

Pleasant Valley Nature Preserve

January 12, 2026

What? No Species List? Nope. We usually don't make species lists for our winter hikes because most plants are dormant. Trying to determine the species of a dormant plant from its dried-up remains is not always reliable. It serves little purpose to create unreliable species lists. So, we'll just give an overview of things that happened on our walk today.

NOTES

We walked the entire perimeter of this peaceful preserve on a 1-mile-long loop trail. It is one of the Jefferson County parks. The 50° temperature was surprisingly mild for early January. The trail was well-maintained. True to its "Pleasant Valley" name, we had a very pleasant walk.

PLANTS: No big news in the plant department – we saw what one would expect to see in a winter woodland. We saw our old friends such as Shagbark, Hackberry (with its petiole galls), Paw Paw, Father Sullivan's Ash, and Sassafras. We saw a couple of ferns (Christmas and Ebony Spleenwort). And of course there were some uninvited visitors, such as Bush Honeysuckle (which surprisingly had some fresh green leaves!), Garlic Mustard, and Winter Creeper.

HIGH-SECURITY RESTROOM: In the center of the Nature Preserve there was a new restroom building. Those who wanted to use it walked up to its doors, but called back to the group that the doors were locked. However the doors didn't have ordinary keyed doorknobs or deadbolts. Instead they had levers with electronic combination locks – the kind you might expect to see in some fancy secured facility. John joked: "Well, we know what the combinations are: they're either 'Number One' or 'Number Two'." Everybody laughed at his quick wit.

CAVE: We found a cave along the trail! Evidently it is a significant one, but it was protected with a large, welded gate. The gate was new and had slots in it to allow bats to enter and exit. George recalled having read about this cave and about a local group's success in restoring its bat population. George later sent us a copy of the article he had read: [HERE](#).

PARTICIPANTS:

There were 20 of us botanists today, who are (in alphabetical order):

Brenda Adams, Prem Barton, Renee Benage, Kathy Bildner, Tina Cheung with Keithi Woodyard, Wayne Clark, Christine Ellis, Tom Hardy with Tayebah Moayedzadeh, June Jeffries, Jeanne Kloeckner, Michael Laschober, Burt Noll, John Oliver, David Steinmeyer, Kathy Thiele, Mark and Deb Tolcou, George Van Brunt, and Laura Yates.