



### *Kickoff Hike*

Last year's January walk brought out folks of all ages.

At CU Maurice River, an important aspect of our mission is raising awareness about the special natural and cultural qualities of our watershed and adjacent areas. The CU staff has been busy putting together a full calendar of out-of-door activities for people to enjoy in 2019. On Saturday, January 19, we kick off our interpretative hikes with a walk on the Eagle Trail near Turkey Point in Commercial Township. This walk is one of our members' favorites

and we will have a number of naturalists to help us spot interesting birds and plants.

The site is owned and managed by an organization called Natural Lands. This non-profit group saves open space, cares nature, and connects people to the outdoors. They have a presence along the Delaware Bayshore and on the Maurice River in southern New Jersey.

The Eagle Trail has a rich history in the reintroduction of American bald eagles to New Jersey. It includes a mix of hardwood swamp and tidal wetlands—a prime habitat for eagles. We are sure to see some of these majestic birds resulting from the valiant efforts of NJ Fish and Game's Endangered and Non Game Species Program to restore this once Federally Endangered species.

We will view the site of the hacking tower from which eagles were released in those first attempts at reintroducing them to our area in 1983, and gain a greater understanding of the reestablishment process. The site is also frequented by owls, coyotes, fox, deer, and a long list of birds. In addition, we will see a variety of plants that are typical of the New Jersey Delaware Bayshore, and there will be

tracks and other animal signs of critters using the area.

The Eagle Trail is one of many fascinating environments we will explore this year. Our calendar has more than 80 trips, hikes, and volunteer opportunities that you might choose, to gain a greater understanding of our natural and cultural history.

This year we have a minimum of 11 presentations and 30+ walks. With conservation partners at the Eagle Fest on February 2 at the Mauricetown Firehall, another five presentations are planned. CU will also host about two dozen interpretative outings. We will cruise to see the purple martins stage before migration and visit the Maurice River and the Delaware Bay lighthouses. Presently, there are five paddles and four campfires on the calendar. We also have some really fun festivals that we help to organize. And our fundraisers emphasize getting together with like-minded people. If you enjoy working in nature, we have wildlife management projects, cleanups, trail work, and native plant pollinator gardens. Our volunteers put in around 10,000 hours each year; they really enjoy making a difference!

Our activities are open to the public; to review our calendar, check out our website at [cumauriceriver.org](http://cumauriceriver.org) and select Calendar of Events. You can download our One-Page Printable CU Calendar that shows most of the key events for the year.

If you are interested in the Eagle Trail walk, contact us at CU Maurice River, by e-mail at [citizensunited@cumauriceriver.org](mailto:citizensunited@cumauriceriver.org), or call the office at 856-300-5331.

Hope to see you on one of our fun adventures!