

A Service of the Union County  
Board of Chosen Freeholders



**UNION COUNTY**  
*We're Connected to You!*

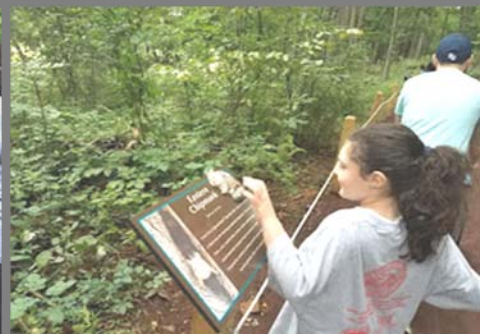


# TRAILSIDE

Nature & Science Center

**Experience Nature**  
**FALL 2018**

*Visit Union County's First of its Kind  
Watchung Reservation Sensory Friendly Trail*



# Union County's Watchung Reservation Sensory Friendly Trail



The new Sensory Trail is located in front of the Trailside Visitor Center and is accessible to all residents, allowing them to enjoy the beautiful natural surroundings. The trail is open seven days a week from dawn to dusk.

The Watchung Reservation Sensory Trail is a 0.3 mile loop with a central gazebo. The trail includes a Braille trail loop with guide ropes, featuring multiple stops to learn about the local flora and fauna with 3D reliefs and Braille for the visually impaired.

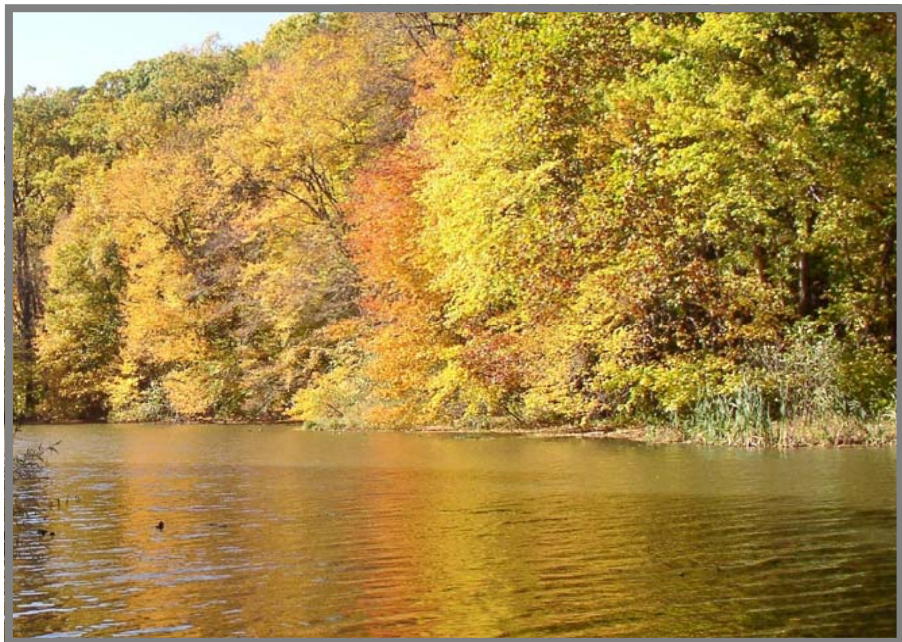


Interpretive signage includes two talking audio kiosks highlighting the natural and human history of the Watchung Reservation. Featured on these kiosks are sounds of nature, including bird songs, insect sounds, and Native American flute music.

The central gazebo offers a sensory play area to attract children and encourage exploration and discovery. Sensory stimulation is provided through sensory gardens, musical components and nature-themed play structures designed to meet the physical, social and cognitive needs of different age groups. All of these elements along the trail provide tactile experiences and create opportunities to enjoy the touch, sound and smells of nature.







The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders invites you to visit Trailside Nature and Science Center to experience over 4,500 square feet of interactive environmental exhibits. Take part in one of the many unique and educational programs designed to spark an appreciation of nature for both you and your child. Trailside's location in the scenic Watchung Reservation provides the perfect classroom for fun while learning about the environment and the natural world around us.

**Hours of operation are 12 - 5 p.m. daily.**



In order to accommodate everyone, please let us know in advance if you or a member of your group has any special needs.

A note about the program fees:

IC = Union County Resident

OC = Out of County Resident

Trailside will be closed :

November 22 & 23 for Thanksgiving

December 24 & 25 for Christmas

December 31, 2018 & January 1, 2019 for the New Year

**Register online at [www.ucnj.org/trailside](http://www.ucnj.org/trailside).**

Trailside reserves the right to cancel a program due to low enrollment or severe weather. In the event of cancellation, a credit will be issued.

Credit will be issued **ONLY** if the program is cancelled by the registrant at least three (3) days in advance. Please call if your child cannot attend a program.

***No refunds will be given for any program.***

Please be prompt when dropping off or picking up your child.

Trailside reserves the right to remove a disruptive or inappropriately aged child from a program. If a child is removed from a program, no credit or refund will be offered.

Each class will spend some time outside, so please, dress your child appropriately for the weather. Long pants tucked into socks offer protection from ticks.



# TODDLER TIME

Sensory hikes, stories, crafts and activities to acquaint adults and children with the natural world. Dress for outdoors.

***Please register for this class using the adult's name.***

**BRING:** A baby carrier or sling; strollers are not recommended.

**WHO:** Adult with child/children up to three years of age. Older children will not be permitted to attend.  
Maximum 4/family per class.

**WHEN:** Thursdays, Fridays or Saturdays, 10:00 - 11:00 AM

**DRESS:** Appropriately for the weather; if possible, we *will* go outside.

**FEE:** Per class: **IC** - \$10/family    **OC** - \$12/family

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**Oct. 4,  
5 or 6**      **Art in Nature** - Everything in nature has a unique color, shape and pattern. Discover nature's beauty on our hike as we search for heart-shaped leaves, "popcorn" berries, camouflaged tree bark and much more. Make leaf rubbings and clay impressions using materials we collect.

**Oct. 11  
12 or 13**      **Monarchs to Mexico** - Find out about these incredible insects that travel to Mexico for a long winter *siesta*. Take a look at their life cycle, visit Trailside's butterfly garden and search outdoors for these beautiful butterflies.

**Oct. 18,  
of 19 or 20**      **Senses of the Season** - The sights, smells, and sounds of nature change with the seasons. Take a hike to find out what the fall season is all about by using four of your five senses! Make a craft out of natural materials collected on the hike to take home.

**Oct. 25  
26 or 27**      **Blowin' in the Wind** - ...floating on the water, stuck on an animal's fur. Seeds have different ways of traveling to new places to grow. Hike through field and forest to find cones, nuts, berries, fruits and pods.

**Nov. 8  
9 or 10**      **Short or Tall** - Take a look around, what do you see? Who is that, taller than me? Find out how you measure up to the tallest tree and the shortest animal. Have fun comparing heights of plants, animals and people!

*Toddler Time continued...*

- Nov. 15  
16 or 17**     **The 1, 2, 3's of Trailside** - Get ready to count everything in nature from snowflakes and paw prints to seeds and rocks. Make a counting book of your own to take home.
- Nov. 29,  
30 or  
Dec. 1**     **What's the Shape?** - Hunt for hexagons, search for circles and seek out squares as we investigate shapes in nature. Have fun on a scavenger hunt to find a mitten shaped leaf, a heart shaped petal, a rectangular tree trunk and a triangular rock.
- Dec. 6  
7 or 8**     **Black Bears of NJ** - New Jersey has only one bear, the black bear. Bring your teddy bear (or favorite stuffed animal) on a walk to look for black bear snacks and hiding places. Compare your foot to a bear track and find out how bears prepare for winter.



# TWO OF US

An interactive program encouraging nature discovery through hikes and other indoor/outdoor activities.

**WHO:** 3 or 4 year-old child with an adult.

**WHEN:** Tuesday, 10:00 - 11:00 AM or Wednesday, 1:30 - 2:30 PM

**FEE:** **Per class:** **IC** - \$10/child & adult **OC** - \$12/child & adult

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**Oct. 2**      **The Art of Nature** - Nature is art that is all around us. Learn **or 3** how the natural world inspires art and discover the different kinds of natural materials that can be used to make an artistic piece of work. Take a hike to collect natural items such as leaves, sticks and rocks and learn how to use them as tools to create a masterpiece to decorate your house.

**Oct. 9**      **Monarch Migration** - Monarch butterflies are off to Mexico **or 10** for the winter. Learn about their lifecycle, from egg to butterfly, and look for them sipping nectar in gardens and meadows around Trilside.

**Oct. 16**      **What Do You Sense?** - Fall is a wonderful time to listen, **or 17** see, smell and touch. Take a walk to look and listen for chirping birds, colorful leaves and prickly and tickly pine needles. Find out how animals use their senses to survive in the wild.

**Oct. 23**      **Movin' On** - Plants spread their seeds in many ways. Take **or 24** a walk to the meadow as we search for seeds with "wings," seeds that hitch a ride on animals and seeds that are eaten by birds, mammals and insects.

**Oct. 30**      **The Colors of Fall** - Hike through the Watchung Reservation **or 31** in search of red, yellow, orange and purple fall colors. Learn why the leaves change color in autumn. Collect leaves to make a colorful fall craft to take home

**Nov. 6**      **Size Wise** - Big, small, short and tall. Find out how **or 7** plants and animals use size to survive in the wild. How do you measure up to an ostrich? A redwood tree? A blue whale? Have fun measuring, comparing and sizing up all that nature has to offer.



*Two of Us continued...*

**Nov. 13 or 14** **The Counting Craze** - One, two, three, four, come along and count some more! Count petals on a flower, seeds in a pod, leaflets on a twig, legs on a bug and much more.

**Nov. 27 or 28** **Shapes in Nature** - Circles, squares, triangles, hearts and stars. Can you find all these shapes in nature? Enjoy looking for spots on a turtle, triangles on a fish and hearts on a tree. You'll be amazed at all the shapes you can find!

**Dec. 4 and or 5** **Bear Necessities** - Black bear, brown bear, polar bear grizzly bear. Learn fascinating facts about these powerful animals. Look at a bear skull, feel a bear pelt, then look for "bear tracks" as we take a short hike.

## SMALL FRY DAYS

A drop-off program to foster awareness and appreciation of the natural world through nature hikes, exploration & activities. Dress for outdoors.

**WHO:** 4-6 year olds.

**WHEN:** Wednesday, 10:00 - 11:15 AM

**FEE:** Per class: IC - \$10/child

**OC** - \$12/child

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**Oct. 3** **Nature Artists** - Nature has inspired artists for centuries. Learn about the wonders of nature and how it influences different kinds of art. Take a hike to collect natural objects that we will use to make beautiful masterpieces to take home.

**Oct.10** **Milkweed & Monarchs** - Monarch butterflies depend on the milkweed plant for their survival. Investigate the lifecycle of the monarch butterfly from egg to adult and find out what monarchs do for the winter. Visit butterfly gardens and meadows in search of these beautiful insects.

**Oct. 17** **Explore Your Senses** - Discover how animals depend on their senses to survive in the wild. Play "Raccoon Paws" and see if your senses can uncover a raccoon's favorite meal.

**Oct. 24** **Getting Around** - Plants spread seeds in unusual ways. They travel by air, water and by animal! Hike to find an assortment of seeds and try to guess how they get around.

## Small Fry Days continued....

- Oct. 31      Fall Fun** - Hike around the reservation to see the changes that occur during fall. Explore the woods for fall colors, and look for animals preparing for winter along the way.
- Nov. 7        Inch By Inch** - Compare and contrast the many different sizes of animals and plant life found in the wild. Learn how the size of an animal or plant helps it survive.
- Nov. 14      Numbers in Nature** - How many points are on a snowflake? How many seeds do dandelions produce? Which plant has leaves of three? Look at leaves, open seeds, investigate insects and count the numerous gifts nature has to offer.
- Nov. 28      Searching for Shapes** - Can you find a leaf that is like a heart? A tree with a circular hole? Have fun looking for different shapes in nature. See if you can find circles, squares, stars, rectangles, triangles and diamonds on a hike through the reservation.
- Dec. 5        Going on a Bear Hike** - Bring your teddy bear and learn the bear facts. Do black bears live in the Watchung Reservation? What do they eat? Where do they go in winter? Make a special bear craft to take home.



# AFTERSCHOOL EXPLORATIONS

## GRADE SCHOOL PROGRAM



A drop off program designed to acquaint your child with nature explorations, hikes and outdoor activities.

**WHO:** 1st - 3rd graders.

**WHEN:** Thursdays, 3:30-4:45 PM

**FEE:** Per class: IC - \$10/child

**OC** - \$12/child

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- Oct. 4** **Stream Stroll** - Knowing what types of animals live in stream helps us to determine the quality of the water. Search for insect larvae, salamanders and crayfish. Discover how they help predict the water quality.
- Oct. 11** **Minibeasts** - Who lives in the soil? Discover which creatures are the gardeners, hunters and garbage collectors. Look for them under rocks and logs and find out why they are important.
- Oct. 18** **Hawk Watch** - Search the sky for migrating birds of prey. Look for hawks, falcons and, if we are lucky, we may see a bald eagle! Find out what makes these birds special and learn why they migrate.
- Oct. 25** **Bats in the Belfry** - Learn the myths and misconceptions of this often misunderstood animal. Discover what New Jersey bats eat and how they use echolocation to catch food.



*Afterschool Explorations continued....*

- Nov. 1     Rocks Rock!** - Hike the “geology trail” and discover old lava flows, glacial rocks and remains of inland seas. Collect and identify specimens to take home.
- Nov. 8     Eco Artist** - Each season brings new beauty; snowflakes, flowers, rainbows, and colorful leaves. Celebrate the change of nature through arts and crafts that capture the magnificence of each season.
- Nov. 15    Lenape Lifestyles** - Experience life as a Lenape Native American. Listen to stories in a life-sized wigwam, play games like corn darts and hold real artifacts. Search outdoors for plants the Lenape used for medicines, food and cordage.
- Nov. 29   Behind the Scenes** - Learn what it takes to care for Trailside’s resident animals. Meet snakes, turtles, fish, and walking sticks up close while learning about their care, behavior, and feeding habits.
- Dec. 6     Prepare for Winter** - Discover how some of Trailside’s resident plants and animals deal with winter. Learn how deep snow can actually help in winter survival and go outside in search of winter animal homes, hideouts, and food.



# SATURDAY OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

Families with children ages 7 & older are invited to take part in theme hikes/nature related talks. Programs last about 45 minutes. For scout programs, see our group brochure. **Donations appreciated.**

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**Oct. 6      Life on Mars** - Take a trip to Mars with NASA Solar System Ambassador and Wagner College astronomy professor, Harold Kozak, who will offer a presentation on the latest discoveries on this intriguing planet. Recent data collected by several robots indicate that water and organic molecules necessary for life are present on the surface of Mars. Professor Kozak will offer a question and answer session as well as discuss future missions to Mars. **2:00 PM.**

**Oct. 13      The Joy of Backyard Bird Feeding** - Join Wild Birds Unlimited backyard bird specialist Pete Axelrod to discover how to create a successful backyard bird feeding station. Find out what types of seed attract different bird species and learn which feeders are best suited for woodpeckers, cardinals, goldfinch and more. **10:00 AM**



**Nov. 10      New Jersey's Magnificent Raptors** - Meet live birds of prey that may include a kestrel, red tailed hawk & great horned owl. New Jersey's awesome raptors, including bald eagles, peregrine falcons and ospreys, have made an inspiring recovery over the past few decades thanks largely to the work of devoted biologists and faithful volunteers from Conserve Wildlife Foundation and the State Endangered & Nongame Species Program. Learn more about these incredible species and the innovative work being done to study and protect them in the Garden State. Sponsored by Conserve Wildlife Foundation. Space is limited. *Pre-registration is required.* **2:00 PM.**

**Nov. 17      Geocaching** - Geocaching is a real-world outdoor treasure hunting game using GPS-enabled devices. First devised in the year 2000, geocaching has become an increasingly popular hobby with over 3 million geocaches hidden worldwide. Join the Northern New Jersey Cachers to learn the history of geocaching and how it works. Then have fun navigating to geocaches located within the Watchung Reservation! **2:00 PM.**



*Outdoor Adventures & Family Programs continued...*



**Dec. 1 Peregrine Falcons**

Just a few decades ago, peregrine falcons disappeared east of the Mississippi River - yet today we can celebrate over 30 active falcon nests in *New Jersey* alone; with one located on the roof of the Union County Courthouse in Elizabeth! The peregrine falcon, also known as the duck hawk, is the largest falcon in the state. It is the

world's fastest animal, capable of flying at speeds over 200 miles an hour. Join Stephanie D'Alessio, Director of Education for the **Conserve Wildlife Foundation**, as she explores the life of these fascinating birds. Find out how to access the Union County Falcon Cam that provides live stream in and around the peregrine falcon nest in Elizabeth. **2:00 PM.**

**SPECIAL FAMILY EVENT**

**STAR PARTY**

**Saturday, November 17**

**7:00 PM - 9:00PM**



Join Members of Amateur Astronomers, Inc. (AAI) from Sperry Observatory in Cranford for a presentation about astronomy in the auditorium followed by an evening of stargazing and observing the moon, Mars and the Orion Nebula. **Pre-registration is preferred.**

**Fee: Free. Dress appropriately for the weather.**

# TRAILSIDE TALKS

*Programs for Adults and High School Students.  
Preregistration preferred. Walk-ins welcomed.*

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## **Sensory Friendly Trail Stroll** **Saturday, October 20**

**2:00 - 4:00 PM**



Numerous studies have proven that access to the outdoors and nature is important to the health, well-being and education of all individuals regardless of age, location or physical abilities. Enjoy a leisurely walk with a Trailside naturalist on

Union County's new ADA accessible, sensory friendly trail. The trail accommodates people of all abilities and offers a unique opportunity to learn about the natural and human history of the Watchung Reservation. Discover the beauty of trees, plants and animals, and then relax around a campfire while listening to the music of guitarist Dario Scholis. **Free.**

## **Thursday, October 25** **Make a Wreath with Natural Materials**

**7:00 - 8:30 PM**

Spend an evening learning how to identify, prepare and use nature's bounty of dried autumn plants. Weave grasses, stems, flowers and seeds into a one-of-a-kind wreath to decorate your home. **Bring:** A hot glue gun if you have one. **Fee:** \$20/IC, \$25/OC. Fee includes all materials.



# Trailside Nature & Science Center

[www.ucnj.org/trailside](http://www.ucnj.org/trailside)

(908) 789-3670

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A facility of the Union County Department of Parks & Recreation

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