

Demarest Nature News



Demarest Nature Center Association
Box 41, Demarest, N.J., 07627

www.demarestnaturecenter.org
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President's Message

We're approaching the summer solstice, the longest day of the year, which means you have more hours per day to stroll through the Demarest Nature Center. I recommend exploring the less-traveled Nine Bridges Trail, which is on the east side of the railroad tracks. It's a windy path through forest and meadow. You can get to it by crossing the tracks from the swim club parking lot, or by entering from County Road and walking past the mulch piles.

I was elected president of the nature center in January. On behalf of the board of trustees, I sincerely thank past President Kevin Riley, who has put his heart and soul into our 60 verdant acres. During his presidency he literally blazed trails and built bridges, improving accessibility to once-remote parts of the nature center. He continues to be in charge of trails and grounds maintenance. Thank you, Kevin, for everything you do.

Many people don't realize that even though the land of the nature center is owned by the Borough of Demarest, we receive no funding from the borough. We're a non-profit organization run by unpaid volunteers. We're your neighbors. Everything we spend money on—from lumber and nails to birdseed to our annual scholarship to school field trips and nature walks to the photo contest to birdhouse- and birdfeeder-building—is covered by your donations, along with our main annual fundraiser, the Craft Show at Oktoberfest.

Do you love nature as much as we do? Please show it by giving generously. While you're thinking of it, write a check, put in the enclosed dues envelope and drop it in the mail. And please, explore the nature center in every season. It's yours to enjoy!

Thanks, and see you on the trails.

Peter Coy
President

Hidden Treasures in Demarest Nature Center...

Imagine yourself hiking by the Tenakill Brook in the Demarest Nature Center. Suddenly you hear a really cool sounding "squeaky" call coming from a nearby tree. You're looking around but it's getting dark and it's difficult to see. What could it be? A few weeks later you hear the same call from down in the water. You look down and see a beautiful sight! Imagine seeing two different wood duck families swimming in the brook. Then it hits you - Those were wood ducks up in that tree. That's where mom had her nest! It's so amazing that a duck can live in a tree cavity. What's more amazing (and dangerous) is that the newborn chicks jump out of the tree very soon after birth. We're so lucky to have wood ducks here. They were hunted to almost extinction during the late 19th century into the early 20th century. Hunting was closed in 1918 which helped restore their numbers. Unfortunately, they are still hunted today for sport and state revenues. I believe that more revenue could be generated from ecotourism

efforts. Wood ducks have been found to breed as far north as Canada and some winter in Mexico. Like mallards, wood duck males and females have significant differences in plumage colors with the males being more colorful. They have handsome bright red eyes on a green head with black & white

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A photo of a Wood Duck family

Your membership dollars allow us to continue to give back to the community and preserve and protect DNC's 60 acres of meadows, forests and wetlands.

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stripes. The females can be sneaky. They are known to “egg-dump” where they lay eggs in the tree cavities of other females for them to take care of. They typically have about 10-11 eggs, however some nests have been found with up to 29 eggs. The wood duck diet consists of berries, nuts, seeds, insects and invertebrates. There has been at least one wood duck pair roaming the grounds of the DNC again this spring. I’ve seen them in the water and on land but not in a tree yet. If you’re watching (& listening) closely, you might be able to spot them. They can nest up to about a mile from water. Hopefully we’ll have more families to enjoy watching this year.

Mark Nagelhout

Trustee, Demarest Nature Center



Come to the Nature Center. Muddy day? No Problem! Enjoy the richness of our natural habitat and keep your feet dry above board

Signs of Spring & Useful Tips

While walking through the nature center, you might be lucky to hear the sounds of peepers or pileated woodpeckers, see a gentle deer or a raccoon nesting in a tree cavity, or feel the sense of peace that being outdoors brings to your soul. It’s springtime and new life will be emerging. I have already seen the wood ducks and Canadian geese nesting. The flora is growing all around the center. One of the issues for people is the concern about Lyme disease and they often misdirect the blame on innocent deer. The white-footed mouse is the reservoir for the transmission of Lyme disease to blacklegged ticks. Deer mice infect the ticks, not deer. The ticks can be found on almost all mammals and most songbirds. There is even more research being conducted on the large roll that migratory birds play in the transmission of ticks. Climate change also affects the tick populations as well as large abundance of acorns which fuel the population growth in white-footed mice.

There are many preventative measures you can take when it comes to ticks. Please keep in mind that ticks tend to be near the ground, in leaf litter, grasses, bushes and fallen logs. When you are hiking, stay on cleared trails instead of walking across grassy fields. Try to avoid playing in leaves, gathering firewood and leaning against tree trunks which are risk areas. Always dress defensively by wearing shoes, socks, long pants and long sleeves. If you have long hair, then you should tie it back. By wearing light-colored clothing, you will be able to see and remove ticks immediately. Some of my hiking friends wear clothing that has been pre-treated with the repellent permethrin. You may also purchase permethrin and spray your clothing and shoes to prevent ticks. When it comes to protecting your skin, studies have shown that repellents with DEET, picaridin or lemon eucalyptus oil are most effective. After you return home from your hike, take a shower right away. This will help wash away unattached ticks and provide a good chance to inspect yourself. Another tip is to run your clothes in a hot dryer for 10 minutes before you wash them, this will kill any ticks that may be there.

A beautiful feature of the nature center is that you can bring your four-legged best friend. Unfortunately, ticks can infect dogs and cats, too. Please consult your

veterinarian about tick-prevention for your pets.

Reducing ticks on our properties at home is also achievable with some easy tips; remove litter, clear brush, prune trees, mow grass short and let it dry between waterings, and move shrubbery and overgrowth farther away from areas frequented by people. Springtime is the best time to place Damminix tick tubes on your property. Another important factor is to make your property unattractive to animals that are hosts to ticks by; eliminating birdfeeders, birdbaths and salt licks; clearing away woodpiles, garbage and leaf piles; erecting fencing around the property; removing stonewalls that provide homes to wildlife; and having your property chemically treated. (Please try to avoid harmful chemicals as it can destroy the environment.) Another tip is to plant some of these to help deter deer from your garden; Lamb’s Ear, Oriental Poppy, Yarrow, Sage, Narcissus, Peony, and Lavender. Another great affordable deterrent is hanging or sprinkling Irish Spring soap around your plantings.

Please remember to be alert to driving in the spring and summer when does start having fawns. The fawns will start traveling with their mothers, at about a month-old, drivers need to be alert to mothers crossing roads with their babies. Young animals in particular do not recognize cars as a threat. When you see one deer, STOP and expect the fawns to be right behind them. This is why electronic signage along roadways is so important as it can warn drivers and help save the lives of newborn fawns/deer. If people continue to cut down forests to build houses, deer have no place to go. They are more likely to move into parks or backyards. More development means less habitat for deer. When I think of the nature center I don’t see it as a place, but more like a home or wildlife sanctuary.

Kimberly Nagelhout

Trustee, Demarest Nature Center



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Birdhouse Building at the Nature Center



Peace on Earth

Many people feel that there is a trade-off between prosperity and peace of mind. You can have material prosperity if you work hard enough and smart enough especially here in the shadow of New York City, the financial capitol of the world. You'll live at the pace of a New York minute though the commute is measured in many. Competition, stress and high demands are the price paid for earned success.

Peace, on the other hand, seems situational and unearned. It is the stuff of small towns, rural nature and former times. When all revved up, peace may even seem boring or it may exist only in the Hamptons or at an expensive spa. A few minutes of peace and quiet is exactly what we crave with kids going crazy or boss on overdrive.

You can have both. We can have all of the prosperity and connectedness and opportunity that exist in the New York metropolitan area and a peaceful escape in our own hamlet. The Demarest Nature Center and the Tenakill brook that flows through it are an oasis of peace that passes human understanding. They are smelling, touching, hearing, and seeing before thinking, before feeling. Observe the flora and fauna through the seasons. Observe the weather and the effects of some of the storms that pass through.

I was recently scheduled to have surgery at 2 pm and couldn't spend a restless agitated morning waiting in the house. I took a short walk in the Nature Center and listened to the brook babbling over the stones below the bridge. This is my favorite. I observed the brilliant greens of so many spring shoots. I counted animal tracks and smelled the incredibly fresh fresh air after the night storm. I felt such peace that surgery became just a detail on my calendar.

Enjoy the Nature Center, chase the kids, walk your dog, bring your boss, enjoy peace and prosperity right in our neighborhood.

Tom Birch

Trustee, Demarest Nature Center

A BUSY AFTERNOON IN THE DNC: Rich Van Buren, Dave Emerson and Hillary and Kevin Riley clear paths in the Nature Center



Before looking north



During Dave Emerson sawing away



Before with forest pixie Hilairy looking south



After dreaming of Ibuprofen and beer

DEMAREST NATURE CENTER ASSN.

Borough of Demarest

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What's Happening This Summer And Fall!

► June 9th

Photo Contest Winners The winners will be contacted directly. Not sure if you're a current member? Send an email to dncamembership@gmail.com to find out.

► September 8th

The Second Annual DNCA DogWalk through the Demarest Nature Center. All area dogs and their "leashed" masters are welcome for an easy hike leaving from The Duck Pond flag pole at 10am (return before 11:30am). No unleashed dogs will be allowed.

► September 22nd

Nature Walk with naturalist Marc Gussen leaving from the Imaginarium playground adjacent to Wakelee field and the Nature Center at 9:30 am.

► October 13th

The Craft Show At Oktoberfest at the Duck Pond 10am to 5 pm. Treats for all your senses -- German music, inflatable rides, Korean and German foods. Plus a wide range and variety of handmade crafts.

Rain date, October 21st.

We are a 501(c)3!

There is no greater feeling than supporting a worthy organization. The Demarest Nature is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. This means that your donations are tax deductible. Your donations support all of our educational programs, scholarships, events and the continued preservation of our green space. Consider a gift to the Demarest Nature Center as an investment in the future of our community. Of course, it goes without saying, or with saying in this case, that we are not offering tax advice by the above statement. Contact any of our trustees if you would like more info.

Photos by Kevin Riley unless where otherwise credited.