

Minsi Lake Corridor Conservation Efforts: Institute Drive Closing from March 31 through May 1 to Protect Amphibians Crossing

By Kelly Prentice

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY, PA – On Tuesday March 31, motorists can expect part of Institute Drive to be closed in the Totts Gap Conservation Area for the next several weeks to protect breeding amphibians. The closure will extend from Totts Gap Road west on Institute Drive for about one-half mile to allow for amphibian migrations to breeding pools without the risk of being crushed by vehicle tires.

In partnership with Upper Mount Bethel Township, Northampton County Parks, Recreation and Conservation is taking steps to protect migrating amphibians by closing the eastern half of Institute

Drive through the County's Totts Gap Conservation Area from March 31 through May 1.

The trigger for the crossing will be a forecast calling for evening rain with mild temperatures, generally above 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Since amphibians (frogs, toads, and salamanders) are primarily active at night, you can observe their migration from dusk until dawn as long as conditions remain favorable.

"Recommendations from the County's Minsi Lake Corridor Greenway & Stewardship plan highlight the need for protection of critical landscapes. This temporary closure is a major step in the ongoing efforts of provide sustainable conservation practices," said Bryan Cope, Parks, Recreation and Conservation Administrator with Northampton County.

The woodlands on either side of Institute Drive are home to the largest concentration of natural seasonal pools and associated species of amphibians anywhere in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Some of these species are listed as threatened and endangered by the PA Fish & Boat Commission, which oversees the Commonwealth's fish, reptiles, and amphibians.

For more information on the natural phenomenon of springtime amphibian migrations and how motorists can help protect them in their travels, log onto <https://www.shaverscreek.org/2016/04/18/amphibians-on-the-move/>.



Clean Team Workforce March Employee of the Month

By Stephnie Appell

(ALLENTOWN, PA) – The Clean Team Workforce congratulates its Employee of the Month for March, Chris H. Chris's early life was marked by challenges. His parents divorced when he was three years old. Chris and his brother lived with his mother in New Jersey. When Chris was in middle school, his mom was diagnosed with cancer, and she passed away when he was a freshman in high school.

At 17 years old, he moved in with his father, who was a heavy drinker. He lived with his dad for 3 years and then, in need of change, relocated to California to live with his aunt. Shortly after, Chris's father passed away. With no direction or stability, he moved from state to state every few years. Most recently, Chris found his way to Pennsylvania. He worked as a line cook, but after being laid off, he depleted his savings to pay for rent and was eventually evicted.

Then, a skateboarding accident left Chris unable to work. That's when he came to the Allentown Rescue Mission for shelter and time to heal. Entering the Emergency Shelter, Chris felt humbled yet welcomed at the same time. He joined the Mission's Transformation Program to gain stability and get back on his feet. "It helped remind me of my roots in spirituality as well as reaffirming my confidence in my abilities and talent," Chris stated. After healing from his injuries and graduating from the Transformation Program, Chris joined the Clean Team Workforce. He immediately started working in the Mission's kitchen as a cook.

His years of culinary experience have been a blessing for the men residing at the Mission. Chris is trained to run many aspects of a commercial kitchen. In addition to making and serving balanced meals to nearly 100 men every day, he is gracious and respectful to donors who drop off food for the Mission. Chris's goal is to become a chef. He would love to work at a high-end resort or possibly team up with his brother and open their own restaurant someday. "I love to cook, and it's a rewarding field to work in," Chris stated.



Families First Second Annual Bingo Was A Huge Success

By Mikal Sabatine / Dir of Families First

PEN ARGYL - "Our Bingo was a huge success and we could not have done it without the wonderful people of the Slate Belt".

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