staff is Josh Boyd, a native of Southern Maryland.



Hello! My name is Joshua Boyd, and I am a new Environmental Educator at NCEEC. I studied Environmental Science at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, receiving a Bachelor of Science in the field and graduating Cum Laude. While attending school, I had the opportunity to take a wide variety of natural science based courses, with many of them being specific to the region, such as "The Natural Environment of the Chesapeake Bay", and other classes focusing on local ecology. I also had the opportunity to participate in an internship with the Environmental Department of the Indian

Head Naval Base where I was able to take the skills I had learned in school and apply them directly to work in the field. This helped me to confirm that I had selected a career path that I would enjoy for years to come. However, the greatest opportunity that I had during my time at school was the opportunity to study abroad. In 2014, I spent 6 months studying at the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji. I was exposed to many new environmental experiences and introduced to a side of the world that I knew very little about. It was a life changing experience that I would recommend to anyone who is given the opportunity.

In addition to my experience in environmental science, I also have experience working with children. While studying abroad in Fiji, I took weekly trips to local villages to mentor students in their classes as well as to help educate them about the need for conservation in a country that will inevitably be hit hard by sea-level rise if preventative measures are not taken.

I also volunteered as an *Upward* Soccer coach for three summers, helping children not only improve their soccer skills but also their confidence and teamwork skills.

I am very excited to be working here at NCEEC, and I look forward to meeting you all.

Word of the Day:

Stewardship — the responsible use and protection of the natural environment through conservation and sustainable practices or as we like to say, taking care of the earth and its natural resources.

Tayac is still going strong at the age of 37!

Come help us celebrate our Bald Eagle's Hatchday!

At the end of the coldest winter of the century up until then, a Bald Eagle hatched on a March day in 1979 along the shore of the Potomac River in Riverside, Maryland. The newly hatched eaglet was hope for the wild bald eagle population rebounding from the problems created by the use of DDT.

This male eagle would leave the nest and live in the wild for 10 years. Hopefully, he was able to raise a few families with a mate between 1984 and that fateful day in 1989 when he was found shot. After being rescued, he was sent for rehabilitation at the Wildlife Center for Virginia. Due to the extent of his injury, he was unable to be released into the wild so he came to Nanjemoy Creek Environmental Education Center (NCEEC) to live the rest of his life at our center. For 27 years, he has been the delight and fascination of thousands of Charles County Public School students.

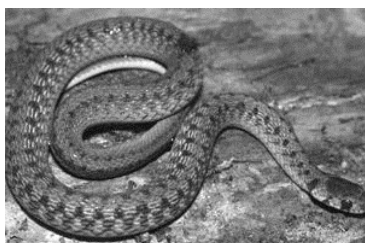
On Saturday, April 23, 2015, NCEEC will celebrate the "Hatchday" of Tayac the Bald Eagle. The center will hold an open house for the public during the afternoon for this event. The Hatchday Cake Cutting Ceremony will take place at noon followed by other activities. Additional activities will be available for participation including a live bird of prey show, nature hike, marsh dip netting and a guided canoe trip. There will be a nominal \$ fee for some of the activities, and they will be held from 1-3 pm. Pre-registration is recommended as some activities will have limited space.

We hope you can come by and hear Tayac's whole story and join us for his Hatchday celebration. For further information contact Mike Callahan at (301)743-3526 or mcallahan@ccboe.com



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Northern Brown Snake *Storeria dekayi*

We have a new addition to our facility at NCEEC, a Northern Brown Snake. This surprisingly common species is often confused with the more well-known Garter Snake. They can be identified by their light tan to brown color and the two rows of black spots running down the length of their back. The Northern Brown Snake can grow up to 20 inches in length, though this is uncommon. Our snake is roughly 8 inches long, and we do not expect him to grow much larger than a foot in length. In the wild, these snakes can be found in a variety of habitats, from forest edges to fields and even in developed areas. They feed on small, soft-bodied organisms such as worms, slugs and grubs, which is exactly what we plan to feed our snake in captivity. While the snake will never be large enough to be safely handled by students, we are excited about the opportunity to share information about native snakes and their ecology.



Garter snake

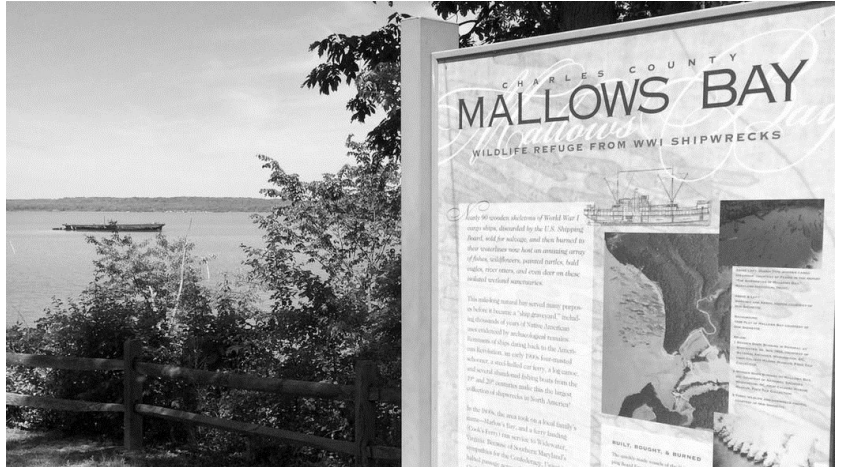


Spotted Wintergreen *Chimaphila maculate*

Spotted Wintergreen (often referred to as striped wintergreen) is a common, small, perennial, evergreen herb that is native to eastern North America. It has thick, leathery, dark green leaves with a white stripe running down the center vein. It flowers from late June to early August. The flowers are white or pink and found on the top of tall stalks. They are insect pollinated, and the seeds are dispersed by the wind. It can be found in dry, well-drained upland forests, and it tolerates acidic soil.

NOAA Ocean Guardian Schools

Through the efforts of a number of dedicated people and community groups, Mallow's Bay is in the process of being designated as a National Marine Sanctuary by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). NOAA is currently holding public forums to develop a usage plan for the site. Along with this designation, NOAA is also promoting their Ocean Guardian School program in Charles County. This year starts the second year that Charles County Public Schools has participated in the Ocean Guardian School program. This program has been made available to 2 schools each year through a grant proposal process. Schools selected were awarded up to \$5000 to complete projects that promote a healthier watershed in a National Marine Sanctuary (which in our case was Mallow's Bay) and ultimately, the ocean.



In its inaugural year, Piccowaxen Middle School and North Point High School were part of the Ocean Guardian School Program. Students in Mr. Ficcalora's class at Piccowaxen learned about how land use impacts water quality through our Enviroscape program, an interactive watershed model activity, and participated in a canoe trip on Nanjemoy Creek. At Mallow's Bay, Piccowaxen students installed blue bird boxes and fishing line receptacles, completed a litter pick up, and planted native trees and shrubs.

North Point students worked with Nanjemoy Creek staff at Mallow's Bay and Mattawoman Creek to collect water quality data and to survey macroinvertebrates as well as exploring both bodies of water by canoe. Back at their schoolyard, North Point students planted trees and shrubs to improve the water quality of their school's runoff. North Point teacher, Lolita Cariasio-Kiorpes, reached out to partners, such as the Master Gardeners, Port Tobacco River Conservancy, and Mattawoman Watershed Society in order to coordinate the mass planting project and field studies.



Going into year two, North Point is once again an Ocean Guardian School, and joining them this year is JC Parks Elementary School. Mrs. Wheeler of JC Parks and Mrs. Cariasio-Kiorpes of North Point have already begun working with students to develop new projects for this school year. North Point HS will be assessing the previous planting project and planting additional areas around their schoolyard to help with runoff. JC Parks will be exploring the problem plastic is causing in our watershed. Part of their project will involve purchasing a water bottle filling station to promote reusable water bottles instead of single use bottled water. We look forward to continuing to support these schools in their efforts towards watershed stewardship!



Nanjemoy Creek Environmental Education Center

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We're on the Web

<http://www.ccboe.com/schools/nanjemoycreek>

The mission of Charles County Public Schools is to provide an opportunity for all school-aged children to receive an academically challenging, quality education that builds character, equips for leadership, and prepares for life in an environment that is safe and conducive to learning.

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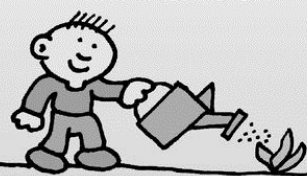
CHECK IT OUT!

If you haven't had a chance yet, take a moment and visit our website at <http://www.ccboe.com/schools/nanjemoycreek/>.

It has pictures from our summer camp, information about the raptors that live at the center, postings about teacher workshops, links to some great environmental websites and more!

Stewardship Thought of the Day:

**LOOK AFTER WHAT
YOU HAVE AND IT
WILL GROW**



Nanjemoy Creek Fan Club

Would you like to help support the programs and projects that take place throughout the year at Nanjemoy Creek Environmental Education Center? Become a member of Nanjemoy Creek's Fan Club by completing the attached form and including a small, tax deductible donation to our center. Your donation helps us keep our program up to date with the latest advances in environmental education and supports care for our raptors and bees. In return for your support, you will receive our newsletter to keep you informed about what's happening at the center.

I have included a donation of

___\$25, ___ \$50, ___ \$100, ___ other

to support NCEEC's environmental education programs for Charles County Public School students.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Newsletter: (circle one) email notification paper copy

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Please make checks payable to "Charles County Public Schools"

Mail to: Nanjemoy Creek Environmental Education Center
5300 Turkey Tayac Place, Nanjemoy, MD 20662

Thank you for your donation!