

Friends of Steele Creek Nature Center and Park

# Knobs and Knolls

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**October 2017**

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## Nature Center Expansion – It's Open!

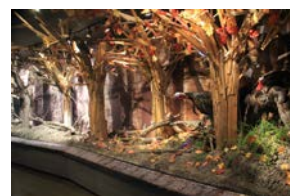
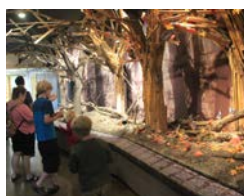
The new wing of the Nature Center is now open! On October 13<sup>th</sup> we celebrated the ribbon cutting and official opening, followed by our busiest Wildlife Weekend ever. Hundreds of visitors have already come by to see our aquatic animals in their new homes and to explore the other new exhibits.

When you enter the new building through the main entrance (now on the upper level) you are greeted, front and center, by Snappy the Turtle in his new 300 gallon home. Many visitors (and at least some of the staff) insist that Snappy has displayed a big smile since making the move to his new digs! Eight additional 100 gallon tanks, beautifully and accurately decorated to be consistent with the Park's natural environment, display many of our other indigenous species of fish and amphibians.



*Live Species Aquarium Array, sponsored in part by **Strongwell** and **Don and Ginia Shawl***

Also found in the large main gallery on the upper floor is the Birders' Forest, dedicated to the memory of Wallace Coffey. Sixty different Park birds are exhibited through both taxidermy and cut-out representations, along with relevant information about each species. Audio recordings allow visitors to listen to the songs, calls, and other sounds of many of the birds in the exhibit.



*Birders' Forest, sponsored by **Ben and Anne Cowan** and **The Wallace Coffey Memorial Fund***

**Continued on Next Page**

## Nature Center Expansion (continued)

By the time this newsletter is circulated, the Woodland Animals diorama (also located in the main upstairs gallery) should be complete. In addition to displaying many of the taxidermy specimens of the Park's woodland animals (including a recently acquired juvenile Black Bear), this exhibit incorporates live terrestrial animals (such as snakes and lizards) that were already in our collection.



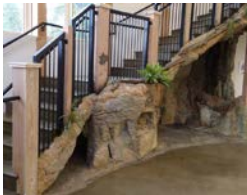
*Woodland Diorama (to be completed), sponsored by **Joe and Sandy Armstrong, Bill and Sonie Schermer, and Robin and Margaret Feierabend***



*Waterfowl Exhibit (to be completed), sponsored by **The Friendship Family of Dealerships***

Upstairs, overlooking the lake and knobs (on what is now the back side of the building) is the nearly complete Waterfowl Exhibit. When finished, this display will feature our taxidermy specimens of ducks, geese and other waterfowl commonly found in the Park, flying overhead and swimming on a replica of the lake. Descriptions of the specimens will help connect the artificial setting indoors with the real scene as viewed through the large glass windows beyond.

On the lower level, beneath the large curved stairway, is the Crawl-through Cave Exhibit, designed to be consistent with the caves found within in the Park. Kids are encouraged to do a bit of "spelunking" and to find specific cave features, fossils, and animal footprints. Judging from the activity during Wildlife Weekend, this hands-on exhibit should prove to be one of the more popular exhibits with children, young and old!



*Crawl-through Cave Exhibit, sponsored by **Rush and Lea Powers***

The DeFriece-Wilson Classroom, on the lower level, is now complete and ready for use. Lab tables, cabinets and educational equipment planned for the space will soon be in place. Final decisions about those items will be made in the coming weeks by the Nature Center staff to assure that they have exactly what is needed for the many activities that will be conducted in our new multipurpose room.



*The DeFriece-Wilson Classroom was made possible through a generous donation from the **Massengill-DeFriece Foundation***

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## Nature Center Expansion: What's Next?



Now that Phase I is nearly completed, we are moving forward with many additional exhibits. Thanks to a generous contribution from the Blue Stocking Club, work will soon begin on the interactive Geology Wall, across from the Cave, downstairs. We hope to add a Giant Sloth skeleton next to the Cave early next year. Meanwhile, we continue our efforts to raise funds for an interactive “Build a Pond Community” ecology wall in the Children’s Discovery Room, a crawl-in Beaver Lodge, a “Park After Dark” display, and a Native Plants exhibit.

This coming spring, we anticipate that City workers will begin renovation of the original building. When renovation is complete, it will provide two additional gallery spaces, much needed additional work areas for our staff, volunteers, and student researchers, as well as additional storage space.

Through the generous contributions of well over 200 individuals, organizations and businesses we have been able to accomplish great things thus far. As we move forward, we look forward to continued support that will allow us to fulfill our vision of a wonderful Nature Center that serves as the focus of environmental and natural history education for the region.



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## Thanks to Our Many Members and Donors

Our campaign to raise funds to fill the new Nature Center began in the late spring of 2016. Since then, we have raised almost two-thirds of our original goal of \$426,000. In addition, our members have helped us maintain our day to day activities in support of the Nature Center at Steele Creek Park. Many thanks to all those who have contributed to *Friends* over the past 18 months through their memberships, donations, and pledges.

**We couldn't have accomplished all that we have without your support!**

**Oak (Champion) \$25,000+**

**Massengill-DeFriece Foundation**

**Ben and Anne Cowan**

**Strongwell**

**The Blue Stocking Club**

**Our list of donors and members continues on the following pages.**

## Thanks to Our Many Members and Donors (continued)

### **Maple (Benefactor) \$10,000 - \$24,999**

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Our list of donors and members continues on the following pages.

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## Thanks to Our 2016-17 Members and Donors (continued)

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## Wildlife Weekend 2017

Wildlife Weekend 2017 was a stunning success. A record number of participants came out to enjoy the beautiful weather, to see the new Nature Center, and to participate in the wide variety of activities available.

On Friday evening, winners of the WW Photography Contest were announced, and Jeremy Stout provided an entertaining and informative presentation on the past, present and future of Steele Creek Park and its Nature Center. Additional highlights of the weekend included a bird banding demonstration by Richard Lewis and Rack Cross, a Red-tailed Hawk demonstration provided by Bays Mountain volunteer Frank Read, a display of fossils by J.R. Arnold of the Clyde Austin 4-H Center, displays of insects and animal skins, and ever-popular fossil casting hosted by Mick Whitelaw and other volunteers from ETSU's Center of Excellence in Paleontology. Discovery walks on Saturday focused on birds, snakes, salamanders, "creep-crawly" arthropods, and mushrooms and fall wildflowers. Entries in the Photography Show were on display throughout the event.

For a better "picture" of all the excitement of our 20th Annual Wildlife Weekend, see the images below!





## 2017 Wildlife Weekend Photography Contest Winners

This year's Wildlife Weekend Photography Contest and Show once again included many wonderful entries in both the adult and youth divisions. With thanks to all of the participating photographers, and to our outstanding judges (Earl Neikirk of the Bristol Herald Courier and Chris Duncan of Chris Duncan Photography), here are the first, second, and third place entries in both divisions.

All of the winning entries, including the Honorable Mention selections, can be seen our website.



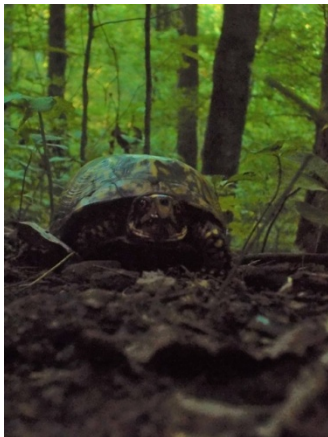
"Double Trouble" by Pam Conley  
Adult – First Place



"Less Traveled" by Mary Annette  
Adult – Second Place



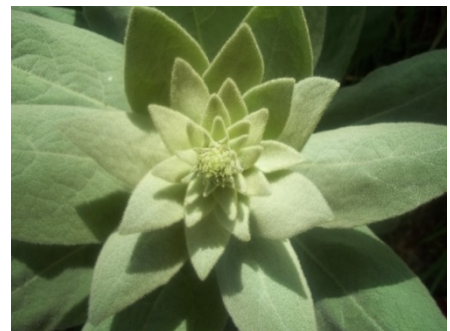
"Snack Time" by Pam Conley  
Adult – Third Place



"Annoyed" by Brice Lay  
Youth – First Place



"Tiger Lily" by Leah Gunn  
Youth – Second Place



"Soft" by Sophia Detrick  
Youth – Third Place

You can keep up with what's going on at the Park and with *Friends* by liking us on Facebook ([FriendsOfSteeleCreekPark](#)) or by following our webpage at <https://www.friendsofstelecreek.org>.

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