

## Silver Lake Visitor Center

Bucks County, Bristol, Pennsylvania

### Project Details

**Scope:** Visitor/Nature Center: 5,000 sf  
**Budget:** \$ 400,000

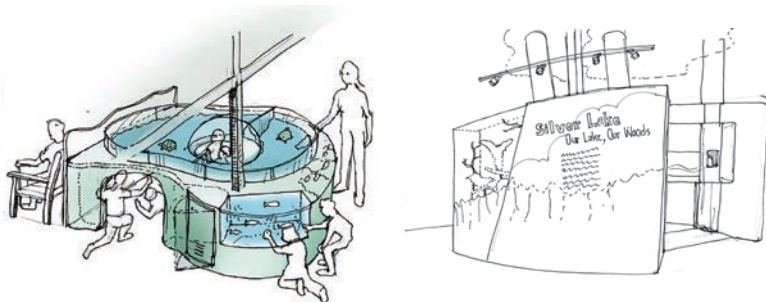
### Project Team

**Exhibit development:** Matt Kirchman  
**Exhibit Design:** Edward Malouf  
**Graphic Design:** Carol Lieb,  
Alexander Tirer  
**Writing:** Faye Goolrick  
**Construction:** Premier Construction,  
Burns & Wohlgemuth Woodcrafters

Our team has developed a visitor-focused transformation for Silver Lake Nature Center. This 235-acre complex is unique to Pennsylvania in that it harbors the best-protected Coastal Plain Forest left in the state. Responding to the communities' desire for a more accessible, welcoming, and attractive space that would support the friendly and open environment created by the staff. Our interactive exhibits prepare the visitor to understand what they will encounter when they hit the trail. Why are there all these large boulders everywhere? Are these softwood or hardwood trees? Is Silver Lake deep? What kind of animals or birds will I encounter? The secondary theme demonstrates the dynamic change that has taken place in just the last century, a spectacular growth in dwellings and surprisingly, trees!



Major architectural changes were made to the space to create a welcoming gallery.



Original entry to exhibit gallery

**Content•Design**

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## Silver Lake Visitor Center

A new case highlights a formerly neglected taxidermy collection. The shelf and easily sliding case doors allow staff to feature finds by visitors.



The photo at the top shows the former offices, the photo below is the new view.



# Restored Wetlands Habitat Wonders

Silver Lake Nature Center has lots of water—and wetlands. The word “wetlands” describes landscapes that are saturated for extended periods of time.

Look for these five different wetland types as you explore the Nature Center today. Each wetland area supports its own community of plants and animals. The wetlands also help prevent flooding and sustain water quality throughout the region.



**1 Bog**

The small unglaciated bog near the wet meadows is one of Pennsylvania's most unusual wetland types. Sphagnum moss, bladderworts, bushy bluestem, and poison sumac grow here—and the ground seems spongy beneath your feet.



Sphagnum Moss

**2 Wet Meadow**

Under the power line wet meadows look like a field of wildflowers in summer as rare marsh pinks and coast violets bloom. During fall and winter, rainwater collects and remains in these flat, low-lying lands well into spring.

**3 Vernal Pool**

Areas of open water within the forest and wet meadows. Like the wet meadows, vernal pools appear seasonally and do not last year-round. Red maples and sour gums thrive here, even though their roots are often underwater. These temporary pools provide excellent habitat for breeding amphibians.



Fairy Shrimp

**4 Marsh**

Visible from the raised boardwalks is a broad, shallow expanse of water. It is abundant with deep green spatterdock, arrowhead, loosestrife, and other “emergent” plants. These tough aquatic plants grow in the muck at the bottom of the marsh, and their stems, leaves, and colorful flowers emerge above the waterline. Aquatic plants provide essential habitat for a diverse community of migrating and residential animals.



Crimson-eyed Rose Mallow

**5 Open Water**

Large bodies of open water – Silver Lake, Magnolia Lake, and Cassalia Pond – are true aquatic habitats, inhabited by plants and animals, including a variety of fish.



Photos: Vernal Pool Background, Fairy Shrimp, and Crimson-eyed Rose Mallow, C.H. King; Sphagnum Moss, USFWS

Typical main area graphic panel,