

**MARCH NATURAL EVENTS**  
**GSWA ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION**  
**SITE**



*Wood Frog*



*Miner Bee*

1. March is a month out at the CMA that nobody with an ounce of naturalistic tendency should miss. Sure its chilly and mucky but let the sun heat up the site just a little and an event so epic will revitalize your childhood wonder of nature anew. Hike out to the vernal pond off the blue trail and watch the show! The natural event before is the manifestation of a primordial spark that ignites the breeding behavior of one of the CMA's most notable players - the wood frog (*Rana sylvatica*). Even in times when there is still snow on the ground this species will head to temporary, predator free depressions of water and start to croak their duck-like wooing's. The frenzy of males vying for females in the pond should immerse you in what I like to call "deep nature", the kind that transfixes and gives you reason for pause and reflection. You have to see it to believe it. I guarantee you will ruminate about the extraordinary planet we travel upon and the uniqueness of life therein.
2. If you hang at the pond long enough you might also see and hear spring peepers and green frogs under the tannic stained leaves of last year's fall. Peepers breed in a variety of habitats and will be calling at the same time as wood frogs. Green frogs are just waking from a long winters slumber to stretch their legs a bit before they initiate breeding behavior in April.
3. On a really warm day in March, say 65 degrees, the activity can hit a fever pitch, with the calls of peepers sometimes bordering on the cacophonous. Garter snakes can sometimes be seen patrolling the limits of vernal pools (ephemeral bodies of water where amphibians breed), looking for an epicurean meal of frog legs.
4. Small flocks of white throated sparrows are often heard announcing winters swansong as they start their migration back to breeding territories farther north. Occasionally a male will sing its angelically, sad, sweet-song "*Hey there, Peabody, Peabody, Peabody*", as if to say goodbye to all the other creatures that will not see them again until next fall.
5. If you're a naturalists who delights in small things like me than keep on the lookout for one of nature's earliest arrivals – the diminutive miner bee. Living and emerging from small ant-like holes in loose soils these solitary bees emerge in unity with some of the earliest flowering plants. The relationship is truly a lesson in evolutionary phenology (the study of timing in nature) – cool stuff for sure!
6. Late in the month and early in April Spring beauties, trout lilies and wild geraniums will bloom profusely as the first spring ephemerals to grace our forest floor.

*Text and Photos: Blaine Rothauser*