



August Newsletter



Director's Corner

By Kerry Kirk Pflugh, Executive Director, New Jersey School of Conservation

As school starts up again, the New Jersey School of Conservation is ready to welcome new and returning friends to our campus for day trips, overnight trips and more.

But don't miss out on one final chance for you and your family to finish your summer strong with a trip to our campus in the stunning Stokes State Forest.

Sign up for Wapalanne Family Camp today for a weekend of archery, boating, fishing, photography, hiking, campfires, storytelling, and more with your loved ones. See the registration link below.

This family camp marks a step forward in expanding access to our campus in new and exciting ways to strengthen connections with friends both old and new and to introduce families across our region to the beauty of Stokes State Forest.

And learn about our exciting Fall programs including Our Plant Walk-Abouts, our Fall Hikes for Women, Archery for Beginners, and a Thankfulness Hike around Thanksgiving time.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude for two phenomenal interns - Ashleigh and Ashley - who are leaving us after a wonderful summer. Read more about their experience below.

In Friendship,

Kerry Kirk Pflugh,
Executive Director, New Jersey School of Conservation



[Sign Up for Family Camp](#)



Connect with Nature This Fall and Winter at NJSOC

By: Michela Sales, NJSOC Executive Assistant

As the seasons change and the air turns crisp, the Friends of the NJ School of Conservation invite you to join us for a series of programs designed to bring people closer to nature. From guided hikes and hands-on workshops to creative arts and mindful observation, our Fall and

Winter 2025 programs offer something for everyone who loves the outdoors.

Each program is carefully crafted to provide a balance of learning, community, and fun. Whether you're exploring local plants, practicing archery, or crafting holiday ornaments from natural materials, these experiences encourage deeper connections with the natural world and with one another.

Program Highlights

Introduction to Fly Tying

September 6, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Learn to tie your own Woolly Bugger and discover how to use it for fishing in Lake Wapalanne.

Plant Walk-Abouts

September 7 & 28, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Take a closer look at the surprising history and uses of plants we encounter every day.

Observing Nature: Inward & Outward

September 13 or 14, 9:30 am – 5:30 pm

Develop new ways of seeing the world through simple mindfulness practices and cell-phone photography techniques.

Tuesday Fall Hikes for Women

September 16, October 21, November 11, 9:15 am – 12:00 pm

Spend the morning hiking local trails with a community of like-minded women.

Bees and Bee-havior

October 4, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Discover the remarkable world of honeybees and observe their behavior up close.

Archery for Beginners

October 11, 18 & 25

Youth (ages 8–13): 10:00 – 11:00 am

Adults (14+): 12:00 – 1:00 pm

A three-session course introducing basic archery skills through drills, games, and guided practice.

Paint Among the Pines

October 26, 1:00 – 3:00 pm

Enjoy an afternoon of painting surrounded by the beauty of the Pines, with a cup of warm cider in hand.

Thankfulness Hike

November 28, 9:45 am – 12:30 pm

Celebrate the season of gratitude with a guided hike along the trails and through the woods.

Holiday Decorations from Natural Materials

December 6, 2:00 – 5:00 pm

Create your own holiday ornaments using acorns, pinecones, and other natural treasures, then wrap up the day with a campfire and s'mores.

This fall and winter, we invite you to slow down, step outside, and experience the wonder of nature with us at NJSOC. Each program offers a chance to learn, to reflect, and to celebrate the simple joys of the season.

Visit njsoc.org/events to view the full calendar and register!

[Read More](#)





Ashleigh Bids Farewell!

By: Ashleigh Clenord, NJSOC Education Intern

Over the past few months, I've had the incredible opportunity to intern at the New Jersey School of Conservation, a place where environmental education, community, and stewardship come together in meaningful ways. As a proud Ramapo College of New Jersey alum, this experience has been such an important step in my journey—allowing me to step into new roles, gain practical skills, and see what environmental education looks like in action.

Some of the most memorable experiences included teaching conservation photography, where I guided students to see nature through a creative lens and watched their excitement as their photos came to life. I also learned how to use iNaturalist to identify species and contribute to biodiversity research, cared for ambassador animals that help teach empathy and respect for wildlife, and joined teacher workshops that showed me how environmental knowledge is passed on to the next generation. Hiking through the campus and helping with garden clean-up gave me a deeper appreciation for stewardship, while supporting the archive project allowed me to preserve the long history of NJSOC and its impact across New Jersey. I also had the chance to try boating for the first time, participate in rock climbing, metalsmithing, fish ecology, archery and water ecology programs. This strengthened my communication skills through writing blog posts and interviewing staff members whose stories bring NJSOC to life.

A major highlight of this internship was contributing to a sustainability practices plan for NJSOC. This project involved researching models from peer institutions, aligning with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and drafting recommendations for programming, facilities, and management that would reduce the school's ecological footprint while enhancing its role as a leader in conservation education. From ideas like campus composting and hydration stations to integrating renewable energy, green infrastructure, and student-led eco-challenges, the plan focused on building both immediate actions and long-term strategies. Working on this gave me hands-on experience in connecting policy with practice and helped me see how sustainability can be embedded into an institution's daily life while inspiring the next generation.

What stood out most, however, were the connections I built—with educators, staff, peers, and students all dedicated to making a difference. These interactions reminded me that sustainability is not only about protecting land, water, and wildlife, but also about creating experiences that spark curiosity, responsibility, and action for a better future.

As I wrap up my time here, I am deeply grateful for the lessons, memories, and friendships I've gained. This internship has given me new tools and perspectives that I will carry forward into my future work in sustainability, urban planning, and environmental policy.



Ashley Bids Farewell

By: Ashley Rogers, NJSOC Education Intern

As summer 2025 is nearing an end, I am saddened to announce that I will be leaving the NJSOC. I loved assisting the NJSOC team these past several months, including analyzing data for the Salamander Population and Adaptation Research Collaboration Network (SPARCnet), teaching Herpetology to 4th-12th graders, and caring for NJSOC's Educational Ambassador Animals.

While I enjoyed participating in numerous aspects of NJSOC's daily operations, one of the highlights of my employment was the establishment of the first Ecological Research as Education Network (EREN) project at the school. EREN is a research collaborative that works with undergraduate students and professors, along with non-profit organizations, governmental agencies, and community scientists to disseminate scholarly data both within the United States and around the world. I was specifically responsible for adapting EREN's Vernal Pool Phenology Project (VPPP) to create a pilot program suitable for middle and high schoolers. This project will be offered as a course to students for years to come.

As I depart, I express gratitude for all that I have learned from the NJSOC. I believe that this internship has not only strengthened my scientific knowledge, but also my interpersonal skills. I was glad to meet the leaders of many partner organizations, ranging from the New Jersey Highlands Coalition and Rutgers University to Outdoors on Purpose and Camp Sojourner – Girls' Leadership Camp. The unique perspectives that these individuals provided me will serve as a vital resource for my future endeavors. I look forward to conducting ecological research with a university professor for the next year, prior to pursuing a graduate degree in animal behavior or wildlife ecology. I will definitely miss spending time at the NJSOC, but am eager to utilize the skills I have garnered towards this next chapter.





WAPALANNE FAMILY CAMP

Make lasting memories in the heart of beautiful Sussex County

September 19–21, 2025

Welcome to Wapalanne Family Camp where you and your family can enjoy the fun of archery, boating, fishing, photography, hiking, campfires, storytelling, and more on the historic NJSOC campus in the middle of beautiful Stokes State Forest!

Relive your Camp Wapalanne days or make new memories in this special place with the whole family. You can stay in one of our cabins or lodges or bring a tent and reserve a spot under the towering pines near Piney Point.

- Guided outdoor activities—canoeing, fishing, archery and more!
- Choose to tent or reserve a cabin with modern amenities*
- Campfire and stargazing
- Delicious, hearty meals
- 240 acres of pristine habitats to explore

Reserve a Spot Today!

Wapalanne Family Camp at the NJ School of Conservation

September 19 - 21, 2025



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Scan for
more
details

Space is limited. Register today!

*Private cabins can accommodate 2 - 12 guests.
View online or call the office at 732-410-6104.

njsoc.org/wapalanne-family-camp

The mission of the New Jersey School of Conservation is to foster environmental knowledge and action through education programs delivered in a natural setting.
The Friends of the NJSOC is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

Our Mission



The mission of the New Jersey School of Conservation is to foster environmental knowledge and action through education programs delivered in a natural setting. We are a community of diverse, responsible stewards of the earth who promote sustainability practices, climate change mitigation and environmental justice.

Click logo to make a

donation. Or click [here](#)!

Visit Our Website

Friends of NJ SOC | One Wapalanne Road | Branchville, NJ 07826 US

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