

SPRING 2024

# THE CLAYTOR CONNECTION

Official Newsletter of Claytor Nature Center



## Spring into Claytor

As we approach March 10, 2024, the anticipation of Daylight Savings Time brings an extra hour of daylight, marking the beginning of longer, sunlit days. It's a reminder that here at Claytor Nature Center, this change presents an incredible opportunity to fully embrace the benefits of our natural surroundings during our hours of operation from 8:30am-5:00pm Monday through Friday.

The extended daylight grants us the chance to engage more actively in outdoor activities, allowing for exploration and rejuvenation amidst the center's landscape. Studies have consistently shown that spending time outdoors has a multitude of health benefits. From reducing stress and anxiety to improving mood and boosting overall mental well-being, immersing oneself in nature fosters a sense of tranquility and rejuvenation.

At Claytor Nature Center, our facilities and programs provide a plethora of activities for a variety of interests. Whether you seek solitude among the lush greenery, invigorating hikes along well-maintained trails, birdwatching or participating in nature observations through our community science projects, our expansive outdoor spaces offer plenty of space for all.

So, let's embrace the gift of extended daylight and make the most of our time at Claytor Nature Center!

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# Upcoming Events

## MARCH:

2: CLAYTOR VOLUNTEER MEET & GREET

THURSDAYS  
MARCH 7-28

STILL LIFE AT CLAYTOR  
4 PART SERIES OF ART CLASSES

24: LYNCHBURG MAKER FAIRE AT RANDOLPH COLLEGE

## APRIL:

6TH:  
THRIVE OUTSIDE FESTIVAL AT FALLING CREEK PARK IN BEDFORD  
9AM-6PM

11TH: NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY CLASS  
6:30-8:30 AT CNC

## MAY:

22-26:  
WILDERNESS  
FIRST RESPONDER COURSE

# Join Us Outside!

Mark your calendars for Sunday March 24 at Randolph College and Saturday, April 6 at Falling Creek Park in Bedford for two exhilarating days of outdoor events: The Lynchburg Maker Faire (March 24) and Thrive Outside (April 6)!

Claytor Nature Center will be participating on both events and will be showcasing our exciting programs and facilities we have on the vast 491 acres of land. Discover the remarkable benefits of becoming a member and unlocking access to the abundant amenities offered at Claytor Nature Center. Our presence at both events offers a golden opportunity to learn firsthand about the exciting trails, workshops, and recreational activities that cater to community interests at all levels of expertise.

Moreover, Claytor Nature Center will be featuring fun, engaging activities with using nature discovery apps such as iNaturalist and eBird. Be sure to join us at the Lynchburg Maker Faire and Thrive Outside for unforgettable days of adventure, learning, and connection!







# Scholar In Residence Program

## WHAT IT'S LIKE TO LIVE AND STUDY AT CLAYTOR

As the end of her sabbatical drew ever closer, Dr. Nina Salmon longed for a sense of completion for any one of the goals she had put forward. Some dedicated time away was surely the answer...

For Claytor Nature Center's first Scholar In Residence week, Dr. Nina Salmon, Associate Professor of English at the University of Lynchburg, spent time at Cloverlea Farmhouse in January of 2024 with three of her colleagues. As our inaugural Scholar-In-Residence, Dr. Salmon writes about her experience here. [Click here to read about her stay at Cloverlea.](#)



We plan to host this residence program each year in January and build upon it year after year as a way to give scholars time to set and/or accomplish goals; have time to think and create; and spend time with colleagues and make new connections that could lead to future collaborations. The program isn't limited to University of Lynchburg and we encourage scholars from all across the region to reach out to us if you are interested in learning more about the program. We hope to have scholars from all disciplines, including artists, writers and researchers. As we develop the program, we will strive to provide this opportunity to our residents at cost. As it is a nascent program, our early adopter scholars can help frame the program.

The beautiful farmhouse with the view of the Blue Ridge mountains is the perfect setting for scholars to relax, share, and create. Please consider joining us!



# Become a Scholar in Residence!

CONTACT US  
TO LEARN MORE:

[CLAYTOR@LYNCHBURG.EDU](mailto:CLAYTOR@LYNCHBURG.EDU)





## Teambuilding: Claytor Welcomes A New Staff Member

Claytor Nature Center is thrilled to introduce and extend a warm welcome to our newest addition to the team. Maggie Marsh joins us as the Communications, Outreach, and Events Coordinator. She comes to us as a Lynchburg native who is no stranger to Claytor. From educational events to celebrating in her friends' nuptials, she has been a part of the many great event held here over the years.

She has earned degrees in Education and Media & Technology from Longwood University as well as a Certificate in Business Fundamentals and Marketing from the University of Virginia. With these skills, Maggie possesses a deep understanding of the intricate relationship between engaging the community and the natural world both in person and online.

Having spearheaded successful campaigns that have amplified the reach and impact of business initiatives, her proficiency in leveraging digital platforms as tools for outreach and engagement aligns seamlessly with our mission to connect with a broader audience and create meaningful experiences centered around nature.



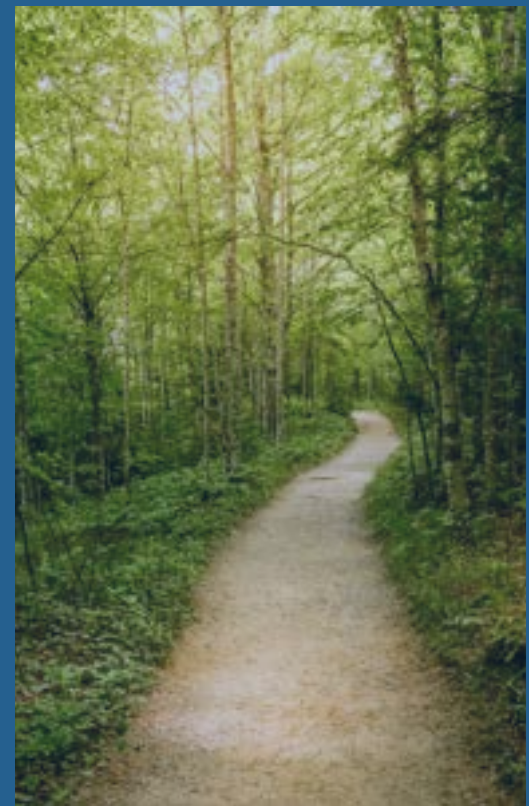
"I see Claytor Nature Center as a place that can easily inspire individuals of all ages to explore, learn, and connect with nature." Marsh states. "Once I became aware of all their resources, I was blown away by just how much Claytor has to offer for everyone. I really want to create that same sense of awareness for our community."

Along with the leadership of Claytor's Director, Jennifer Wills, we can anticipate exciting developments in our enhanced community outreach efforts, and a calendar brimming with events that promise to delight and educate.

"...I was blown away by just how much Claytor has to offer for everyone."

MAGGIE MARSH

COMMUNICATIONS,  
OUTREACH AND EVENTS  
COORDINATOR



# Claytor Hosts ACF Screening with Q&A

On February 22, we hosted over a dozen individuals to watch Clear Day Thunder: Rescuing the American Chestnut, The American Chestnut Foundation's new documentary.

American Chestnut trees were abundant over 100 years ago: almost four billion of them existed along the east coast. They were one of the fastest growing and largest trees in the forests, living for up to 300 years and growing to 6 feet in diameter. The wood was rot resistant and used for making nearly everything. The chestnuts provided sustenance to humans and farm animals alike. In the late 1800s, a fungus was brought to the United States and killed the defenseless trees. While some trees still sprout from the old roots, they will eventually die of the blight. The American Chestnut Foundation is working to restore the American chestnut to its native range through research, education and restoration. Laura Podyma, [ACF's Virginia Chapter](#) volunteer, held a Q&A session after the screening and took some of us to the Claytor chestnut orchard to talk about what's going on there.

The orchard began in 2014, and in 2022, some of the trees produced burrs (seeds) for the first time. Those burrs were collected by Laura and taken back to ACF's research facilities to help develop an American chestnut that is resistant to the blight that killed hundreds of millions of these magnificent trees.

Over the years, many of the original trees in our orchard have died from Phytophthora, or root rot (a problem unrelated to the blight). ACF took soil samples from our orchard to determine if the orchard could be used as a testing site for growing potentially root rot resistant chestnut seedlings. The answer is yes and ACF will be planting new seedlings in the orchard this spring.



## Coming Up...

LOOK OUT FOR OUR NEXT  
CLAYTOR CONNECTION  
NEWSLETTER IN JUNE

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NEWSLETTER](#)



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Thank you to all of our members and donors. Your contribution supports our mission and helps us steward the land, provide educational programs, support research, and expand our reach through art, music, events and more.



[Become a Member of the Claytor Crew!](#)