



Evesham's Gateway to the Pinelands

Hike, bike, trail run, walk your dog, fish, birdwatch, and so much more...

Black Run is a great place for the community to enjoy

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FRIENDS OF THE



October 2023

Protecting and Preserving the Black Run for future generations

Letter from the Chair

Dear Friends,

The dream of the Black Run Preserve was presented to the Evesham Township Environmental Commission in July 2004. Looking past years of dumping and land scarred from a variety of abuses, the Environmental Commissioners were able to visualize the possibilities of this local ecological diamond in the rough. It was a long road, but as more people visited this beautiful corner of the Pine Barrens, they recognized its potential for outdoor recreation and education. In 2009, Pinelands Preservation Alliance (PPA) put a spotlight on the BRP's potential through three consecutive summer workshops for Evesham Township School District and Cherokee High School teachers and students held in the BRP. PPA organized public hikes and the first of many clean-ups began; the most memorable being the 2011 removal of over 400 tires by DeMasi Middle School students under the direction of Maureen Heenan, ETSD teacher and FBRP Ambassador. BRP's natural beauty inspired so many to ac-

tion resulting in the founding of FBRP in 2012. Initial major financial support from REI Co-op enabled FBRP to grow and inspire hundreds of concerned citizens to volunteer their time, energy, skills, and resources to remove dozens of dump truck loads of debris through years of effort. Once BRP's beauty was revealed the next task was developing and maintaining its 19+ mile trail system. Kudos to all the volunteers who helped transform the BRP into the gem it is today.



My gratitude for this broad community of people whose love and care for the Pine Barrens life in our corner of the world fills me with great satisfaction and hope for the uncertain environmental future all our children will face. In May 2024 I'll step down off the FBRP Board of Trustees knowing it's in good hands. Volunteerism is the backbone of our nation. FBRP can use more hands and I hope more individuals are inspired to become actively

involved as there is so much more to accomplish. The Board of Trustees has been planning for this transition for a year. In the final months as Chair, I will do my utmost to help pass the torch to the next generation of Ambassadors, Board, and Committee members in the hope that more and younger hands are willing to keep that flame alive. In this Newsletter, you'll find opportunities to be one

of those who chooses to try and make the world a little better than they found it. During the past eleven years, FBRP has built a strong organizational foundation and developed a wide variety of committees, each with activities designed to preserve and protect the BRP's Pine Barrens nature, enhance public health, advance environmental education, and promote positive social interactions. The BRP needs you.

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1,300 acres of Pinelands Paradise

101+ bird species sighted

20 miles of multi-use trails

FBRP: 200 Members and Growing!

In June, the FBRP reached a giant milestone of 200 members! We would like to send a big THANK YOU to each and every one of you! We started the Membership Committee in 2019 and have steadily increased and maintained the number of memberships each year through our website, social media contests, events and good old-fashioned word of mouth.

The FBRP is a non-profit organization and relies on grants, donations and membership to help maintain trails, install directional and educational signage, educate its visitors, host events and give a place of peace and solace to the community.

Three co-chairs, Jane Dean, Rosemary Bernardi, and Amy Pross, each bring our own set of skills: understanding the computer software used to track membership; creating metrics to give a monthly committee report to the Board of Trustees; brainstorming and implementing special offers, events and contests for our members; designing surveys for membership feedback; and keeping up to date on membership correspondence. Some of our best ideas have developed while walking through the preserve, so we hope to see you out there!

Join us at the next General Membership Meeting, October 11

As FBRP enters its second decade our vision and priorities have become more focused. Join us to learn how you can become more involved in the diverse projects FBRP committees have planned to meet the BRP's current needs.

The meeting agenda includes:

- FBRP's reorganization to meet the challenges of the future.
- An overview of each committee and plans for this year.
- Update about FBRP collaboration with the Evesham Township School District and Pinelands Preservation Alliance monitoring BRP's water quality.
- Overview of the next training program for a new cohort of Ambassadors.
- Overview of major events on our calendar

Four "suspicious" fires have made the BRP an important buffer for our neighbors, but more can be done. Listen to our special guest Tom Gerber, NJ Forest Fire Warden, speak to the need for vigilance in protecting people and property living on the edge of the BRP.

[Register for the meeting](#)



A SELFIE OF THE SELFLESS
Membership Committee co-chairs:
Amy Pross, Rosemary Bernardi, and Jane Dean

Membership Growth by Year

Membership Count	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
2023	189	195	196	194	196	200	202					
2022	168	180	186	188	192	184	185	185	179	182	185	183
2021	151	150	161	162	164	173	173	176	168	167	164	159
2020	22	25	27	62	73	80	82	82	112	112	125	145
2019	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	3	8	14	17

To become a member or to renew your membership, [visit our website](#).

Letter from the Chair

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FBRP members support its goals and objectives by giving their time, energy, money, talent, and enthusiasm. Volunteers created the BRP and many positive things in America. Active volunteers are the backbone of their communities. The volunteer movement essentially developed in the late 1800's with volunteer fire companies. My grandfather was a founding member of the Sicklerville Volunteer Fire Company which started in the 1920's. Grandpop said, "After everyone watched (a neighbor's) barn burn down, the Italians and the Americans figured out that they needed to get along so we could start a fire company. So, we did. And by 1933, we bought a brand-new fire engine. Cash."

Speaking of which, FBRP is very grateful to our generous donors who have enabled us to build a strong financial foundation. As a result, FBRP is planning a self-funded "next phase of the MUA basins restoration" this spring. Check out our Calendar at www.blackrun.org for a wide variety of events and ways to connect with a committee and the FBRP community of volunteers. Good things happen when positive communication occurs. Join us for a [Members' Social at Zed's Beer](#) on Oct. 1st @ 12-1:00 Then, Go, Eagles! Let's get to know one another. Become a friend.

Yours in Peace,

John Volpa, FBRP Founder and Chair

Get to Know the Black Run Preserve

Ambassador Led Tours Educate and Delight our Visitors

FBRP Ambassadors are specially trained in all aspects of Pine Barrens ecology and history. They lead five different themed tours and staff specific information stations that focus on a unique aspect of the Black Run Preserve. An Ambassador can answer many questions a visitor may have in addition to sharing details about native flora and fauna. Each season brings opportunities to share some fascinating aspect of life in the Pines. In the springtime an Ambassador can reveal a carnivorous doodlebug hiding in its sand trap pit as it waits for prey. Summertime brings blooms of Sweet Pepperbush. Ask an Ambassador to demonstrate why Pineys call it "soapbush" and lather up. The Pine Barrens are a fire prone eco-

system. An Ambassador can share the variety of ways Pitch Pines have evolved to thrive and survive a harsh and unforgiving environment. Fall migration brings stopovers by birds looking for high-energy food. Ambassadors can point out how Black Gum and Sassafras signal these avian guests to their nutritious fruits. If you join a winter walk you can see how the resident beaver clan has prepared for this season. Any time of year, breathe deeply and learn how we know the air in the pines is so clean. FBRP Ambassadors can help a visitor make a deeper connection with this land, which is recognized as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

Register for a tour or special event with Ambassadors and enhance your understanding of the natural world we inhabit.

[Join us on our upcoming events.](#)

Ambassador Training Announced

Are you a curious person? Do you enjoy learning about life's diversity? Would you like to learn more about the ecology and unique cultural history of the Pine Barrens? Do you like sharing knowledge with others? If you've answered yes to these questions, you would make a good candidate for FBRP's Ambassador Program. FBRP founder and former environmental science teacher and former Pinelands Adventures' Director of Education, will offer his last training session before retiring from his FBRP post. Six classes held in the evening and/or weekend starting in late January to April, will prepare our future Ambassadors. Graduates of the program will be paired with an experienced Ambassador for their first official duty at our

annual Poker Run. Ambassadors will also take part in the BR Stream Water Quality Monitoring Program field testing days in May. Not sure if this is your thing? Join one of our tours this fall and experience what our Ambassadors offer to our visitors first hand. See our website for a list of upcoming events.

If you're interested in learning more about the Ambassador Program, come to the [General Membership meeting on Oct. 11th](#) and/or visit our website on that date to obtain detailed information including: application, curriculum, training schedule, and more.



The Friends of the Black Run Preserve (FBRP) has as one of our missions the stewardship of the multi-use (hiking / biking / skiing) trails throughout the area. The Black Run Preserve property is owned by Evesham Township and designated as a township park. The FBRP have a Memorandum of Cooperation with Evesham Township to be the stewards of the BRP. Preserving the quality of the outdoor experience, while providing a minimal level of soil and vegetation disturbance are some of the goals of our trail work. During the 2023 spring and summer months we have worked on the following projects:



On May 15 a fire was reported on the northwest side of the Preserve and the adjacent Rancocas Conservancy property. The Evesham Police, Fire Department, and NJ State Forest Fire Service responded to this event which covered about 25 acres. The Evesham Fire Dept and NJ State Forest Fire Service performed a controlled burn to contain the fire and let it "burn-out". The damage was mostly on the Rancocas property. The BRP Kettle Run Road west trailhead was closed for 10 days.



On the evening of June 9 another fire was reported on the west side of Kettle Run Road on private property just south of the BRP. The fire spread to cover 700 acres of private and BRP property. The Forest Fire Service again performed a controlled burn. The BRP East Side trails were re-opened on June 14 and the west side trails re-opened on June 23.



On July 1 yet another fire was discovered and quickly controlled on a bridge on the Black Run Trail (blazed black). This trail section was previously closed due to a large beaver dam that was constructed over the bridge. The fire originated within the beaver dam and burned the underlying bridge structure and the dam materials. Due to serious safety concerns this trail section remains closed.



We have conducted 2 Clean Communities Events in cooperation with Evesham Township to remove trash from the Preserve so far this year, and our next event will be on Saturday October 14. As a result of the June 9 forest fire, a significant amount of debris has been uncovered as

the ground plants were burned off - glass bottles, metal cans, tires, etc. Our plan is to continue to collect as much of this new exposed debris as possible on the trails on the west side of Kettle Run Road. We can use all of your help to accomplish this clean-up effort. We thank the many volunteers who have participated so far, and welcome all to join us on October 14. [See our web site events page](#) for further information and to register.



In cooperation with the Township, the FBRP have been upgrading and improving signage around the preserve, including additional blaze markings, updated maps for the Kiosks, and additional marker posts in various locations.



In total the BRP has a total of 25 marked trails and 19 miles of marked trail distance. We have established a team of volunteers as trail maintainers for effective trail care. Our trail section maintainers are the "eyes" and "ears" of their trail sections, as well as important advocates and protectors. In this role, they have become familiar with the techniques to perform the simple, recurring maintenance and repairs necessary to keep the trails in good useable and safe condition. Trail maintenance is an important task and without vigilant attention, the trails would soon disappear.



We thank our current 12 maintainers for their volunteer service. If you are interested in volunteering as a trail maintainer, we have trail sections available for maintenance. Please contact us, and we will provide you with the necessary training and assign to you a trail section.



Explore the BRP safely with updated trail maps. Download them from our website:

[North Section trails \(east and west of Kettle Run Road\) and Aerohaven section](#)

[5K Route](#)

If you live nearby, you're probably familiar with the Black Run Preserve: 1,300 acres of pristine wilderness right in your own backyard. Perhaps you hike, bike, or fish there. But did you know the preserve plays an important role in keeping your home and family safe?

Ecologists estimate the Pine Barrens ecosystem that we call home to be around 8,000 years old. It's a unique biological community blending 109 species of plants of Southern origin with 14 Northern species. The familiar Pitch Pine is well-adapted to life in the uplands along with various oaks. But - as evidenced by recent experience - with all this growth, it's a fire prone environment.

John McPhee, in his 1968 book, "The Pine Barrens" stated, "whatever else they do, men in the Pine Barrens are firefighter throughout their lives." Only one percent of fires are caused by lightning. More than half are purposely set by humans. During the past fourteen months, the Black Run Preserve has experienced four suspicious fires; the last of which occurred in June, with more than 700 acres of private and public forest burned. Fortunately, Evesham Township's Fire Department and the New Jersey Forest Fire Service used their combined expertise and the buffer that the BRP provides against a west-wind driven fire to keep the days-long blaze contained.

Fighting Fire with Fire

The Lenni Lenape, our area's original inhabitants, understood the mechanism of their natural environment and knew how to manage its resources by using fire to clear the forests' understory in order to better spot game for hunting. But the practice has applications for today's suburban lifestyle as well, by eliminating potential fuel and hampering the spread of fire outside its point of origin.

In the Winter of 2018, through Friends of the Black Run Preserve's (FBRP) advocacy, the NJ Forest Fire Service and Evesham Fire Department conducted a prescribed burn in the BRP. That protection proved invaluable in the firefighter's efforts to stem the first suspicious fire on May 1, 2022 that burned 65 acres south of Bortons Road. This pre-burned buffer continues to serve to protect the BRP's neighbors in Kings Grant and along Hopewell Road.

Beyond the Buffer

Being a pre-burned buffer is but one of the many ecological services the BRP performs. BRP's still pristine water is a vital part of the vast Kirkwood-Cohansey Aquifer, which underlies the Pinelands and provides some of the purest water in the world to more than one million South Jersey residents. The FBRP maintain almost twenty miles of multi-use trails for humans which traverse a variety of habitats for native animals, such as beaver, river otter, turtles, frogs, and deer. From protection, to hydration, to recreation, the BRP is a neighbor that always has your back.



If you'd like to learn more about FBRP's continuing advocacy to protect local homes from wildfire and what you can do to become more informed about fire risks, come out to our [Fall General Membership Meeting](#) on October 11. Special guest, NJ Forest Fire Warden, Tom Gerber, will present important information for homeowners. FBRP will also share information about its restoration efforts to help combat climate change by planting native trees and grasses that pull carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere.



Fire in Aerohaven Section, May 1, 2022

Black Run Preserve NestWatch Project

2022-23 Update

Jeff Jackson, NestWatch Co-Chair
Amy Golden, NestWatch Co-Chair



Mom and babies are doing fine!



Carolina chickadees are year-round residents in our area

Every spring at Black Run Preserve, a group of certified volunteers for the Nest Watch monitoring program check 37 bird boxes for nests, eggs, and nestlings. The information is recorded and sent to Cornell University Lab of Ornithology. The nationwide Nest Watch Program is designed to track status and trends in the reproductive biology of birds. Black Run Preserve volunteers receive specific instructions on how to check a bird box and must be certified by Cornell University. Boxes are checked every 3-4 days from April through mid- August. Data is collected and meticulously recorded. At the end of the season, the information is submitted to Cornell to be used for their scientific publications.

This year we had 53 successful fledglings, more than 2022 or 2021! Eastern Bluebirds were most abundant with 18 fledged, then House Wrens with 13 fledglings. Other nestlings included 11 Carolina Chickadees, 5 Tree Swallows, and 4 Carolina Wrens. We had our first Great Crested Flycatcher nest with 2 successful fledglings. A couple of other surprise nest box inhabitants included mud wasps, a bat, and a southern flying squirrel!

Read on to learn about the resilience of a family of Chickadees:



Surprise! Flying Squirrel inhabits nest box

A Story of Survival: A Family of Carolina Chickadees survives Two Fires at Black Run Preserve

On **May 6, 2023**, a volunteer for the Black Run Preserve Nest watch program checked a nest box on the west side of the Preserve. When he opened the box, there was the beginning of a beautiful multicolored nest. He saw a Prothonotary Warbler nearby and wondered if this was her nest. He checked again May 10 and the nest was still incomplete. Then on May 14, a brush fire was discovered on the same west side of the preserve. Over the next week, 25 acres were back-burned and access to the nest box wasn't possible. The volunteers were concerned that the nest wouldn't survive.

By **May 25**, Jeff Jackson, co-chair of the nest watch program, was able to access the nest. He was relieved to find that the fire had not spread to the nest box! The nest was complete and one egg was present! He no longer thought it was a Prothonotary Warbler because two adult Carolina Chickadees were "calling" nearby.

By **May 31**, the nest contained five eggs. The box was checked again on June 3. Both times, a Chickadee flew from the nest box when the volunteer knocked on the box. Then, as typical for this species, both adult birds stayed in nearby trees and "scolded" the volunteer for disturbing the box.

The evening of **June 9**, a second fire was discovered. It was a huge one of over 700 acres and engulfed most of the west side of the Preserve. This fire was so massive and hot that no access was allowed for two weeks.

When the fire cooled and Jeff Jackson was finally able to reach the box, he was shocked to find that everything had burned except a 5-foot trough around the box! He opened the box to discover a completely still adult. He presumed it died from smoke inhalation, trying to protect the eggs. He closed the box and grabbed some gloves to see what was underneath the bird. When he opened the box a second time, he saw that the Chickadee wasn't dead at all, but had flown out, revealing three fledglings!

The box was checked again in 4 days and the three fledglings and one unhatched egg were observed. By **July 1**, the three birds had fledged.

It was truly a miracle that these two adult Carolina Chickadees and three of their Chicks survived two fires.

If this story inspires you, consider joining our Nest Watch Team.



The nest box survived the fire!



Carolina Chickadee eggs post fire

Preserve and Protect the BRP's Pine Barrens Nature

Following through on our 2013 Concept Plan, FBRP has conducted two restoration projects and is working to start a third. Adhering to the Plan's recommendation of "road to trail conversion" native trees and shrubs were purchased with a New Jersey Conservation Foundation's Franklin Parker Conservation Excellence Grant then planted by volunteers in the former roadway between the two decommissioned Municipal Utilities Authority's (MUA) basins then the Long (red trail) Path was rerouted onto the south basin's rim. That grant also funded FBRP's effort to eradicate the non-native phragmites in the decommissioned MUA basins.

Since 2016, annual efforts of mowing, cutting off phragmites seed heads, one prescribed burn, and planting 1500 native grass plugs have reduced the phragmites numbers from 70,000 to under 5,000. FBRP is working with our partner, Evesham Township, to restore the upland area that was clear-cut to install the former MUA irrigation lines. Stay tuned for more details.



These three restoration examples focus upon areas that were altered in the 1980's. Since the establishment of the BRP in 2007, it has slowly gained popularity, especially during the pandemic. FBRP is now tasked with the impact of thousands of visitors, some of whom do not adhere to Leave No Trace ethics. Some have gone so far as to create many rogue trails throughout the BRP, many cut into sensitive wetland areas. FBRP is working with Evesham Township to close off these unmarked and unmapped trails. Future restoration projects are being considered to replant these areas in an effort to remain true to our mission statement. When you visit, please stay on the blazed and mapped trails, and help us to fulfill our mission to "preserve and protect the BRP's Pine Barrens nature."

Events and Outreach

FBRP events held in the Black Run Preserve are always fun and educational, but it's also a great joy for us to go out into the community and educate local people about our little oasis in the middle of the suburbs. We have participated in several community events this year and we are looking forward to many more in the future.



Bringing Community Together: The Vital Role of the Events and Outreach Committee

In any thriving community, there is an invisible thread that weaves its way through the very fabric of our lives—a thread that connects us, strengthens our bonds, and makes us feel like we truly belong.

The FBRP Events and Outreach Committee plays a pivotal role in fostering a strong sense of community by organizing events and activities that bring people together. Conversation centered on the BRP evolves into the seeds of project ideas that develop into events such as the Poker Run, Moth Night, Maple Tapping, and Hiking with Police just to name a few annual events. Each of these events celebrates a different aspect of the BRP environment: fun on the trails, appreciating the little things that run the world, discovering how plants make sweet food, and sharing an educational walk with our local officers, dressed down like everyday hikers.

In November we'll start planning for the annual Poker Run and begin incubating some new event ideas for 2024. Come to one of FBRP's Socials at Zed's Beer and meet like-minded humans whose creative energy manifests itself in the best location for fun, the Black Run Preserve!



Hike with a Cop



The Power of Volunteering

Volunteering for the Events and Outreach Committee is a decision that can change your life and your community. Here are a few compelling reasons to consider joining:

- **Make a Difference:** Volunteering is a tangible way to make a positive impact on your community. Your efforts can directly contribute to creating a better, more vibrant community that includes the Black Run.
- **Learn and Grow:** Being part of this committee exposes you to a diverse range of experiences. You'll develop valuable skills in event planning, communication, teamwork, and leadership.
- **Expand Your Network:** Building connections with fellow volunteers and community members can be incredibly rewarding. You'll meet people from all walks of life who share your passion for making a difference.
- **Boost Your Well-being:** Research has shown that volunteering can lead to increased happiness and reduced stress. The sense of fulfillment and purpose derived from giving back can be immensely gratifying.
- **Shape the Future:** By actively participating in FBRP's events and outreach efforts, you play a role in shaping its future. You become a part of something bigger than yourself, contributing to sustaining the beauty of The Black Run.

New members interested in all FBRP committees are welcome. Find the one that resonates with you, email your interest to admin@blackrun.org, and you'll be introduced to the committee co-chairs. Or talk with an Events Outreach Committee member at one of Evesham's many community events: Harvest Festival, Marlton Business Day, or National Night Out. We'll be there too.



Sturbridge Lake Boat and Float

FBRP in the Community

Holistic Health and Healing Expo



Evesham National Night Out

The Poker Run - A Community Event Like No Other!

On April 22, 2023, The Friends of the Black Run Preserve welcomed more than 150 participants to the Black Run Preserve for our 2nd Annual Poker Run.

A Poker Run is not your typical community event. It combines the elements of a scavenger hunt, a day at Black Run and a card game into an unforgettable adventure. Participants bike, run or walk through the preserve, stopping at five checkpoints. They draw a playing card at each to gradually build a poker hand as they complete the journey and connect with other community members who share a passion for the outdoors, the Pinelands and particularly the Black Run. It's an exciting blend of strategy and chance. While participants have control over the route they take and the checkpoints they visit, the cards they draw at each stop introduce an element of unpredictability. Will you end up with a full house or a royal flush? The anticipation of revealing your final poker hand adds an extra layer of excitement to the event.

One of the highlights of the Poker Run is that it is accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds. Families, individuals or groups can take part making it an event that truly brings the community together. Beyond the game itself, it's an opportunity for Evesham Township council members, Evesham Township Police Department, Evesham Fire-Rescue, Evesham Township School District, local businesses, organizations and individuals to come together in support of a shared cause. This year, we had the support of over 40 sponsors, who donated incredible prizes. This was an added heartwarming dimension to the event, fostering a sense of unity and purpose among the participants.



Mark Your Calendars!

Volunteer Appreciation Night
November 12, 2023
 6 pm, Zed's Beer

3rd Annual Poker Run
Saturday, April 13, 2024

Stay tuned for details

Volunteer of the Year



The inaugural meeting that resulted in the FBRP was held in the King's Grant Fire Hall in May 2012. Pinelands Preservation Alliance invited the list of names it

had acquired through public outreach events in the BRP and conducting three previous summer workshops for Evesham Schools and Cherokee HS teachers and students. The room was filled with a diverse group of people who cared about the Pine Barrens and they recognized BRP's uniqueness and beauty. The establishment of the first Board occurred that evening and Jill Giulianelli's was one of the nine enthusiastic hands raised. Eleven years later, Jill has stepped off the board, after helping to create an organization with five volunteer committees through which local people can express their caring for

the community. The Board of Trustees is so grateful for her selfless, thoughtful professional work to create a strong organizational foundation. Over the years, Jill has played an important role in achieving countless milestones for our organization. FBRP has come a long way with Jill helping to steer.

Jill and I first met at the inaugural meeting of the Marlton Elementary School (MES) PTA in 1993 after our neighborhoods' children were moved from Rice Elementary. The township was growing and DeMasi Schools began the same year. MES PTA created a number of events such as Halloween Carnival and the Talent Show, improving them each year.

In addition to her long history with FBRP after PTA, Jill is now a member of the Marlton Lakes Nature Club. But most importantly, she is now a grand-



Volunteer of the Year, Jill Giulianelli

mother! On behalf of the FBRP Board, our Donors, our members and the Evesham Township community, I'm pleased to say, "Kudos. Thank you. Have more fun with your family." Until our trails cross again, be well my friend.

- John Volpa

BR Stream Water Quality Monitoring Program Launches

Because its Headwaters have never been developed, the BRP has remained as island oasis of Pine Barrens. The Pinelands Commission's first Chief Scientist, Dr. Robert Zampella, coined the term "pristine Pine Barrens" to describe the BRP's soil and water characteristic low pH and nutrient levels. These nonliving conditions are the key to supporting its native plant and animal species.

FBRP is pleased to announce the official start of the Black Run Stream Water Quality Monitoring Program. FBRP has facilitated a partnership with Evesham Township, Evesham Twp. School District (ETSD), Pinelands Preservation Alliance (PPA), Pinelands Adventures (PA), and AmeriCorps Watershed Ambassador Program to monitor BRP's streams. After a successful pilot program last May, ETSD middle school students will continue to conduct water quality testing at sites within the BRP this fall and spring.

Working with the Rancocas Creek Watershed Ambassador, PPA Conservation Scientist, PA Director of Education, and FBRP Ambassadors; Evesham's sixth grade students will conduct biological and chemical testing on BRP's waters to gather data, which will be entered into a long-term database created and maintained by PPA and PA. This new Citizen Science program will provide data to help Evesham Township and the FBRP sustain those pristine condition. This program is designed to continue in perpetuity, therefore helping monitor impact upon the BRP and properly steward it.

Now retired, upon reading the project proposal, Dr. Zampella said, "Involving local students is the most important part of this program. The BRP's future is in their hands." All the program partners are excited to help spark a sense of environmental awareness and activism within the local population who will inherit the stewardship of the BRP.



Local Middle Schoolers conduct water quality testing

Maple Sugaring at Black Run Preserve

During the winter of 2020 and again this past February, Friends of the Black Run Preserve held a red maple sugaring event. The demonstration was provided by Dr. Matt Olson, Assistant Professor of Environmental Science at Stockton University, a maple tapping expert. The Black Run Preserve Red Maple Tapping Project is part of a community outreach program, supported by a three year United States Department of Agriculture grant to Stockton, to promote maple sugaring in the South Jersey region.

Maple sugaring operations have never developed in South Jersey due to relative rarity of sugar maple trees and the shorter duration of freeze-thaw cycling necessary to draw sap from the trees. However, the Pinelands (including FBRP) do have an abundance of red maple trees (AKA Swamp Maple), growing near swampy areas and bogs. Although the red maple sap contains half the sugar content of the sugar maple, it is still possible to draw sap through the use of modern technology. Once again, on January 20 or 21 (weather permitting), Dr. Olson will explain everything you want to know about red maple sugaring, including identification of the trees and how to place the tap, tube and bucket. We will be asking for volunteers to collect the sap and boil it themselves to turn it into their very own delicious maple syrup.

Last winter, the maple sugaring season was very short due to unusually warm weather



Maple tapping is fun for the whole family

and very few nights with an overnight freeze, followed by above -freezing temperatures during the day. We can only hope that this next winter will provide more ideal weather for maple sugaring. Maple sugaring is fun for the whole family. By participating in this event, we hope you will get the bug to tap your own trees and become home hobbyists of red maple syrup production!

Thank you to our Donors

FBRP's Development Committee reaches out to local businesses and organizations with our Qualifications Package, which provides details about our nonprofit organization, our mission, goals, and evidence of the many successful partnership projects we've conducted. Completing projects that provide positive environmental, educational, and social impact backs up our mission statement. Of course, the hundreds of volunteer hours our members give is a nonprofit's testimony to its value to the community. Getting projects off the ground meet a variety of challenges, so we're grateful for the patience our donors demonstrate.

Two major projects: a restoration project sponsored by Laurel Oak Wealth Management Group and an Ambassador Training Program sponsored by the Outdoor Club of South Jersey are planned to launch in early 2024. Our third annual Poker Run will once again be sponsored by Cornerstone PEO. Individual donors have supported the BR Stream Water Quality Program, adding benches to the BRP, and another native planting project being planned for 2024. FBRP is grateful for all the support these donors have given to help build our organization and preserve and protect the BRP.

Lights, Cameras, Action! Cue the Moths!

Moth Night 2023



On August 12, the FBRP hosted a second annual Moth Night at the Links Golf Course. As the sun began to set, guests enjoyed delicious burgers, hot dogs, snacks and beverages while catching up with one another or making new friends. When it became dark, the outdoor lights were shut off and the insect enthusiasts were able to walk to three different screens, each with its own special lighting. On hand at each screen were insect specialists, Ann-Marie Woods and John and Joanne Maxwell. As many different species of insects and moths landed on these screens, they were there to provide information and answer any questions. This year, there were also a few caterpillars on hand to observe. Who knew that seeing and photographing so many different kinds of bugs could be so much fun?



Get your entries ready!



FBRP 2024 Juried Photography and Art Exhibition

For photography and other 2D media

April 26 - May 27, 2024

Center for the Arts in Southern New Jersey, 123 South Elmwood Road, Marlton

Artist Reception and Awards Ceremony: May 17, 7-9 pm

Exhibition prospectus and online entry form will be available soon!

Fiery Renewal, Ron Pugh



Joe Reidl, Frozen Bog, 2021 1st place, photography

Our call for art for our highly anticipated 2024 Juried Photography and Art Exhibition is underway and we'll be ready to accept your entries soon.

Meanwhile, here are a few ways to get inspired:

[See the slideshow of all the entries to our 2021 exhibition](#)

[Watch our webinar: Capturing the Beauty of the Black Run Preserve](#)

Keep an eye out for a guided photo walk coming later this fall

We can't wait to see the beauty of the BRP through your eyes!



*Marge Taylor, Sky Basin
2021 1st place, art*