

Reflections

By: Max Bukowitz, Park Naturalist

If someone were to say that over the course of a year I would educate thousands of children, lead numerous hikes, kayak tours, workshops, nature programs, festivals, art shows, birthday parties, and so much more, I might think they were crazy. Yet here we are, nearing the end of the year and the nature center has done all of this and so much more. But of course, I did not do it on my own; it all came together thanks to the remarkable volunteers and staff of Piney Run Park with tremendous support from the members of the Piney Run Recreation and Conservation Council. Piney Run Park and Nature Center is fortunate to have a strong volunteer base and an active council ready to help with everything. While both our council members and volunteers range in age, from high school thru retirement, each one holds a tremendous respect for nature and wants to impart that respect on to others. We are grateful to all of our volunteers and members for all that they do and want to remind them of why they love being a part of this park



At this time of year, as we are scrambling to find the perfect gift at the perfect price, we here at the nature center like to take a step back and look out the window. Better yet, grab warm winter gear and hit the trails. Remember what is most valuable to us and let the cold weather refresh our spirit and mind. At Piney Run, you can do just that while you also look and listen for the native life of the park. You might see a family of deer grazing as they pass through the woods, a pair of squirrels playfully chasing each other around the trees or an owl silently watching from overhead.

As hard as we try though, it can be difficult to maintain quiet long enough to catch sight of these magnificent animals. Even though the animals themselves may remain hidden, there are still treasures to be found in the quiet of our winter forest. Treasures like nests of twigs and leaves, tree hollows for storing food, crumbs from a meal of acorns, a family of prints in the snow and so much more that can only be seen when the sleeping trees drop their leaves. Take advantage of the trails and let yourself unplug for a few hours. Allow time to discover the magic of nature, and understand the lure that nature holds to our volunteers and council.



We hope you enjoy the holiday season and accept the gifts that nature provides. Be thankful for the clean fresh crisp air, the tall trees with the artistic exposed branches, the soft sounds of the birds, and so much more. Be thankful and always, be respectful so we can enjoy all of nature's presents today, tomorrow on for the future.