

NEWS RELEASE

From the Brodhead Watershed Association

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, March 29, 2018

MEDIA CONTACT: Carol Hillestad, 570-629-2727

Download photo here: <https://1drv.ms/u/s!AlusXBZdArEwoE4w5FsD9mFo7XKT>

Credit Carol Hillestad

HIKE EVENT: Searching for spring at Gravel Family Nature Preserve

The 179-acre Gravel Family Nature Preserve in Barrett Township already holds the promise of spring for hikers.

On Sunday, April 22, Brodhead Watershed Association will host a guided hike – part of the Get Outdoors Poconos series – to search for these harbingers of warmer days.

In the shadow of Mount Wismer, hundreds of wild blueberry bushes glow in a haze of orange-red, the leaf buds ready to open as the days grow longer. Past an open field, small wetlands gleam through stands of rhododendron. Within weeks, these cold, silent places will be rife with salamanders, spring peepers, wood frogs, toads, and all the riot of new life.

The trail leads through white pine, hemlocks and Norway spruce. Beech, birch and shagbark hickory trees are also abundant, along with native witch hazel and the ever-present barberry.

Past the tumbled fall of boulders at the base of Wismer and around the edge of a 50-acre marsh, remains of last year's cattails spike above this huge, wet meadow of sedges and water-loving shrubs. The abrupt "conk-la-reeeee!" of a male red-winged black bird rings out — another promise of spring.

HIKE EVENT

WHAT: Naturalists Patti O'Keefe and Jackie Speicher will lead a 2-mile out-and-back hike to the headwaters of the Middle Branch of Brodhead Creek in Barrett Township. Footing is easy to moderate, with leaves and rocks underfoot and stretches of wet ground. Walking stick recommended.

WHEN: 10 to 11:30 a.m. Sunday, April 22

COST: Free, but registration is required. Directions will be provided upon registration.

INFORMATION: Call 570-839-1120 or 570-629-2727; email info@brodheadwatershed.org. For information about this and other hikes in the free Get Outdoors Poconos series, go to brodheadwatershed.org/gopoconos. The hike series is administered by Brodhead Watershed Association and supported by a grant from the William Penn Foundation.