



Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club Newsletter

Fungi, Fun & Friends!

VOLUME 25, ISSUE 1

MARCH / APRIL 2025



President's Message Barbora Batokova

WELCOME TO 2025! We kicked the year off with a walk in the Strip District on February 8 with over 30 participants! We explored the neighborhood's unique shops, discovering an incredible variety of dried mushrooms, including red russulas, cauliflower mushroom, and the bamboo stinkhorn! If this walk is any indication, we are in for a fabulous year!

In 2024, we led more than 60 mushroom and lichen walks across 12 Pennsylvania counties, plus one in Ohio and one in New York! This diversity reflects our community's passion for exploring and documenting fungi, and I encourage all WPMC Identifiers to plan a walk this year so that we can continue to learn from each other and document the mycodiversity around us.

Shortly before the year ended, we received word that our grant application for the PA DCNR Wild Resource Conservation Program was approved! The grant of \$14,149 will support our Western Pennsylvania Fungal Biodiversity Project. See the article by **Richard Jacob** for more information.

The 25th Annual Gary Lincoff Foray returns to North Park Lodge on September 20 with keynote speakers **Britt Bunyard**, mycologist, author, and founder of *FUNGI* magazine; and **Matt Kasson**, Associate Professor of Forest Pathology & Mycology at West Virginia University. Mark your calendars!

We are also preparing our annual Mushroom Education Day at Powdermill Nature Reserve on June 14, which will feature workshops, presentations, and field activities for all levels of mycological interest.

As we continue in 2025, I invite you to participate in our meetings, walks, and events. Your passion and curiosity are the heart of our club. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who helps organize events, lead walks, and support various initiatives from DNA testing and publicity to record keeping and so much more—your dedication not only keeps our club running, but thriving. Here's to another year of mycological adventures!

Finally, I encourage you to check out the "New York City Mycological Diversity Report #1" from the New York Mycological Society, showcasing over a decade of data collection by the club from 17 parks. A beautifully designed publication, it is a wonderful contribution to North American mycology and an inspiration for other clubs, as well! You can read it here:

<https://www.newyorkmyc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/New-York-City-Mycological-Diversity-Report-First-Edition-January-2025.pdf>

2025 Meeting Schedule

MARK YOUR CALENDARS now for this year's monthly WPMC meetings. Note that two meetings will not take place on the usual third Tuesday of the month. The May cultivation meeting has been moved to May 13 to avoid a conflict with Election Day, and the September meeting has been moved to September 9 so that it will not be the same week as the Lincoff Foray.

All meetings will be held on Tuesday evenings from March through November at the Frick Environmental Center and will feature updates on club activities, a speaker/presentation, mushroom identification table, and mushroom-related merchandise for sale. Meetings are free and open to the public.

HERE IS THE COMPLETE LIST OF 2025 WPMC MONTHLY MEETING DATES:

March 18 Into the World of Fungi Sara Klingensmith

Searching for mushrooms is an exciting treasure hunt taken at a naturalist's pace. Fungi are incredibly diverse, with adaptations that challenge the imagination. Learn how to search for fungi, identify common species, and understand their various roles in the ecosystem with an Allegheny Land Trust educator and WPMC Identifier!

continued on page 3



PA DCNR Wild Resource Conservation Program Awards Grant

By Richard Jacob

LATE LAST YEAR, WPMC received approval for our grant request to work on environmental DNA from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. In this article I will present some background on the project and outline its goals.

The Western Pennsylvania Fungal Biodiversity Project aims to expand the catalog of macrofungi and soil fungi in Western Pennsylvania. Traditionally, this has been done by recording observations of species. Over the last 15 years, it became clear that recorded identifications or pictures were not sufficient to differentiate to species level and that there were many unrecorded species that looked like other named species.



Furthermore, the myco-community used nomenclature assigned to species found in Europe for similar-looking species found in North America. Through continued DNA research, it was determined that these similar looking but geographically distant species were also genetically different. With the advent of DNA barcoding, it became possible to start to create more accurate fungal catalogs that can delimitate species.

While macrofungi are the visible fruit of the fungi, the mycelium lives in or on their food source, or substrate. Many species of fungi do not produce visible fruiting bodies (sporocarps) but are no less important. Analysis of environmental DNA (eDNA) extracted from soil have identified thousands of species, many of which have not been isolated and currently defy categorization. Due to the role fungi play in the ecosystem, multiple classes of soil fungi are considered keystone species whose presence indicates that the habitat is healthy and whose absence indicates environmental degradation and distress.

WPMC has not yet analyzed eDNA samples or started to document the soil fungi. This is a big step to better understanding all of the fungi constituents of a habitat. The same methods, but a different DNA barcode region, will be used to identify bacteria and archaea from the eDNA collections. The project objectives can be summarized as:

- To catalog the bacteria, archaea, and fungi in soil from five sites across Western PA, in order to establish baseline results for future comparison.
- To compare multiple next-generation sequencing methods to determine a standardized protocol for future use.
- To collect, analyze, and voucher 1000 sporocarps, comparing eDNA results to known macrofungi species and focusing on less common genera and smaller species to expand the region's macrofungi catalog.
- To train WPMC members and community scientists on making iNaturalist observations and collecting specimens for DNA barcoding, as well as teaching a smaller group how to process dried specimens and analyze DNA barcodes.
- To publicize the project through educational material, reports, and public presentations on fungal diversity and conservation.

Project partners include Stephen Russell and the Mycota Lab for DNA sequencing; Carnegie Museum of Natural History for the fungarium; and Allegheny Land Trust and Cook Forest Conservancy for location and education partnerships.

During the first year of the project, five soil samples will be collected and submitted for DNA analysis. In the second and third years of the project, we will collect, document, process, and voucher 1000

WPMC President Announces Annual Awards



Photos by Cecily Franklin

AT THE NOVEMBER MEETING, WPMC President **Barbora Batokova** announced two awards for 2024.

The President's Award went to WPMC Identifier **Dawn Wehman** for her outstanding dedication and contributions to WPMC. As Membership Records Chair, Lincoff Foray Co-Chair, and a frequent walk leader, Dawn has gone above and beyond, conducting interviews with founding members for the club newsletter, organizing registration at monthly meetings and Mushroom Education Day, coordinating the storage locker, and creatively re-designing ID buttons. Her commitment and innovation have enriched the club and inspired our community.

The Outstanding Service Award went to WPMC Mycologist **Stephen Bucklin** for his remarkable leadership and expertise as WPMC President from 2021 to 2023. A dedicated Mycologist and Lichen Specialist, Stephen has enriched our community through frequent walks, educational presentations, and by overseeing logistics for monthly meetings at Frick. His passion shines through initiatives like the annual fluorescent foray at Cook Forest as well as organizing the first logo contest for the foray T-shirt. His commitment has profoundly strengthened the club and inspired a shared passion for fungi and lichens.

Please extend our congratulations and appreciation to Dawn and Stephen for all of their service to the club.

macrofungi for DNA sequencing. We will be looking for specimens that match species identified in eDNA samples, as well as other less observed genera.

Two applications were submitted to fund the project. The first application was to the WPMC Board of Directors to sample soil eDNA at two locations. The second application was to Pennsylvania's Wild Resource Conservation Program, under the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), to sample eDNA at three sites and to sequence 1000 macrofungi for those sites over three years.

The WPMC Board agreed to fund the first project in June 2024. The application to the Wild Resource Conservation Program was accepted by DCNR in November 2024, with funds awarded in January 2025.



Have a Good Trip: Exploring the Magic Mushroom Experience

Reviewed by Cecily Franklin

HAVE A GOOD TRIP by Eugenia Bone is well written, thoroughly researched, and packed with information on every page. Ms. Bone explains how to find *Psilocybe* mushrooms, as well as how to cultivate them. She also reminds the reader that psilocybin is illegal.

The author provides plenty of warnings, including who should avoid magic mushrooms (people with schizophrenia or bipolar disorder), drug interactions, and a whole chapter called “Bad Trips” which had me audibly disgusted. Who wants to read about puking, disturbing hallucinations, and complaining for years about a bad experience?

Ms. Bone says that she’s never had a bad trip herself. She reduces the expectation to a formula: “Dose + Intention - Risk.” The late Gary Lincoff once told the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club that, while he was using magic mushrooms, he “saw evolution.” But the book describes another experience in which Lincoff got anxious when he hallucinated that his host turned into a wolf.

According to Ms. Bone, a psilocybin trip typically lasts four to six hours, though an eight-hour trip is not uncommon. She also quotes Dr. James Fadiman, a researcher into psychedelics, who advises setting aside three days for a trip: one to prepare, one to trip, and one to integrate the experience.

The chapter on “Clinical Trials, Retreats, and Private Guides” provides a first-hand account of Ms. Bone’s experience at The Blue



Portal, a psilocybin-assisted therapy experience owned by Tradd Cotter, author of “Organic Mushroom Farming and Mycoremediation.” Once the small group started tripping, “there was always someone crying, someone crawling away, someone who needed to talk, to vomit, to be comforted or redirected.”

The author paid \$449 for online training called the Science of Psychedelics; for an additional fee, she could have received a certificate. According to Ms. Bone, there is no ethics board that you can go to if you’ve been harmed, and psychedelic therapists have no governing body. “Keep in mind it is a business where you are the one who bears the risk.”

In the chapter on “Microdosing,” the author emphasizes that almost everything we know about it is anecdotal. “There is no standard” and, as with guides, we are in a professional vacuum. Microdosing can be “mega-expensive”, and a good outcome may be a placebo effect. Some people stop microdosing because they end up feeling nothing at all. And it’s still federally prohibited and illegal in most states.

The book takes a more favorable tone when it gets to the chapter on “Therapeutic Trips.” This is where synthetic psilocybin—in carefully measured and controlled doses—is being tested as a possible treatment for various ailments, including addiction, depression, PTSD, eating disorders, and OCD. While the outlook from clinical trials appears to be promising, demand greatly exceeds supply. As a result, people continue to order unknown substances from unknown suppliers over the Internet.

An editorial by James Kent from the online news site *Psychedelic Spotlight* says “we have a growing demand for a therapy that is not approved, has not been demonstrated to be effective, with no actually authorized training programs for the thousands of therapists needed to meet the growing demand. This could be described as a bottleneck, but it potentially is much worse than that, it is shaping up to be a train wreck.”

It’s obvious from the book that many, many people have used magic mushrooms over the centuries. However, I’m not one of them. I’ll continue to watch for progress on clinical trials, and I recommend that you read the book. As for magic mushrooms, try them if you want, but count me out.

2025 Meeting Schedule (continued)

April 15 Mushroom Preservation: How to preserve, store and enjoy your foraged bounty for year-round use
Kristen & Trent Blizzard (virtual)

WHEN THE RAINS COME, the mushrooms often come out in abundance. If you don’t want all those fresh mushrooms to go to waste, what can you do with them? Learn tips & techniques to preserve your fresh mushrooms from Trent and Kristen. Once preserved, you can enjoy them in the coming year or give them as gifts to friends and family.



May 13* Annual Cultivation Meeting
June 17 Cooking Demonstration
Bryony “Bee” Hensel

July 15 Medicinal/Culinary Mushrooms
Dr. Michael Beug (virtual)

August 19 What happens to our specimens?
John Plischke & Garrett Taylor

Sept. 9* When the Tables are Turned: Plants that Eat Fungi
Melissa McCormick (Virtual)

Oct. 21 Photo Contest Results & Election of Officers

Nov. 18 Potluck & Annual WPMC Awards

**NOTE: These meetings will be held on the SECOND Tuesday of the month.*

If you can’t be there in person, check this website on the night of the meeting to watch live:

<https://www.facebook.com/WPAMC>

The streams are also being archived on our YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/WesternPennsylvaniaMushroomClub>



Interview with WPMC Founding Member Dick Duffy

By Dawn Wehman

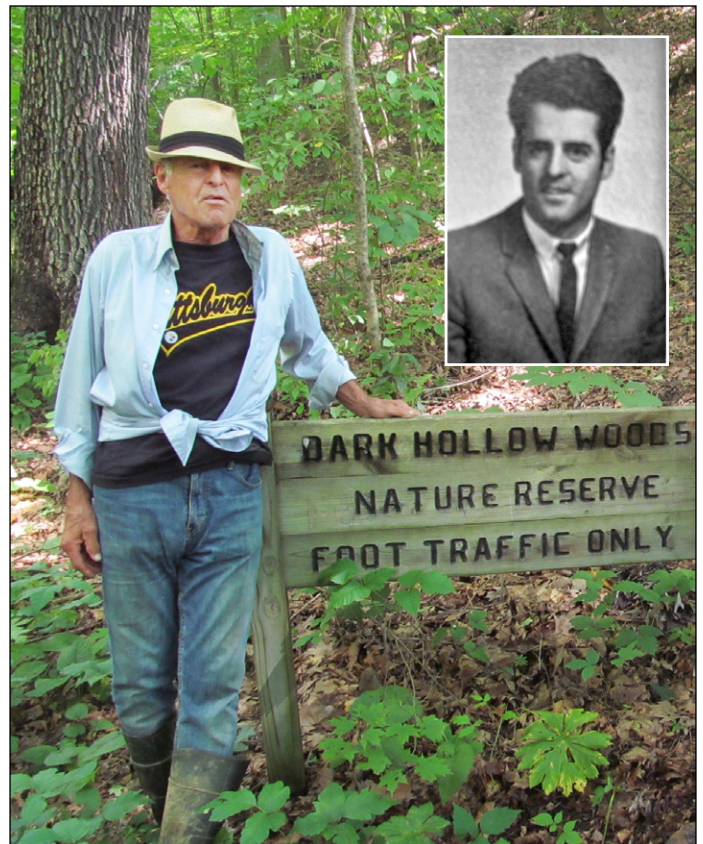
ACCORDING TO WPMC founding member **Becky Plischke**, the late **Gary Lincoff** had been “telling us for years to start a mushroom club in the Pittsburgh area. We knew we needed a core group, but we didn’t have one.” That all changed in March of 2000 at Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve, and **Richard “Dick” Duffy** was there.

Mr. Duffy was a science teacher for the Pittsburgh Public Schools, and later a substitute teacher after retirement. “I started off bare bones learning about mushrooms. I didn’t know anything, I just asked a lot of questions! There were quite a few mushrooms right in my backyard.”

Dick recalls “a lot of very interesting people! We had lots of walks and forays. We laid out all the specimens we collected on the table and then the Plischkes (father and son) would sit and identify stuff. They were very conscientious of what you needed to know and what you could eat. I really appreciated that!”

By 2002, Dick Duffy was serving as Vice President under then-President, the late **Dick Dougall**. The two of them led mushroom walks together at Hampton Community Park, Emmerling Park, and others. As shown in the photo, Dick Duffy attended a WPMC walk at Dark Hollow Woods in 2017. Two years later, he came to WPMC’s annual cultivation meeting at Beechwood Farms, where he inoculated a log.

Now age 86, Dick doesn’t enjoy as many of the mushrooms as he used to, but he still has a few favorites. “Sheepshead [*Grifola frondosa*] are my favorite and Morels.”



(INSET) *Mr. Duffy the high school science teacher in a 1970 yearbook. Dick Duffy at Dark Hollow Woods in 2017. (Photo by Cecily Franklin).*

City Nature Challenge 2025: Pittsburgh Region

By Cecily Franklin and Julie Travaglini

IT’S TIME FOR WPMC members to once again help the Pittsburgh region document biodiversity where we live. It’s easy! Just take pictures of mushrooms (or plants, animals, or things they leave behind) from **April 25 through April 28**. Upload your observations to iNaturalist and help identify observations that other people share. Anyone using iNaturalist in Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Washington, and Westmoreland Counties during these dates will be a part of the project.



Community science, also known as citizen science, is crucial for fostering a deeper understanding of local ecosystems and engaging the public in scientific research. By involving non-experts in data collection, community science enables large-scale observation of biodiversity that would otherwise be difficult or impossible for scientists to achieve alone. Platforms like iNaturalist empower individuals to contribute their observations of plants, animals, and fungi, building a global database that aids

conservation efforts and biodiversity monitoring. These collective contributions help scientists track species distributions, migration patterns, and the effects of climate change, ensuring that the efforts are both broad-reaching and locally informed.

The City Nature Challenge will be a key event to highlight the significance of community science. During this annual global competition, cities across the world challenge each other to document as many species as possible over a weekend, using tools like iNaturalist to record their findings. This friendly competition fosters collaboration among local residents, schools, and various organizations, all working toward the common goal of recording biodiversity in their cities. The data collected not only provides valuable insights into urban ecosystems but also raises awareness of the rich biodiversity that exists within metropolitan areas. Participants get a firsthand look at how nature thrives in cities, leading to a greater appreciation and a sense of responsibility toward environmental stewardship.

By integrating iNaturalist and initiatives like the City Nature Challenge into everyday life, communities are encouraged to take a more active role in science. This increased engagement not only enhances public awareness of environmental issues but also creates a more inclusive approach to scientific research. In turn, it helps build stronger connections between communities and their surrounding environments. Keep an eye on the WPMC website and this newsletter for walks happening during City Nature Challenge weekend!

Check out the 2024 statistics for the Pittsburgh Region here:

<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/city-nature-challenge-2024-pittsburgh-region>

To join the 2025 project, go to: <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/city-nature-challenge-2025-pittsburgh-region>



25th Annual Gary Lincoff Foray

MARK YOUR CALENDARS now for the 25th annual Gary Lincoff Foray on **Saturday, September 20**. Registration will open at a later date, but here are the events we're planning for that weekend:

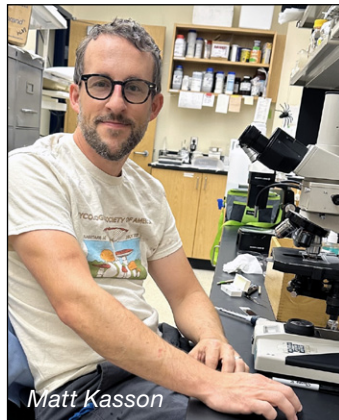
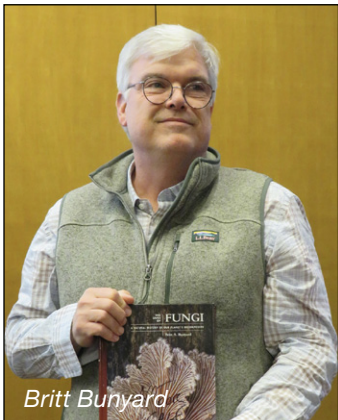
Friday, September 19 – Pre-Foray Walk at Cook Forest State Park. There is no charge for this walk, but you will be responsible for your own transportation and lunch.

Saturday, September 20 – The 25th Annual Gary Lincoff Foray at The Lodge in North Park. Activities will include:

- Guided morning walks in North Park
- Afternoon speakers
- Mushroom display tables
- Auction, Sales, and Vendors
- Cooking Demonstration
- Mushroom Feast
- Table Walk

Lincoff Foray Will Feature Two Guest Mycologists

OUR GUEST MYCOLOGISTS this year include **Britt Bunyard**, founder, Publisher, and Editor-in-Chief of the mycology journal *FUNGI*; and **Matt Kasson**, Associate Professor of Mycology and Forest Pathology at West Virginia University. Britt Bunyard will discuss stories from his book "The Lives of Fungi" in his presentation "A resilient planet needs fungi now: the secret lives of fungi." Matt Kasson will present his lab's work on fungivorous millipedes in his talk, "Fungus-eating millipedes: More fungi than legs!"



WPMC in the News

The Fall 2024 issue of *FUNGI* Magazine included two book reviews by WPMC Past President **Cecily Franklin**: *Hunting for Mushrooms* by WPMC President **Barbora Batokova**; and *Mushroom Mania* by **Denis Benjamin**.



Auction Donations

DONATIONS ARE ALREADY coming in for the Auction/Raffle at this year's 25th Annual Gary Lincoff Foray on Saturday, September 20. Mushroom Nerds will donate knives and folding hand trowels (pictured). Other donations will include jewelry, arts and crafts, book, ceramics, cookie cutters, T-shirts, dried mushrooms, and more!



If you would like to donate a mushroom-related item to this year's auction, call **Kathy Gilotty** at 412-445-3121 or email Past President **Cecily Franklin** at cs4wpmc@gmail.com.

Call for Foray Vendors

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND! The 2025 Lincoff Foray will again feature local vendors. The application for vendors will open soon. We anticipate more interest than available vending spots, so the application process may be competitive. Anticipated vendor fee is \$25.

Look Great While You Support WPMC!

SHOW YOUR WPMC pride by purchasing customized club gear from spreadshop.com. The WPMC Merch Store offers many products with the WPMC logo, including shirts of various styles, hats, mugs, aprons, tote bags, and more. Whether it's for men, women, or toddlers, you get to choose the size and color! Buy for yourself or as one-of-a-kind gifts. All purchases benefit WPMC, so get started at this link:

<https://western-pa-mushroom-club.myspreadshop.com/>



Annual Lincoff Foray Logo Contest

By Stephen Bucklin, Foray Logo Contest Chair



2024 winning design submitted by **Marissa Kolarosky** as it appeared on the 2024 Lincoff T-shirt



HOPEFULLY YOU HAVE your calendar marked for the 25th annual Gary Lincoff Foray, scheduled for September 20 at The Lodge in North Park. Last year we initiated a Foray Logo Contest to create a transparent and equitable process for selecting artwork. Due to that success, we are offering the same opportunity again this year. Below are the rules for participating; please share this far and wide with any artists you know who might be interested!

RULES:

- This contest is open to anyone in the world! You do not have to be a member of the Western PA Mushroom Club, though special consideration may be given to WPMC members.
- The final design will contain the official name of the event: 25th Annual Gary Lincoff Foray.
- Each participant may submit up to 5 entries.
- Artwork must meet certain requirements for printing; please see guidelines below.
- If you choose to represent a mushroom, we prefer distinctly recognizable, real mushroom species known to occur in Western Pennsylvania. We have listed a few species below.

DEADLINE:

Contest entries must be received no later than June 1, 2025. Winner will be announced no later than July 1, 2025. Please email all entries to foraydesign@wpamushroomclub.org, with the subject line "2025 Annual Foray Logo Entry."

PRIZES:

The artist behind the winning design will receive the following:

- A one-year membership to WPMC or a one-year extension if they are already a member.
- A feature in WPMC's bimonthly newsletter.
- One example of each item printed with the logo. This will include a t-shirt, sticker, and any other swag that is created for the event.

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRAPHIC ARTWORK:

- Hand drawn art without text in the layout can be submitted alone. Submit raster files (.jpg, .psd, .tif) scaled to size (10") of 300 dpi or greater.
- All text included in the design must be vector format and outlined unless it is high resolution (300 dpi).
- To keep within product production budget, the design must be limited to 1 or 2 colors (or 3 colors by incorporating the color of the shirt into the design).

- Vector files such as AI or EPS are preferred.
- Any fonts used must be free for commercial use.

OTHER IMPORTANT STUFF:

Semifinalists will be selected by representatives from WPMC's Foray and Publicity Committees, followed by a vote of WPMC's Executive Committee. Please note that WPMC may at our discretion alter graphic elements, font, or verbiage on the chosen design. The winning entry becomes the intellectual property of WPMC for exclusive commercial use in all marketing, merchandising, and in any other way the organization sees fit.

EXAMPLES OF FALL MUSHROOMS IN WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA:

- Amanita flavoconia*, Yellow Patches
- Armillaria mellea*, Honey Mushroom
- Chlorociboria aeruginascens*, Green Wood Cup
- Craterellus fallax*, Eastern Black Trumpet
- Craterellus ignicolor*, Flame Trumpet
- Grifola frondosa*, Hen of the Woods or Maitake
- Helvella crispa*, White Saddle
- Hericium americanum*, Bear's Head Tooth
- Hydnum umbilicatum*, Depressed Hedgehog
- Laccaria ochropurpurea*, Purple-and-White Deceiver
- Laetiporus sulphureus*, Chicken of the Woods
- Lycoperdon perlatum*, Common Puffball
- Mycena haematopus*, Bleeding Fairy Helmet
- Suillus spraguei*, Painted Suillus

WPMC Scholarship Committee

WPMC ADMINISTERS AN annual Scholarship/Grant program to promote wild mushrooming by providing monetary support for attending educational events, projects, research, or mycological studies by individuals or institutions. Application forms are available on our website and must be sponsored by a WPMC member. For more information or to register, go to:

<https://wpamushroomclub.org/education/wpamc-scholarship-grant-application/>

Donations Help Fund WPMC Projects

LOOKING FOR A WAY to support WPMC beyond paying your annual dues? Make a donation anytime; it's tax-deductible (if you itemize deductions) because WPMC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Donations may be made in honor or in memory of a loved one. Your employer may even match your contribution. Make checks payable to Western Pa. Mushroom Club and submit them to our Treasurer, **Jared Delaney**.



WPMC Mycologists Join DNA Sequence Validation Corps

By Cecily Franklin



WPMC Mycologists John Plischke (left) and Garrett Taylor. (Photo by Cara Coulter)

WPMC MYCOLOGISTS **John Plischke** and **Garrett Taylor** have joined the first cohort of 25 volunteers for the DNA Sequence Validation Corps, a program made in collaboration with the Ohio Mushroom DNA Lab, Mycota Lab, NAMA's DNA Sequencing Committee, and Fungal Diversity Survey (FUNDIS).

The goal of this program is to provide the necessary information and support to allow interested individuals with any level of experience to learn how to validate DNA sequences, an essential step to understanding fungal diversity.

John and Garrett have successfully completed the preliminary training program with **Harte Singer**, FUNDIS Sequencing Programming Director. After submitting their applications, they had a month to read the *Volunteer Sequence Validator Corps Guidebook*, attend two hands-on workshop meetings, and then complete a final assessment with a 100% score.

John and Garrett will be responsible for looking at DNA barcode data and determining the validity of the data as well as the best identification for the fungi in question. FUNDIS recently opened a second round for volunteers and filled all the available and waitlist slots! For more information, go to:

<https://www.fundis.org/dna-sequence-validation-corps>



1.



2.



3.



4.

Winter Walks with WPMC

1. ON NOVEMBER 7, WPMC Lichen Specialist **Stephen Bucklin** led a lichen walk at the North American Association of Environmental Educators (NAAEE) Conference, where he found this bearded lichen, *Usnea* spp. *Photo by Lyndsay Denny*

2. ON NOVEMBER 30, WPMC Mycologist **Richard Jacob** led the annual Thanksgiving Walk at Hartwood Acres. *Photo by Richard Jacob*

3. ON DECEMBER 14 AND JANUARY 26, WPMC Lichen Specialist **Stephen Bucklin** led lichen walks at Schenley Park and Frick Park for Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy. *Photo by Mark Bowers*

4. ON FEBRUARY 8, WPMC Mycologist **John Plischke** led a mushroom walk through Pittsburgh's Strip District. *Photo by Barbora Batokova*





ID Buttons

THREE WPMC MEMBERS have earned ID Buttons in recognition of their ability to identify mushroom species: **Mark Bowers** (50), **Katie Manion** (75), and **Cherie Cornmesser** (350). Congratulations to all!

WPMC's Button ID Button Program offers members a fun way to increase their knowledge of mushroom species. To learn more about the ID Button program and how to submit your list of known mushrooms, go to:

<http://wpamushroomclub.org/about/button-id-program/>



Mark Bowers



Katie Manion



Cherie Cornmesser

WPMC Membership Report

By Dawn Wehman

DO YOU NEED to renew your WPMC Membership? A renewal notification reminder email was sent in February. Thank you to all of you that have already renewed! The year 2024 ended with more than 770 members from 454 households. As of this writing for our 2025 roster, we have 319 members from 185 households.

Membership dues will be increasing in 2026. (More on that later.) If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to reach out to me at membership@wpamushroomclub.org. See page 12 for the membership form to join or renew your membership, or go to: <https://wpamushroomclub.org/about/join/>

Your membership dues are vital to keep the club running. These dues contribute over 40% of the WPMC's income every year. WPMC members are entitled to the following benefits:

Membership benefits include:

- Nine monthly meetings with speakers & mushroom identification
- Free mushroom kit at our annual cultivation meeting
- Five electronic WPMC newsletters
- Advance notice of mushroom walks and other local, regional & national events
- Annual photo contest for WPMC members only
- Access to WPMC Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/250320011779>
- Discount at WPMC's annual Gary Lincoff Foray

Get Your Cameras and Cellphones Ready

ONCE AGAIN, WPMC Identifier **Sara Klingensmith** will judge members' photos for our annual Photo Contest. Here are the Photo Contest rules for this year:

- Deadline for Submissions: September 30, 2025
- Maximum of 5 Entries per WPMC member
- Submit high resolution JPEG files
- Rename images before submitting, using name and subject, e.g., "Joe Smith morel.jpg"
- Email entries to Sara Klingensmith at pamushroomclubphotos@gmail.com.
- Indicate in your email the desired category for each photo.

You must be a member of the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club in good standing to enter. Club dues must be up to date. Photos submitted by non-members will not be considered.

Pictorial: This division is for single photos that illustrate the beauty and variety of fungi in form and color.

Documentary: For single photographs especially suited as illustrations in a field guide or monograph, or for use in a lecture.

Mushroom Selfies: Entries must be single, self-taken ("selfie") cell phone photos of you with at least one mushroom.

Judge's Option: For photos which do not fit into the Pictorial, Documentary, or Selfie divisions.

Subject material: Organisms from the *Myxomycota* (slime molds), the classes *Basidiomycetes* and *Ascomycetes* of the *Eumycota* ("true fungi"), and Lichens are eligible.



USE AND COPYRIGHT: WPMC may use your photographs on the website, newsletter and Mushroom Catalog and when we do, they will always be accompanied by your name as photographer (mentioned on the same page or caption of the image). WPMC will not allow the use of your photographs on other websites, although realistically we cannot prevent this. We will not sell or provide the images to others without your permission and the images remain the property and under the copyright of you the photographer and are used under license by the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club.

For complete contest rules: <https://wpamushroomclub.org/photo-galleries/annual-wpmc-photo-contest/>



Day and time for walks vary. Note any registration requirements or fees. Check the website at www.wpamushroomclub.org/events for updates, directions, and more. If you would like to lead a WPMC walk, or if you know a great walk location, please email WPMC Identifier **Josh Mowris** at joshmowris@yahoo.com.

WPMC does not endorse or support the commercial harvesting of wild mushrooms from any state, county or city park. WPMC does promote the gathering of mushrooms—where permitted—for recreational, educational, and scientific purposes.



WPMC Walks & Events

SATURDAY, MARCH 15, 11:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.

Chaga Walk at Gallitzin State Forest (Somerset County) Route 56, four miles east of Windber

Meet WPMC Mycologist **John Plischke** and WPMC Identifier **Dawn Wehman** at the Babcock Picnic Area for a winter Chaga (*Inonotus obliquus*) walk. Dress appropriately. Free and open to the public but sign up on the link below in case of any last-minute changes due to the weather:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeYh0Nw_I7P5fxXS2ciWc0YGoPSfnMxORrsPmb7dEX-6HhR_g/viewform

FRIDAY, APRIL 25, 5:30 – 7:30 P.M.

Beginner's Mushroom ID Hike with Allegheny Land Trust Dead Man's Hollow Conservation Area, McKeesport Catfish Pond Entrance, 527 Scene Ridge Road

Join ALT staff and WPMC Identifier **Julie Travaglini** for a mushroom hike and ID table at Dead Man's Hollow. This is not a traditional guided hike. After a brief introduction, attendees will be looking for mushrooms on their own before reconvening for an ID table and discussion at the end.

As this hike is beginner friendly, we will be using the mushrooms' common names and looking at distinguishing features to begin identifying mushrooms. We will be documenting fungi via iNaturalist for the City Nature Challenge during this hike! We will not be foraging for food on this hike or discussing edibility. Hike runs rain or shine. NO WALK-INS will be permitted. Tickets are \$5 for ages 3 and up; tickets not required for children ages 2 and under. Register here:

<https://alleghenylandtrust.networkforgood.com/events/81954-beginner-s-mushroom-id-hike>

SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 10 A.M. TO NOON

Science Stroll: CNC Hike with Allegheny Land Trust Girty's Woods Conservation Area End of Irwin Lane, Millvale, PA 15212

Parking: Drive to the end of Irwin Lane and you will see an open gate. Drive through the open gate and park in the grassy area just past. ALT staff will guide you. Please do not park along Irwin Lane.

Interested in learning how to utilize iNaturalist? Join an ALT Educator on a hike where we'll discuss how to properly use the app, as well as begin logging some of the biodiversity of Girty's Woods as part of the 2025 City Nature Challenge. Please have iNaturalist downloaded on your phone and have an account created prior to arriving for the hike. Hike runs rain or shine. NO WALK-INS will be permitted. Tickets are \$5 for ages 3 and up; tickets not required for children ages 2 and under. Register here:

<https://alleghenylandtrust.networkforgood.com/events/81955-science-stroll-city-nature-challenge-hike>

SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 11:30 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.

Pine Township Earth Day Event Pine Community Center, Wexford

WPMC will have a table at the Pine Township Earth Day event. Stop by to visit WPMC Mycologist **Richard Jacob** at the information booth.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 5:30 – 7:30 P.M.

Beginner's Mushroom ID Hike with Allegheny Land Trust Audubon Greenway, 160 Magee Road Sewickley Heights, PA 15143

Join ALT staff and WPMC Identifier **Julie Travaglini** for a mushroom hike and ID table at Audubon Greenway. This is not a traditional guided hike. After a brief introduction, attendees will be looking for mushrooms on their own before reconvening for an ID table and discussion at the end. As this hike is beginner friendly, we will be using the mushrooms' common names and looking at distinguishing features to begin identifying mushrooms. We will not be foraging for food on this hike or discussing edibility. Hike runs rain or shine. NO WALK-INS will be permitted. Tickets are \$5 for ages 3 and up; tickets not required for children ages 2 and under. Register here:

<https://alleghenylandtrust.networkforgood.com/events/82045-beginner-s-mushroom-id-hike>

THURSDAY, MAY 15, 5:00 P.M.

Brush Creek Park, Beaver Falls (Beaver County)

Meet WPMC Identifier **Dawn Wehman** at the parking area in this link for a mushroom walk at Brush Creek Park in Beaver County. Free and open to the public. Wear protection from mud, ticks, and sun.

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/vHHGgCKFNbX6mQoQ8>

MONDAY, MAY 19, 5:30 – 7:30 P.M.

Fungi 101 Talk & Walk with Allegheny Land Trust Fern Hollow Nature Center 1901 Glen Mitchell Road, Sewickley, PA 15143

Join ALT staff and WPMC Identifier **Julie Travaglini** for a mushroom talk and identification walk at Fern Hollow Nature Center. After a short introductory lecture indoors on fungi, participants will look for mushrooms around Fern Hollow and collect specimens for an ID table. As this hike is beginner friendly, we will be using the mushrooms' common names and looking at distinguishing features to begin identifying mushrooms. We will not be foraging for food on this hike or discussing edibility. Hike runs rain or shine. NO WALK-INS will be permitted. Tickets are \$10 for ages 3 and up; tickets not required for children ages 2 and under. Register here:

<https://alleghenylandtrust.networkforgood.com/events/82264-fungi-101-talk-and-walk-fern-hollow-nature-center>

continued on page 10



SATURDAY, JUNE 14 (ALL DAY)

Mushroom Education Day Powdermill Nature Reserve, Westmoreland County

More details will be provided in the May/June newsletter.

SATURDAY, JUNE 21, 10:00 A.M. TO NOON

Mushroom Walk with Hollow Oak Land Trust

Meet Foray Food Chair **Mike Henry** and members of the Hollow Oak Land Trust for a mushroom walk at either Montour Woods in Moon Township or Vinegar Hollow in Killbuck Township. More details will be provided in the May/June newsletter.

Other Walks, Forays & Events

MARCH 10 – 12

PAEE Annual Conference, Erie, PA

<https://www.paee.net/conference/>

MAY 30 – JUNE 1

67th Allegheny Nature Pilgrimage Allegheny State Park, Cattaraugus County, NY

<https://www.alleghanynaturepilgrimage.com/>

SUNDAY, JUNE 8, 9:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.

Phipps BioBlitz & Family Fun Festival, Schenley Park

AUGUST 8 – 17

Summer Continental MycoBlitz 2025

<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/summer-continental-mycoblitz-2025>

SEPTEMBER 4 – 7

Northwoods Foray, Cable, WI

<https://www.wisconsinmycologicalsociety.org/>

SEPTEMBER 5 – 7

Ohio Mushroom Festival, Hammondsville, OH

<https://ohiomushroomfestival.com/>

SEPTEMBER 18 – 21

Northeast Mycological Federation (NEMF) Foray Ithaca, NY

<https://www.nemf.org/>

SEPTEMBER 21

25th Annual WPMC Gary Lincoff Foray

See page 5 for more information.

OCTOBER 17 – 26

Fall Continental MycoBlitz 2025

<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/fall-continental-mycoblitz-2025>

SEPTEMBER 11 – 14

North American Mycological Association (NAMA) Annual Foray, Marlboro, Vermont

<https://namyco.org/annual-foray/>

Important Walk & Foray Information

CHECK LIST:

- Bring a buddy or two. **Do not forage alone!**
- Dress for the weather, carry a rain poncho
- Bring drinking water and lunch
- Insect repellent
- Basket for collecting
- Knife for cutting mushrooms
- Wax or paper bags (no plastic) to keep mushrooms separated
- Whistle
- Compass
- Hand lens
- Cell phone & camera
- Notebook & pencil
- Field guide for identification
- Band-aids
- Garden hand-clippers
- Try to dig up three of the same species at different stages of development.
- Don't pick old mushrooms; leave them to drop spores.
- You are responsible for not getting lost. Find a buddy.
- Only Club Mycologists and Identifiers should be used for identification and advice.
- Take notes and pictures to help you remember the mushrooms: location, habitat, etc.
- Whether you decide to eat a mushroom is ultimately your responsibility alone.
- Help Keep Our Parks Clean! It's easy to bring a bag to collect cans, bottles or other trash you find. Trash cans are generally found nearby. If not, take it home for disposal.

**NEVER EAT AN UNIDENTIFIED
MUSHROOM!**

WPMC Newsletter

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club is published five times a year: March/April, May/June, July/August, September/October, and November/December. Articles, photos, news items and other submissions should be sent to the Editor at least 6-8 weeks prior to targeted distribution. The Editor cannot guarantee that submissions will be included in the next newsletter. The Editor reserves the right to make spelling or grammatical corrections and may suggest content changes to the author. Material published in our newsletters may only be used in other non-profit publications with expressed permission and with appropriate acknowledgements.

Cecily Franklin, Editor
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WPMC MEMBERSHIP FORM

Anyone who has an interest in wild mushrooms is welcome to become a WPMC member.

COMPLETE THIS FORM **PRINT CLEARLY**, SIGN AND MAIL

Benefits: WPMC newsletter • Nine monthly WPMC meetings • Free participation in WPMC walks • Discount for WPMC forays

NEW MEMBERSHIP: RENEWAL:

Name (s) _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone 1 _____ Phone 2 _____

E-mail (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY) _____

Interests (e.g.: foraging, identification, cooking, etc.) _____

**PLEASE PRINT IN PLAIN BLOCK LETTERING. TAKE SPECIAL CARE WITH EMAIL ADDRESSES:
numeral "1," uppercase "i" and lowercase "L" look the same.**

Please return completed, signed and dated form (with check payable to Western PA Mushroom Club) to:

WPMC, c/o Jared Delaney, 1912 Chislett Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15206 • treasurer@wpamushroomclub.org

or visit <http://wpamushroomclub.org/about/join/> to pay using a credit card.

Please indicate your newsletter/event announcement preference: Electronic via e-mail Hardcopy via US mail (\$10 additional)

\$15 Individual \$20 Family \$10 Full-time Student \$10 Newsletter Hardcopy Amount enclosed: \$ _____

Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club Release and Indemnification Agreement

This Release and Indemnification Agreement (the "Agreement") is entered into by and between the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club, as it is presently organized and may be later structured ("WPMC") and the undersigned Member (the "Member") on this _____ day of _____, 20____.

WHEREAS, WPMC is a non-profit educational organization that has as its principal purpose the sharing of mushroom-related information among its members; and

WHEREAS, all officers, directors, identifiers and members serve WPMC in a voluntary capacity and receive no remuneration for their services; and

WHEREAS, in cases where WPMC charges a fee for its forays, walks, lectures and other events (collectively "WPMC Events"), it is doing so only to cover its direct costs and does not operate in a for-profit capacity; and WHEREAS, the Member understands that there is inherent and unavoidable risk in outdoor activities relating to hunting and consuming wild mushrooms. These risks include but are not limited to the dangers of hiking in difficult terrain, the possibility of misidentifying a wild mushroom, and the possible allergic or toxic reaction that some individuals may have to otherwise edible mushrooms.

NOW THEREFORE, the Member hereby agrees to the following:

1. The Member assumes all risks associated with WPMC Events. The Member expressly acknowledges that it is the Member's sole responsibility to hike safely and to determine whether a wild mushroom may be consumed.
2. The Member releases, holds harmless, and indemnifies the WPMC, its officers, directors, identifiers, and representatives from any and all liability relating to any injury or illness incurred by the Member or the Member's family members as a result of participation in a WPMC Event.

This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. If any portion of the Agreement is declared for any reason to be invalid or unenforceable, such invalidity shall not affect any other provision of the Agreement. This Agreement shall apply to all current and future WPMC events.

MEMBERS:

SIGNATURE (IF PARTICIPANT IS UNDER AGE 21, SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN). PLEASE PRINT NAME:

1 _____ 1 _____

2 _____ 2 _____

3 _____ 3 _____

4 _____ 4 _____

