



News from Masonville Cove Environmental Education Campus

An urban refuge partnership

A Monthly Newsletter

JULY 2014

Volume 2 Issue 7

July Open Hours

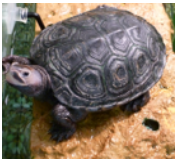
The Conservation Area is open

Mon-Fri 11am-4pm

Sat 9am-1pm

Closed Sunday

Closed July 4 & 5



Free Programming for Children & Families

Sat 7/12 9:30 am-10:30 & 11:00 am-12:00 *Science Alive for Kids Under Five — Turtles!*

Tues 7/15 10:00 am-11:30 *Budding Biologists (ages 5-7) — Tracks & Scat*

Sat 7/19 9:30 am-10:30 & 11:00 am-12:00 *Science Alive for Kids Under Five — Hiding in Plain Sight*

Fri 7/25 9:00 am-10:30 *Budding Biologists (ages 5-7) — Beautiful Swimmers*

Other Opportunities to Connect with Nature at the Cove

Tues 7/8 9:30 am-10:30 *Fishing Fun (ages 15 and under)*

Thurs 7/10 9:30 am-10:30 *Fishing Fun (ages 15 and under)*

Thurs 7/10 2:00 pm-2:30 *Patuxent Research Refuge Presents: A Fox Tale Puppet Show*

To reserve your place at any of these programs, please go to www.masonvillecove.org.

MCEEC Contact Information

1000 Frankfort Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21226

Phone: 410-246-0669, ext.105

Website:

www.masonvillecove.org

Email:

For inquiries related to educational programs, email info@masonvillecove.org

For inquiries related to volunteering, email

friends@masonvillecove.org

Announcements:

Dumpster Day:

Saturday, July 12 will be the last of four dumpster days organized for Brooklyn and Curtis Bay. Between noon and 3 o'clock, there will be one dumpster at Edwight Court in Farring Baybrook Park and another behind the Boys and Girls Club at 3rd Street and Patapsco Avenue, waiting for your trash and junk. Using them will be free — and legal!

Maryland Master Naturalist Classes:

The National Aquarium, Irvine Nature Center, and Masonville Cove are collaborating to recruit and train adults interested in becoming certified Maryland Master Naturalists. Classes will meet all day every Tuesday from September 9 until October 18 at all three of these institutions. For general information on the Maryland Master Naturalist program, please visit <https://extension.umd.edu/>

masternaturalist.org. To apply, please visit www.masternaturalist.umd.edu or contact Program Facilitator Courtney Sagal at courtneysagal@explorenature.org or 443-738-9224.

News:

Masonville Cove BioBlitz

It's easy to see that Masonville Cove is a popular spot for all kinds of living things — it is, after all, an environmental education campus — but after the Cove's first BioBlitz, we now have a better idea than ever of how many species call this place home.

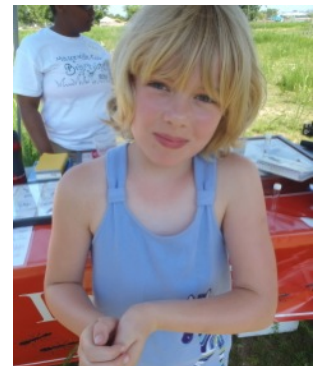
On Saturday, June 28, over 100 people, including community volunteers, National Aquarium volunteers, and visiting experts, descended on Masonville Cove for a BioBlitz. The goal of a BioBlitz is simple: identify as many different species as possible, regardless of taxonomy. As The Masonville Cove Newsletter went to press, the species count here had broken 150.

Jillie Drutz, a Chesapeake Conservation

Corps volunteer working with the National Aquarium, organized the BioBlitz. Participants in the event spent the sunny hours checking traps of various kinds set by Aquarium personnel the previous day, looking for tracks, and learning from experts in various fields who came to share their knowledge.

We're very grateful to Jillie, the Aquarium team, and our volunteers and experts who made the BioBlitz such a lively and memorable success. Thank you to all!

A brave volunteer cradles a mystery species at the BioBlitz.





Scenes from the BioBlitz: volunteers pursue insects; a Masonville Cove resident, the red-bellied cooter; a Masonville Cove staff member handles a common snapping turtle; a painted lady butterfly and a curious volunteer.

Masonville Cove Feature Series: Nation's First Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership (Part 3 of 4-part series) by Jake Comer

On maps of Baltimore drawn in the first half of the 20th century, a town called Masonville lies just to the south of where Masonville Cove Environmental Education Campus is today. It was a settlement considered "the other side of the tracks," according to Horton McCormick, a retired office supply sales person and former Masonville resident: surrounded by the trappings of industry, Masonville at its peak was a town of about fifty houses, all occupied by a handful of the same families. The scrap yards, railroad tracks, factories, warehouses, and shipbuilding and -breaking facilities on all sides provided Masonville's people with their livelihood.

In the early 1950s, as part of a project to extend its south Baltimore railway yard, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad bought up Masonville and tore it down, replacing it with track and loading facilities. Today, the enduring concrete and metal presence of the shipping and transportation industries makes it difficult to envision the recollections of the people who lived in Masonville, who describe an uncomplicated community with modest, hard-working charm.

In their free time, Masonville's people often went swimming, fishing, and crabbing at Masonville Cove. Black-and-white photographs show them, squinting and smiling, lounging on the same sandy shores that lie within the education campus

today. Those who remember make it clear that Masonville Cove was less than untouched — two submerged dumps in the area and discharge from the nearby Brooklyn Chemical Company, McCormick said, often turned blond swimmers' hair green — but, for McCormick and his peers, it was one of few options for a place to be outside and recreate. On summer days, McCormick said, hundreds of people might gather there by the water.

McCormick's generation watched as Masonville disappeared, engulfed by the growing industrialization of the south Baltimore waterfront. As a recreational and gathering spot, Masonville Cove faded, not only because roads and railroad tracks cut it off from residential neighborhoods, but also, McCormick contends, because of a general change in the ways people chose to spend their time.

"Change in the economy," McCormick explained. As time passed, "you had private parks, like Carlin's Park in northwest Baltimore. They had swimming pools; they had everything. It was convenient. You could take the streetcar there. ... So why come down here where you had to undress in the woods?"

Instead of walking the dirt roads to Masonville Cove, locals began driving to public beaches or parks on the weekends. Isolated in an industrial landscape, Masonville Cove languished. The City of Baltimore discontinued dumping in the area, but, with lax enforcement of waste disposal regulations, illegal dumping continued.

About Masonville Cove and the Campus...

Masonville Cove is located on 70 acres of water and 54 acres of cleaned-up land including wetlands, nature trails, and a protected bird sanctuary. The Masonville project developed from mitigation tied to the creation of a Dredged Material Containment Facility (DMCF) by the Maryland Port Administration (MPA). This created an opportunity for the local residents and schoolchildren (from Brooklyn, Curtis Bay, and Cherry Hill) to connect with their natural environment and participate in meaningful stewardship projects related to Masonville Cove and their communities.

MPA worked with the community associations from Brooklyn and Curtis Bay, the Living Classrooms Foundation, and the National Aquarium to create the Masonville Cove Environmental Education Campus (MCEEC). Maryland Environmental Service coordinates the mitigation project. The MCEEC has been a model for community involvement and environmental awareness from its inception to its opening as a landmark urban environmental education center. The sustainable growth of this urban wilderness conservation area and its wetlands will remind the community that they are a part of something positive for generations to come.



A Partnership among:

Maryland Port Administration
Living Classrooms Foundation
National Aquarium
Maryland Environmental Service
US Fish & Wildlife Service