

# Pennsylvania Naturalist

Connecting People, Nature and Community

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## From Deep Woods To The Holy Water Place

**Today is** the First of March. Weather cold. Sky grey. Snow predicted. Early this morning, up in the deep woods the rat-ta-tat-tat of a woodpecker, I think a hairy woodpecker, heralded for me the emergence of the new month.

Feeders are active this morning. Pine siskins and gold finches are bullies lording over seeds bullying chickadee and tufted titmouse. There are hairy and downy and red-headed woodpeckers. A red-breasted nuthatch – I think just one has acclimatized to us. Brown creepers course the hemlock trunks. A week ago neighbor



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Leckey came over carrying a fist-full of dead white-winged crossbills. They crashed into windows by his spruce trees where they had been feeding. Lately, there have many reports of these northern nomads.

Between the porch and Pine Creek rhododendrons flash red with the “Bird Clergy” of winter. The College of Cardinals—I call them. Creek side we have been seeing a sleek black mink ‘hump walking’ its way in search of crayfish.

Our water ebbs and flows with the rains and snow melts of winter. Coming off the deep woods six feeder streams flow into Pine Creek. West of “Hemlock Springs” – our acreage—Pine Creek’s headwaters from Hawk Mountain join Rausch Creek coming down from Panther Spring headwaters of the Pinnacle Ridge. Rausch cascades for two miles over falls into plunge pools. Jim Arnosky, my wildlife illustrator friend and I used to fish the pools, could drink its water and hike the Deep Woods. He returns now from his home in Vermont as a

teacher for our Institute. If you “Google” Jim there is a wealth of his children’s nature books. My own library is filled with them.

Closer to home is an artesian spring; the sole source of water for our home. When we were building our place I hired my neighbor—an excavator with a delicate touch— to lay pipe deep under a stretch of boulders 300 feet from spring cistern to cabin. In the last thirty-seven years the water level has never dropped. A “Y” connector diverts water under Pine Creek and through the meadow to the vegetable garden a thousand feet away. Our children and their children still gather at the “Holy Water Place”. There is still that same old Sierra Club cup hanging on a rhododendron branch as it was when they were just toddlers and would hike back to the Holy Water Place to drink from the spring.

This is our home; this is where we belong.

- Jim Brett

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### Institute Staff:

**Jim Brett**

*Co-founder and President*

**Michele Richards**

*Co-founder and Director*

**Michele Kittell**

*Program Coordinator*

**Emily Brodsky**

*Program Assistant  
Newsletter Editor*

Contact us:  
[info@piceweb.org](mailto:info@piceweb.org)

For more program information and to download registration materials, visit  
[www.PICEweb.org](http://www.PICEweb.org)

## PICE News

### Preparations Begin for 2009 Wildlife Leadership Adventures, Contributions to Conservation by 2008 Students are Many

While we get ready for this year's WLA field school, last year's students are busy working on their outreach and service activities. We received 11 Early Bird Record Books this year; that's more than 50% of the students who attended camp! Together, the early birds have conducted 70 outreach and service projects, engaged in 260 contact hours with the public, reaching an audience of over 3,300 people across 8 counties in the state. As a reward, several of the early birds students are going on a day trip to visit the Penn State deer pens and to attend the Pennsylvania chapter of The Wildlife Society's (TWS) annual meeting at the University. TWS students will mentor WLA students throughout the day, hopefully making it a great experience for everyone! We are eagerly awaiting the arrival of the final record books by April 15 to read about everyone's achievements and to select the 2009 cohort of Assistant Team Leaders.

### New Staff Member at PICE to Coordinate the Wildlife Leadership Adventures

We are pleased to welcome a new Program Coordinator for the Wildlife Leadership Adventures, Michele Kittell. Michele comes to us from Disney World, where she introduced marine ecology to guests of The Seas. She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the position, having earned an M.S. in Zoology from Clemson University and a B.S. in Biology from Penn State. Michele's research background ranges from studying invasive plant species to fish behavior and genetics to coral reef surveying and dolphin cognition. She has taught environmental topics to varied audiences in a range of settings, such as community colleges and state parks. Michele is already immersed in planning for this year's program, and is looking forward to her first WLA field camp in July!

### Elk Country Visitor Center Project Complete

After months spent compiling and analyzing data from surveys, site visits and interviews, Michele, Jim and Emily completed the Program Plan for the Elk Country Visitor Center Conservation Education



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Program. The Plan, which was submitted to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and DCNR in February, provides guidelines for conservation education and interpretive programs to be developed during the Center's startup, based on an extensive study completed over the last several months. Input was gathered from state-of-the-art environmental education centers and organizations all over the country, PA state parks and state forests, colleges and universities and public schools to learn about best practices and determine how the Center can best meet the needs of the community. PICE anticipates that the hard work that went into this project will soon pay off when the Elk Country Visitor Center launches its first year of top-notch educational programs.

### Planning for the Master Naturalist Pilot Module Continues

The advisory council for the Master Naturalist urban ecology module in the Northern Piedmont ecoregion met in early January to continue planning for the first pilot program. The group discussed the next steps in developing the program, including fundraising ideas, further curriculum development, identifying potential instructors and marketing resources. The advisory council includes representatives from such organizations as the PA Horticultural Society, US Fish & Wildlife Service, NJ Academy of Aquatic Sciences, the Academy of Natural Sciences, Longwood Gardens, Center in the Park and Audubon. PICE hopes to get the pilot module off the ground in the spring of 2010, but this will depend on funding. To learn more and stay updated, please visit [http://www.piceweb.org/p\\_masternaturalist.html](http://www.piceweb.org/p_masternaturalist.html).

## Featured Artist

### GEORGE LAVANISH

George studied art in Philadelphia, and began his career at Penn State University as staff artist. He has illustrated hundreds of stories and covers for national and regional magazines, as well as stamp designs and outdoor books. Specializing in realistic acrylic wildlife paintings, George creates artwork for organizations such as the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Trout Unlimited and the PA Game Commission.

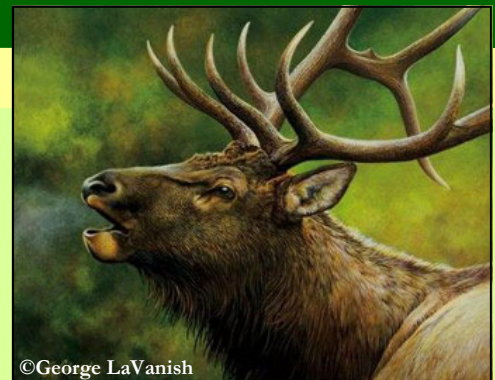
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## Spring & Summer Field Seminars & Retreats

©Scott Brown



### Exploring Landscape through Photography

MAY 16-17 (SAT – SUN), Pike County and Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, Scott Brown  
The landscape of the Eastern Ridge and Valley of Pennsylvania showcases the splendor of the Appalachians and Delaware Water Gap. Scenic vistas, waterfalls, wildflowers and woodland scenes grace much of Pike County with pastoral beauty. Scott Brown will guide all levels of photographic experience towards an end product of extraordinary visual satisfaction. Imagine returning home with a collection of stunning landscape photographs which can be shown as hanging portraits, shared e-mail images, and greeting cards. All camera formats are acceptable, but 35mm and digital formats are encouraged.

©Michele Richards



### Capturing Nature with Watercolors

JUNE 7, 2009 (SUN), Near Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, Kempton, Berks County, David Hughes  
Enjoy a leisurely spring day in the field with a talented Pennsylvania watercolor artist and teacher, David Hughes. Learn the basics, from choosing the paper, brushes and paint to plein air techniques for trailside work. You'll focus on capturing the diverse visual elements of plant and animal life, forest and stream settings, and the Appalachian landscape in a style to match your own creative expression. You'll take a closer look at nature's elements, studying them, and discussing ways to transfer these images to paper or canvas. Beginners and veterans alike will enjoy Dave's graceful balance of mentorship and independent work.

©Michele Richards



### Birding Basics

JUNE 29-30, 2009 (MON - TUE), Raystown Field Station, Dan Ardia  
Birding is a wonderful way to enjoy nature, be outside, and learn about animals and their habitats. Join Dan Ardia, who has spent his life observing and studying birds across the Americas and beyond, as he begins to familiarize beginning birders with behavior, flight patterns, feeding habits and plumages of Pennsylvania birds. After an informative classroom session on the natural history of Pennsylvania birds and birding basics, you'll spend time afield identifying birds by field marks, behaviors and habitats. Cultivate sharp eyes, perceptive ears and necessary patience for this popular outdoor activity. The Institute will provide binoculars, scope and natural history interpretation as well as field guides and other materials you can take home.

©Michele Richards



### Creating a Sense of Place Through Journaling

AUGUST 7, 2009 (FRI), Canoe Creek State Park, Heidi Boyle  
This one-day workshop invites you into the field to uncover relationships across time and culture in order to create a sense of place. Participants will use journaling as a basis for creating a more-in-depth look at their environment. Participants should be prepared to spend the day outdoors. Pre-workshop materials will be provided to give participants a head start on journaling skills.

©Michele Richards



### Grasses, Sedges and Rushes

AUGUST 12, 13 and 14, 2009 (WED – FRI), Shaver's Creek Environmental Center, Sarah Miller  
Designed with consultants, natural resource professionals and college students in mind, join an experienced botanist to learn skills necessary to identify these challenging plant species using diagnostic characters and botanical keys. Each day will consist of both classroom sessions and fieldwork. Classroom activities will highlight basic morphology, the characteristics of common genera, and identification of plant specimens using both simple and complex keys. Slides, overheads, handouts, herbarium and freshly collected field specimens will be used to illustrate plant characters, especially those that may prove an obstacle to keying. In the field, participants will have the opportunity to visit different wetland types in the area to practice their plant identification skills.

©Michele Kirtell



### Ferns and Mosses

SEPTEMBER 12, 2009 (SAT), Ricketts Glen State Park, Susan Munch, Ph.D.  
The forests of Pennsylvania provide ideal habitat for luxuriant growth of ferns and mosses as well as other nonflowering plants. Investigate the habitats and uniqueness of these fascinating plants as we explore old forests, wetlands and Appalachian landscapes. Learn to identify major common genera and species from an experienced botanist. For our field studies, we will explore the most beautiful and alluring Pennsylvania natural area where nonflowering plants thrive. Ricketts Glen is known for its abundance of scenic waterfalls.

For details and registration information on these field seminars, visit our website [www.PICEweb.org](http://www.PICEweb.org).

## Building Conservation Leadership for Pennsylvania: The Wildlife Leadership Adventures Program

### SPOTLIGHT ON STUDENTS

**Kyla Brick, Class of 2007,  
Assistant Team Leader 2008**

*The WLA Influence:*

“I believe that every student should have the opportunity to learn and perform to their fullest potential. I realized this when I was challenged by PICE, because I achieved more in the first day of the Wildlife Leadership Adventures camp than I had in my entire life.”

*Achievement Highlights:*

Kyla was selected to participate in last year’s field camp as an Assistant Team Leader for her outstanding service and outreach contributions during 2007-2008. This year, Kyla has continued with her hard work; she has participated in deer counting, helped PICE as a community liaison, and worked toward her Deer Steward Certification through the Quality Deer Management Association. She will also be participating in Penn State’s 4-H Veterinary Lab course.

*Plans for the future:*

Kyla is still deciding on what college to attend, but has been accepted to the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry with a scholarship, the Biology Program at Delaware Valley College in PA with a Presidential Scholarship, West Virginia University, also with a scholarship, Penn State University, and Frostburg College in Maryland. Kyla has been working towards a Deer Steward Certification through the Quality Deer Management Association, and plans to continue with this pursuit as well.

**Carlos Cuevas, Class of 2007,  
Assistant Team Leader 2008**

*The WLA Influence:*

“I am still not 100% sure of my goals but I have been trying to get as much real life experience under my belt as I can. I cannot thank you and the instructors of WLA enough for changing my life and giving me a direction to follow. It has been a great experience!”

*Achievement Highlights:*

Carlos was the top student in 2007, engaging in



**Bucktails Class of 2008**

over 100 hours of outreach and service, reaching an audience of 969 people. He has continued to gain experience in the wildlife sciences and contribute to local conservation efforts. This year he has worked with the Natural Resources Conservation Service’s Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, and with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation helping with erosion control planning. He helps the PA Game Commission with deer trapping, and at check-in stations during bear season. He assists the Quality Deer Management Association with many projects, and recently spent three days speaking with the public about deer management at the Eastern Sports and Outdoors Show QDMA booth.

*Future Plans:*

Carlos has been accepted at Paul Smith’s College in upstate NY, and plans to study wildlife and fisheries science. Carlos was awarded a WLA college scholarship for his outreach achievements and a tuition scholarship from Paul Smith’s. He will enroll in the fall of 2009.

**Greg Fry, Class of 2008**

*The WLA Influence:*

“Before I attended WLA, public speaking did not come easy for me. After attending the camp and doing several outreach programs I feel more comfortable speaking in public. Part of WLA is to go out in the public and talk to people about what I learned at camp. By doing this I have had the opportunity to meet many new people.”

*Achievement Highlights:*

Since the field school, Greg has conducted 11

outreach and service projects in his community, reaching an audience of over 188 people. He has helped with habitat restoration at a local state park and a deer exclosure study, and has given presentations about wildlife, conservation, and WLA at local events.

*Plans for the future:*

Greg would like to return to WLA in 2009 as an Assistant Team Leader to “continue my learning experience and further develop my leadership skills.” He hopes to study at Penn State to become a deer biologist.

**Breanna Lincoski, Class of 2008**

*The WLA Influence:*

“WLA has given me self-confidence to take on more challenging opportunities. The leadership skills that I attained there I will carry for the rest of my life; for example, I have gained self-confidence in public speaking and in taking on difficult challenges. The skills I learned enhanced my ability to go out and make connections in my community. WLA was not just a week-long leadership program; it is a program that gave me skills to change my life.”

*Achievement Highlights:*

Breanna has conducted over 20 projects with a variety of organizations, such as California University’s Wildlife Society, local gun clubs and their youth programs, Audubon PA, PA Game Commission, Girl Scouts of America, and the Fayette County Drug and Alcohol Program which is making pictures she took of elk into billboards. She has been selected as the 2009 Outstanding High School Student by Next Step Magazine because of her WLA outreach; she will be on the March cover along with the other winners.

*Plans for the Future:*

Breanna plans to attend California University of PA in 2012. She is interested in studying natural science, education, or pre-med. She would like to return to WLA as an Assistant Team Leader in 2009.

# Naturalist Rambles

## AN INTERVIEW WITH DAN KUNKLE

Dan Kunkle grew up in Carbon County near Lehighton, where he still lives today. A biology teacher at Freedom High School in Bethlehem for nearly thirty years, Dan moved on in 2002 to lead the restoration of the Lehigh Gap Wildlife Refuge in Slatington. Much of the 750-acre Refuge had been degraded by industrial pollution, but has since been transformed through Dan’s leadership from a barren ridge to a thriving prairie grassland. Dan now directs the Lehigh Gap Nature Center, formerly known as the Wildlife Information Center. He leads and participates in various scientific research projects, including the Bake Oven Knob raptor migration monitoring program, and continues to educate students of all ages through natural history programs at the Center.

**What experiences led you to become passionate about the natural world?**

I grew up in a rural area with forests and streams near my house; my brother and I spent a lot of time running around the woods and streams, which I think was a major factor. Another factor was that I began hunting with my grandfather at age 12. I don’t know that hunting had much to do with it; it was more about the time spent in the woods with my grandfather.



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**What do you enjoy most about your work at Lehigh Gap Nature Center?**

The learning. I learn all kinds of new things here every day.

**Where is your favorite place to go to connect with nature?**

I live in nature! My backyard is probably my favorite place; we have 50 acres. Lehigh Gap is my second favorite. Where I live and where I work are my favorite places; not many people get to say that!

**What’s the best thing anyone ever taught you?**

My parents taught me to respect everyone and get along with everyone. That was probably the most important thing.

**Who do you see as the best thinker (or thinkers) in your field, and why?**

In ecology, Roger Latham is who I look to most as a mentor. Roger is an independent ecologist, who taught at Swarthmore College and the University of Pennsylvania, and now runs his own consulting company called Continental Conservation. I’ve worked with lots of really good thinkers and mentors at Lehigh Gap, but Roger probably has the most knowledge and experience in ecological restoration.

**What’s the most influential book that you’ve read?**

A Sand County Almanac by Aldo Leopold and Desert Solitaire by Edward Abbey.

**What do you think is the best season where you live and why?**

First of all, I love that we have four seasons; I think that’s really special about where we live. I guess I enjoy autumn the most, because our grassland is spectacular and the leaves are spectacular, and because of the hawk migration. Spring is a close second though, with the migration of warblers and other types of birds, and generally with life awakening.

**What principal do you strive to live by?**

It’s kind of like the Golden Rule, but it extends to the Earth as well as people: trying to leave the Earth a better place than when I got here.

—Emily Brodsky



Dan Kunkle

### Wildlife Watching Hotspot

Be sure to include a visit to the **Lehigh Gap Nature Center and Wildlife Refuge** in your spring and summer plans! Dan Kunkle and others have been restoring 750 acres of this site from degraded industrial land into a beautiful prairie landscape. Learn about these changes, watch for mammals, reptiles and migratory songbirds while hiking on the trails, or observe shorebirds and waterfowl from a canoe or kayak!

**For more information visit:**

<http://www.lgnc.org/>

**Or call:** (610) 760-8889

# Support Our Work

## OUR MISSION AND PURPOSE

The Institute is dedicated to stimulating knowledge of, interest in, and an appreciation of natural history by providing extraordinary field-based educational opportunities in Pennsylvania and beyond.

We are committed to creating a more ecologically literate population; one that becomes increasingly engaged in the conservation of natural resources.

Your support makes our programs possible. Please let us hear from you today and we will put your contribution to work.

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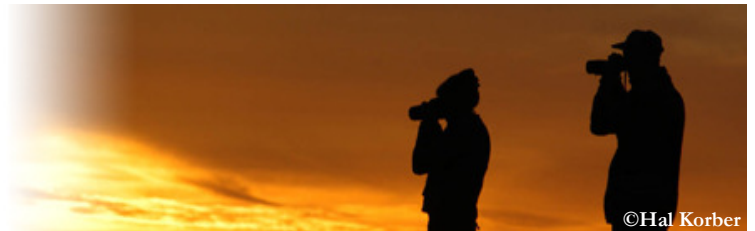
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## Spring & Summer Wildlife Watching Hotspots



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### Jennings Environmental Education Center

**Where?**

Adjacent to Moraine State Park, in Butler County

**What's There?**

The only protected relict prairie ecosystem in PA

Massasauga Rattlesnake (endangered)

Blazing star (endangered prairie wildflower)

**For more info:**

<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/parks/jennings.aspx>

### John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum Marsh

**Where?**

Near the Philadelphia Airport

**What's There?**

300 species of migratory birds, 85 species of nesting birds

Southern Leopard Frog (endangered in PA)

Red-bellied Turtle (threatened)

50 species of butterflies

**For more info:**

<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/heinz/welcome.htm>

### Tannersville Cranberry Bog

**Where?**

Tannersville, Monroe County, in the Poconos

**What's There?**

Bog copper butterfly (endangered)

River otter, Bobcat, Gray fox

Insectivorous plants

Black spruce and tamarack

**For more info:**

<http://www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/pennsylvania/preserves/art19484.html>