

NEWS FROM THE RIDGE



Bat Box Boon!

On July 7th, the Rolling Ridge Conservancy had the pleasure of receiving a gift of eight handmade, carefully designed and researched, bat boxes from Rosalyn Lavalée. Rosalyn gave a presentation about her project to residents of Rolling Ridge as well as campers doing volunteer work at the China Folk House.

For her Girl Scout Gold Award Project, Rosalyn wanted to make a difference in the community – but not just any community and not just human communities. She wanted to help bats. Why bats? In her presentation, Rosalyn explained why bats are so valuable to us and to the ecosystem. She described some of the threats to bats, including habitat loss, white nose disease, insect decline, and light and noise disturbance in caves where they overwinter.

The bat boxes are made by reusing disassembled pallets and are coated with nontoxic, dark stain. Care was taken to design the boxes with babies in mind, including using smaller mesh inside for tiny claws to grab. Rosalyn brought printed instruction sheets for how to make your own bat box and brochures to learn more about bats.

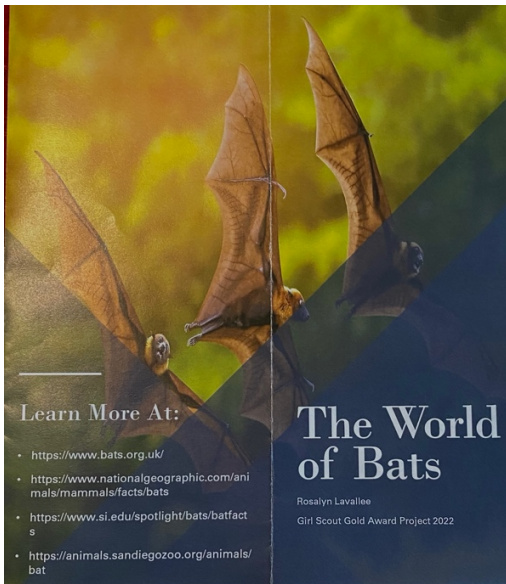
Why did she choose RRC? Rosalyn had been a FLOC Outdoor Education Center camper and student when Josh Evans, current RRC resident, was program director. I asked her what she appreciated about the program. She shared with me that she had experienced some bullying and she felt safe here, welcomed and invited to new learning that she didn't find in the classroom. She enjoyed working on projects around camp, like putting in the pond.

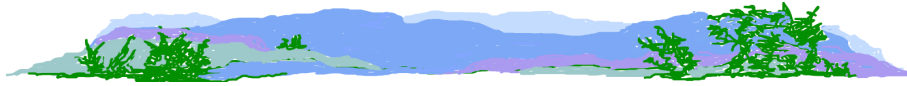
We will hang two boxes at the OEC site, two in the vicinity of the Study Retreat residential community, two near the Niles Cabin, and two near the China Folk House. We hope the bats will feel safe and welcome!

Bats can eat up to 1200 mosquitoes an hour!

More than half of the bat species in the United States are in severe decline or are endangered.

~ from Rosalyn's brochure "The World of Bats"





Native Plants for Birds, Bees, and Caterpillars

Over the years RRC has planted more than thirty trees, 200 shrubs, and countless ground covers along the edges of woods, down by the river, and along stream banks. We select native species because they are adapted to the conditions of our ecosystem and hence are more resilient and low maintenance.

Not only that, native plants do more than hold soil, sequester carbon, and provide shelter – they add ecological value to the landscape. The berries on arrowwood viburnums and spicebush plants, for example, provide the highest nutritional value for migratory birds just at the right time of year they need it. Native plants also support the two groups of insects most important for terrestrial ecosystems - bees that pollinate about 80% of all plants and caterpillars that provide the most energy to local food webs. Virtually all baby birds are fed insects and it takes 200 aphids to equal one fat, nutritious caterpillar!



Insects and plants native to a particular place share an evolutionary history. They have adapted to each other in interdependent, often highly specialized, relationships. A native oak tree is the larval host plant for over 450 caterpillar species whereas a non-native tree species will, at best, only support a few caterpillar species.

Ever wonder why monarch caterpillars only eat milkweed leaves? Milkweed plants secrete a toxic milky substance along the veins of their leaves as a defense mechanism against being eaten. But a monarch caterpillar will first bite a hole in the leaf's midrib to "turn off the tap" so that it can munch away without having its mouth glued shut!



RRC HAPPENINGS

June/July/August: Opequon
(BYM) Camping Intensives

July 30: Miners Lady Race

August 3: Site Visit with WV
Outdoor Heritage Conservation
Fund

Learn more about

Rolling Ridge Conservancy at:
www.rollingridgeconservancy.org



Visiting Goats Munch on Invasive Plants

Kallan's three goats came from the Friends Wilderness Center, where they live with the Bensons, to clear out the Study Retreat residential community's chicken yard. They love Johnson grass, multiflora rose, wineberries, and barberry. Now if we could just let them loose in the woods...

