



Waterloo News

What is Natural History – And Why Should We Care?

As the term suggests, ‘natural history’ is the study of the natural world.

But what does that mean?

To answer that question, you should know that the term has not always had the same meaning.

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In the years 77-79 AD, Pliny the Elder published his work, *Naturalis Historia*. This 10-volume, 37-book work is the largest surviving collection of writings from ancient Roman authors. Pliny included topics from anthropology, astronomy, and agriculture to mathematics, mineralogy, medicine, and zoology. Pretty much anything which had to do with the material world (as opposed to the Divine) was considered Natural History.

In the Middle Ages, European scholars classified studies into two categories: Human Endeavors and Divinity. Natural history was not a general topic of study. Science was only learned through books, not through observation or experimentation. The Renaissance period brought renewed interest in studying the natural world and secured its place in academics as a rigorous field. The study of nature was divided into two parts at that time: ‘natural history’ (biological and earth sciences) and ‘natural philosophy’ (chemistry and physics).

More modern definitions placed ‘natural history’ solely in the biological world – with a ‘naturalist’ being one who studies organisms and their environment. Natural history was taught in colleges throughout Europe and included topics in botany, geology, and physiology. Charles Darwin was one of the great naturalists of the 19th century.

Today, natural history museums broaden their offerings. A modern museum may include exhibits in astronomy, anthropology, and agriculture, just as Pliny the Elder did.

With our ever-increasing scientific specializations, we view ‘natural history’ in this broader perspective. Instead of specific studies, natural history can take a more all-encompassing view, linking natural systems and seeking to see connections between disciplines. The more we learn, the more we see the natural world as a network of intertwined and interdependent relationships. We see ourselves as part of the natural world as well, instead of set apart.

As for us, we at the Waterloo Natural History Association seek to bring you a broad range of topics from the natural world too. We hope to share with members a sense of wonder in the world around us. Check out the following pages for programs which would have made Pliny smile.

Article courtesy of Meg Gower, WNHA Trustee

Discovery Center Building Hours

Labor Day to Thanksgiving

Monday-Saturday

10am-5pm

Sunday

Noon-5pm

Gift Shop Open during these hours.

Waterloo Recreation Area
Trails and Grounds open
From Dawn to Dusk Daily

A \$18 annual Recreation Passport is required for entry in the Waterloo Recreation Area. A self-pay station is located at the upper parking lot of the Discovery Center. Passports can be purchased at the Secretary of State with license plate renewal for \$13.

The Discovery Center will
Close November 22. Please
check website for reopening
information in January 2024.

Waterloo Natural History Association Programs

September –November 2023

Please call 734-475-3170 to register in advance!



ALLIGATORS AND THEIR KIN: 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. Sunday September 17

Join us for an exciting, hands-on presentation of live reptiles from the Critchlow Alligator Sanctuary. You will have the opportunity to see large and small alligators up close along with other intriguing reptiles. Learn about the fascinating characteristics of these creatures and how they survive in the wild.

FALL MUSHROOM HUNT 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. September 24

Come search the woods to find and collect fall mushrooms! Afterwards, mushroom experts Phil Tedeschi and Kirk Coppernoll will look at your collection and identify those that are edible and those that are poisonous. Bring a basket or paper bag and waxed paper for collecting. **Program limited to 35 participants.**



SEVEN OUTDOOR SKILLS EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW! 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. Sunday, October 1

In this hands-on workshop, Meg Gower will show you traditional ways to navigate, as well as basic survival skills. Learn how to make fire without matches, build a shelter, locate water, signal, and more. Program geared to ages 10 to adult and will be held outdoors. **Program limited to 30 participants.**

MICHIGAN BIRDS OF PREY 2:00-3:30 p.m. Sunday October 8

Survival at its finest! Francie Krawcke of Michigan Avian Experience will bring live raptors to demonstrate their remarkable survival adaptations and behaviors. Enjoy a close-up look at these magnificent birds.

NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP 2:00 – 3:30 p.m., Sunday, October 15

Here is an opportunity to learn how to capture great images, whether you are using your cellphone or a DSLR camera. Photographer Thomas Nighswander, who specializes in State and National Parks photography, will begin this workshop indoors followed by a walk on the trails for hands-on practice with your camera. The focus will be on what creates a great photograph, how to see with a creative eye, and how your camera can best capture those special moments. Bring your own camera or cell phone.



Advance reservations are requested for all programs!

To make reservations call the Discovery center at 734-475-3170 and leave a message with your name, phone number, number in your party. If unable to attend after making reservation, please call to cancel so those on the waiting list may be admitted to the program.

*A Recreation Passport is required for entry into the Waterloo Recreation Area, where the Discovery Center is located at 17030 Bush Road. The passport can be purchased with your license plate registration renewal at the Secretary of State for \$13 annual Fee. A \$5 convenience fee is added when purchased at the self-pay station located in the upper parking lot at the Discovery Center. To reach the Discovery Center from I-94 take exit 157, go north and follow the signs.

All WNHA sponsored programs are \$2 per person or \$5 per family. WNHA members are admitted Free.



FALL FORAGING

2:00 – 3:30 p.m.. Sunday October 22

Join Rachel Mifsud from *Will Forage for Food* on a walk through the woods to discover what Mother Nature has to offer this fall. You will learn about edible, medicinal, and otherwise useful plants and mushrooms that can be found in the Waterloo area.

SANDHILL CRANE TOUR

Sunday, October 29 @ 2PM

Local crane enthusiast Bill Wells will begin this program at the Discovery Center with a short discussion of Sandhill Cranes and their fascinating behaviors. Afterwards, he will lead a driving tour to view cranes in the fields around the Waterloo Recreation Area. Visitors can expect to see some of these magnificent birds at close range. Bring binoculars and cameras.



SELF-GUIDED FALL COLOR AND SANDHILL CRANE TOUR

Large numbers of Sandhill Cranes can be seen in parts of the Waterloo Recreation Area through late November. Beginning October 10, free maps showing the best fall color routes and crane viewing areas around the Waterloo Recreation Area will be available at the Eddy Discovery Center or at www.wnha.org. The Discovery Center is located at 17030 Bush Rd west of Chelsea.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 12 @ 2PM

Our annual member meeting is back after an extended hiatus. Mark your calendars for a WNHA Dessert Party on Sunday, November 12 at 2:00PM!

The Annual Membership Meeting is an opportunity for us to thank you, our members, for your support throughout the year, as well as getting a little board business done such as voting on board members and officers. The meeting will include an exclusive animal program available only to members and their guests. Bill and Terri Neill from Science Alive have promised to bring some of their coolest animals to entertain us for a unique program designed just for us. Cookies and beverages will be provided!

Hope to See You There!



The **Waterloo Natural History Association** is an all-volunteer 501c3. To find out more about us, our mission, or to contribute, visit online at: **wnha.org**



**Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Marketing and Outreach Division**

WATERLOO RECREATION AREA EDDY DISCOVERY CENTER
17030 Bush Road
Chelsea, MI 48118
734-475-3170

The Eddy Discovery Center, at Waterloo Recreation Area, introduces visitors to the fascinating world of geology and to the diverse natural habitats that are found today within Waterloo's 20,000-plus acres. Waterloo Recreation Area has miles of trails offering hikers of all ages and abilities the chance to explore the diverse geology and habitats from forest wetlands to mature oak-hickory forests. The exhibit hall inside the center explores Michigan's geology and diverse habitats through the years from the Ice Age through European settlement to today. Waterloo is also a great place to view Sandhill Cranes in a self-guided tour,

Arrows Away. Saturday, September 9, 23, 30, October 7 & 21. 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Learn a traditional outdoor skill through fun, safe instruction. Equipment provided. Age 8 and up. Cost: Free.

Geocaching 101. Saturday, September 16, 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Using a GPS receiver, navigate the trails at the Discovery Center to find hidden caches of "treasures." Learn how you can join this ongoing adventure of hidden treasure all over the world. Cost: Free.

Partial Eclipse Viewing. Saturday, October 14, 10:30 a.m. Watch the partial Solar eclipse at the Discovery Center and celebrate our solar system with solar print card making, eclipse viewing, sun specific treats. Cost: Free.

Apple Cider Pressing. Saturday, October 14 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. **and October 28, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.** Become part of the process from start to finish, with lots of family time and great cider! Cost: Free

Halloween Geocaching 101. Saturday, October 28, 2 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. Using a GPS receiver, navigate the trails at the Discovery Center to find hidden caches of "tricks and treats." Learn how you can join this ongoing adventure of hidden treasure all over the world. Cost: Free.

Hike to Hickory Hills. Saturday, November 4, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. This 5 mile hike over rugged terrain follows glacial topography through an old golf course, beside Crooked Lake and along the Waterloo-Pinckney Trail. Wear sturdy shoes and bring water. Approximately 2 hours. Cost: Free.

Hike Around Mill Lake. Saturday, November 11, 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. A relatively flat 3 mile hike around a kettle lake, passing historic cabins of Mill Lake Camp, a boat launch, and wandering through oak hickory forest. Cost: Free.

Hike a 1000 foot Esker in Waterloo. Saturday, November 18, 9 a.m. This 1.5 mile hike over rugged terrain follows glacial topography to a view on top of the park! It is possible to see 5 bodies of water from this vantage point. Wear sturdy shoes and bring water. Approximately 1.5 hours. Cost: Free.

Talkin' Turkey. Saturday, November 18, 1 p.m. Bring the family to hear the story of our wild turkeys, their interesting adaptations and how the Michigan DNR helps manage the restoration of turkey populations throughout the state. Make a solo cup turkey clucker to take home! Cost: Free.

**WNHA Gift Shop at the
Eddy Discovery Center**

*-Interesting and Educational Books and Guides for all ages
 -Stuffed Animals
 -T-shirts, Hats, and
 Walking Sticks
 -Rocks, Games, and Puzzles*

**ALL Gift Shop Sales
support programs at the
Waterloo
Recreation Area.
WNHA members re-
ceive a 10% discount.**



Musings from the Chair

As you may know, the symbol of WNHA is the Sandhill Crane. The combination of wetlands, meadows, and agricultural land within and around the Waterloo recreation area is prime Sandhill habitat, and this is a unique species visitors seek out (especially during our fall crane tours!).

I have been blessed with many interesting experiences with Sandhill Cranes over the course of my life. They have been a consistent staple of life over the last 14 years of living out here on our small homestead. Rarely a day goes by where I don't hear their trumpeting call. There are often groups of them in the area calling to each other. Their voices travel a long distance and some of those birds could be a few miles away. Often, I see them too – in the fields next door or across the street or flying overhead. I always love watching them come in for a landing – gliding gracefully over the long approach; always touching down with few final flaps to slow down completely to a stop. Before too long, most will fly south for the winter by the end of November, but there are always small groups of stragglers that tough things out until mid-December. And we always rejoice when we see the first few come back in late February – one of the very first reminders that spring is on her way.



You can even say that Sandhill Cranes have helped usher in new branches to our family tree. In the days leading up to the birth of my son, my wife and I would visit the Haehnle Audubon Sanctuary to watch the cranes and hike around hoping that the exercise would help induce labor. Here I remember the first time a crane flew over my head so close I felt I could reach right up and touch it. It was also here where I discovered the air rushing through their beaks in flights makes a slight whistle sound, something I've been fortunate enough to experience a few other times since. My daughter on the other hand was born on a hot July night during a thunderstorm. We lost power, and the next morning I left her and mom at the hospital to rest while I ran home to hook up the generator. As I pulled in the driveway, unbeknownst to me a crane was right next to it feeding from

the mulberry tree. As I exited the door we scared the daylights out of each other and went running in opposite directions. Every July some cranes find their way to our mulberry tree and will return regularly. One year, a family group consisting of a bonded pair and young "colt" (the proper name for a young crane) visited that tree twice a day, every day - so regularly you could set your watch by it.

In many cultures, cranes are a symbol of longevity and eternal youth. I cannot think of a better symbol for WNHA – may this organization have a long life and stay forever young by being passed down to each new generation!

Erik Zempel, Chair

EnChroma Glasses now available at the Discovery Center

As nature enthusiasts, we understand the profound impact that colors have on our appreciation and understanding of the world around us. For those who experience colorblindness, however, the richness of these colors may often remain veiled. Colorblindness is more common than you'd think – it impacts about 8% of men and 0.5% of women in the US.

Our mission at WNHA is to help maximize people's experiences with nature, and we're excited to share a new way in which we're helping to create some new experiences and memories for our friends who experience colorblindness. Thanks to the generosity and support of EnChroma, WNHA recently acquired a set of innovative new eyewear that have the power to unlock a world of vibrant colors for those who experience colorblindness! The set includes eyeglasses in a variety of sizes and styles designed to fit all sizes and correct the two main types of colorblindness.

These innovative glasses are now available for public use at the Eddy Discovery Center, allowing everyone to experience the beauty of the Waterloo Recreation Area in its full, resplendent glory. Imagine for the first time witnessing the breathtaking, subtle hues of a sunset over Big Portage Lake, or the delicate shades of wildflowers that blanket our meadows, now accessible to those who were previously unable to perceive them fully!

Through this collaboration with EnChroma, and others such as Action Trackchair who provided the all-terrain wheelchair for the Discovery Center, we aim to provide an inclusive opportunity for everyone to marvel at the wonders of nature.

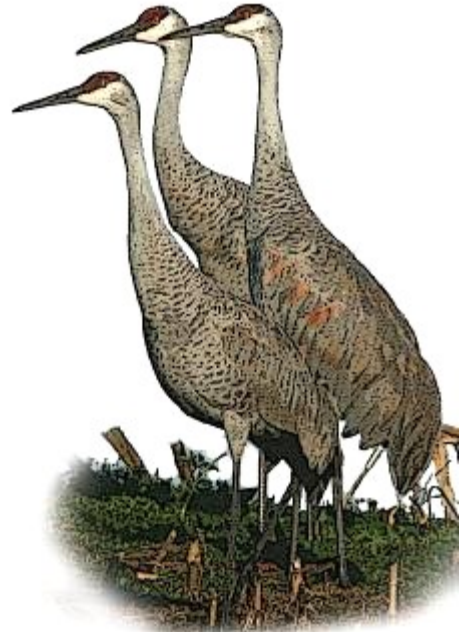


I encourage you to spread the word about this fantastic opportunity amongst your friends and family. By sharing this news, we not only celebrate the diversity of our natural world, but also ensure that more people are touched by our mission to inspire and educate.

Waterloo Natural History Association
PO Box 504
Chelsea, MI 48118



Official Newsletter of the Waterloo
Natural History Association



MEMBER'S CORNER The Waterloo Natural History Association gratefully acknowledges the support of the following new members and those who have recently renewed their memberships through August 2023

Individual

Heather Blakeman
Kathleen Coakley
Janet Tarolli

Senior

Don Enderby
Ann Fulmer
C. Lynn Babcock
Tom Eisenbieser
Don & Gwen Schrader
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Donations

Melvin & Rhonda Conley

Corporation

Waterloo Hunt Club

A special Thank You To
Susan Jacobs, CPA for
use of her office window
display space!

*Is it time for you to renew your membership? Your address label will show your renewal month!
Save Postage! Join, donate, or renew your membership online through our secure website!*

The **Waterloo Natural History Association** is an all-volunteer 501c3. To find out more about us, our mission, or to contribute, visit online at: **wnha.org**