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JOHN JAMES AUDUBON CENTER ANNOUNCES NEW MUSEUM OPENING JUNE 2019 AT HISTORIC MILL GROVE SITE

\$13 Million Facility Promises “The Nest Big Thing” in Art, Conservation and Education for Greater Philadelphia Region

AUDUBON, Penn. (April 26, 2019) – On **June 5, 2019**, the [John James Audubon Center](#), in partnership with Montgomery County, will celebrate the grand opening of a new 18,000-square-foot museum and nature-based facility at historic [Mill Grove](#). The building, a \$13 million project, will offer interactive and family-friendly ways to explore the legacy of famed ornithologist John James Audubon and the conservation movement he inspired.

“Montgomery County has preserved more than 6,000 acres of public open land, which includes seven parks, four historic sites and over 90 miles of trails in our regional network,” said Dr. Val Arkoosh, Chair of the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners. “Our wealth of green space and native wildlife are said to have inspired the work of a young Audubon and we treasure that heritage. We are proud to include the John James Audubon Center at our historic Mill Grove site among our list of premier Montgomery County attractions and welcome the new museum as a destination for our residents and visitors to connect with nature.”

The new Audubon Center museum at Mill Grove joins the existing historic house, barn and nature trails to provide an immersive visitor destination while continuing to serve as a haven for birds and wildlife. Built by [Montgomery County](#), in partnership with the [National Audubon Society](#), the new building will house two galleries for art and conservation as well as permanent exhibits with multi-sensory experiences and fun outdoor features.

“John James Audubon has inspired generations of birders and nature lovers. This new museum offers an unmatched experience at Mill Grove to learn about his life in the early 1800s and how the wonders of birds, science and conservation have become a part of America’s way of life,” said David Yarnold ([@david_yarnold](#)), president and CEO of the National Audubon Society. “There is something here for everyone that will spark intrigue in budding naturalists, birders and scientists, who will carry on Audubon’s work protecting birds and the places they need for decades to come. We’re proud to have partnered with Montgomery County and alongside community leaders to make this center for art and conservation possible.”

The Building

Managed by Montgomery County's Department of Assets and Infrastructure, construction of the Audubon Center's new museum began in 2017 and was funded by the County, a Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and donations from dozens of individual and foundation supporters. Designed by Conshohocken-based [Kimmel Bogrette Architecture + Site](#), the new eco-friendly building reflects "life among the trees," drawing inspiration from the surrounding landscape at Mill Grove that Audubon called home.

The exterior lines of the building reflect the designer's interpretation of a bird in flight, bolstered by "tree-like" columns that branch out to support the structure. The building incorporates bird-safe windows, natural nesting places, an observation deck, gift shop and an adjoining look-out patio offering sprawling views. In addition to the visitor spaces, the venue includes archival storage rooms, a classroom, offices and a catering facility that connects to a year-round event pavilion.

The Experience

Hours of Operation: Monday – Sunday, 9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (Mill Grove grounds are open year-round, dawn – dusk.)

Admission: Adult – \$14, Seniors (65+) – \$12, Youth (ages 6 – 17) – \$10, Children (age 5 or younger) & Active Military (along with immediate family members) – Free.

The Audubon Center's new museum will serve as an educational facility dedicated to engaging visitors with the natural world of birds while preserving John James Audubon's artistic, scientific and historic work. With exhibitions and installations designed by West Chester-based [Gecko Group](#), visitors of all ages and interests will be able to connect with Audubon (the man, the organization and the mission) through the use of artifacts and modern technology.

- Galleries & Permanent Exhibits:
 - **Drawn From Nature – The John James Audubon Gallery:** After losing his business in 1819, Audubon declared his intention to paint every bird in North America, resulting in the now world-renowned body of work of 435 images – known as *The Birds of America*. In this gallery, visitors can view one of the few surviving **first editions of *The Birds of America*** (sometimes called the "Double Elephant Folio" for its large size) and his lesser-known drawings of mammals from the *Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America*. A life-size digital version of *The Birds of America* will captivate guests as they browse featured species.
 - **WOW Birds! Gallery:** This space showcases the beauty, variety, sounds and songs, graceful flight and presence of birds along the Atlantic Flyway. Learn about the process of **Bird Banding** and its modern role in migration research. Immerse yourself in the **Sound Forest** to experience bird songs in different habitats. Take a close look at feathers and nests, and learn why not all eggs are shaped the same. Take **Flight** as you discover how birds' wings work and trace the migration patterns of your favorite flock via a digital flyway map.
 - **Conservation Stories:** Learn how the organization that bears the artist's names – National Audubon Society – has become synonymous with bird conservation throughout the Americas. The story of Audubon's Seabird Restoration Program and Project Puffin illustrate Audubon's pioneering work in saving and conserving rare and endangered species. Discover how Audubon biologists used creative methods of social attraction to restore the

populations of Atlantic Puffins on the coast of Maine after nearly disappearing from this area, which became the model for social attraction projects worldwide.

- Outdoor Features:
 - **Pawlings Porch:** Birdwatch over a wildflower meadow and learn more about the birds and native plants in the area.
 - **Fledgling Trail:** Funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and Barbara and Ray Blydenburgh in conjunction with the Wyncote Foundation, this outdoor installation is a playful take on a bird's life from egg to flight. Children of all ages can experience simulated milestones for a baby bird. From "hatching" out of an oversized egg to feeling the sway of a "tree" and the first "flight," visitors will discover the steps that a baby bird must take to successfully leave the nest. The Fledgling Trail will also include a sensory garden, water features and ADA-accessible play areas.
- The Resident Birds of Audubon: As avian ambassadors, these non-releasable wild birds are trained to help educate people about their natural history and issues facing birds today. The Audubon Center's resident birds include three Screeching Owls (Abby, Scooter and Oscar), Conrad the Blue Jay, Hopper the Broad-winged Hawk, Oden the Great Horned Owl and Sherlock the Barred Owl.

The John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove is situated on a historic 18th-century site. The 175-acre estate includes the original farmhouse (built in 1762), five miles of nature trails along the Perkiomen Creek, and is home to more than 175 species of birds and more than 400 species of native plants.

In conjunction with the June opening, the Audubon Center at Mill Grove will host guided bird and nature walks around the estate along with interactive workshops and classes focusing on native plants, habitat conservation, birding and the Delaware River Watershed. To learn more about the John James Audubon Center, visit www.JohnJames.audubon.org and follow along on Instagram as the Center takes flight at @johnjamesauduboncenter.

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Opening Press Event:

When: Tuesday, June 4, 2019 – 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Members of the press are invited to attend the ribbon-cutting event featuring remarks from partners including the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Montgomery County, Audubon Pennsylvania and the National Audubon Society. Light refreshments will be served beginning at 11 a.m., speaking program to begin at noon.

Where: 1201 Pawlings Road, Audubon, PA 19403

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About John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove

*The **John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove** is made possible through a partnership between Montgomery County (PA), the National Audubon Society and Audubon Pennsylvania. Completed in 2019, the state-of-the-art facility serves as an educational center dedicated to engaging visitors with the natural world of birds while preserving John James Audubon's artistic, scientific and historic legacy, and celebrating the conservation movement he inspired. The Audubon Center stands on the 175-acre Mill Grove estate – a Montgomery County Historic Site that includes the original 1762 farmhouse and five miles of nature trails along the Perkiomen Creek. The Audubon Center joins the National Audubon Society's network of more than 40 nature centers and sanctuaries in communities across the country. Learn more about the John James Audubon Center at www.johnjames.audubon.org and follow us on Instagram @johnjamesauduboncenter.*

About Audubon

*The **National Audubon Society** protects birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow. Audubon works throughout the Americas using, science, advocacy, education and on-the-ground conservation. State programs, nature centers, chapters, and partners give Audubon an unparalleled wingspan that reaches millions of people each year to inform, inspire, and unite diverse communities in conservation action. A nonprofit conservation organization since 1905, Audubon believes in a world in which people and wildlife thrive. Learn more how to help at www.audubon.org and follow them on Twitter and Instagram at @audubonsociety.*

***Audubon Pennsylvania**, a state office of the National Audubon Society, conserves and restores natural ecosystems in Pennsylvania, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity. Learn more at www.pa.audubon.org and by following them on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram at @audubonpa.*

About Montgomery County

Montgomery County, originally a part of Philadelphia County, was created by the Pennsylvania Assembly on September 10, 1784. Steeped in history and blessed with an abundance of natural beauty, they are one of the Commonwealth's most vital and progressive counties. Montgomery County encompasses 483 square miles of exceptional housing, thriving malls, and shopping centers, rolling farmland, pristine rural areas, and vibrant office and industrial complexes populated by numerous Fortune 500 and multinational corporations.

There are 24 boroughs and 38 townships that make up Montgomery County. Norristown is the county seat with the courthouse located at Airy and Swede streets. The county's population was estimated to be 821,725 in 2016, according to the US Census Bureau. For more about Montgomery County at www.montcopa.org and by following them on Facebook at @montgomery.county.pa and Twitter @montcopa.