

Hike offers opportunity to sketch nature

By JASON KAPLAN

For the third year in a row, Emilie Wolf, chair of the Science Department at The Browning School, will lead the Hike & Sketch through Black Rock Forest starting at 10 a.m. on Saturday.

The two to three mile moderate hike will last about

three hours and takes participants around the upper reservoir. The hike will incorporate several sketching sessions. No drawing skills are required.

The Browning School is a member of the Black Rock Forest Consortium and Wolf's predecessor had led hikes focusing on biotechnology.

"What I like doing in the forest is sketching," said Wolf, adding she experiences feelings of joy and calmness when she's drawing in nature. "It's a nice way to take the time to actually observe beautiful things in a closer, more purposeful way."

The hike also creates a sense of excitement, especially when coming across a

rare or unusual species.

Wolf said previous hikers enjoyed finding juvenile newts because of their bright orange color and red dots.

Her groups have also discovered parasitic plants such as the *Monotropa uniflora*, that are known as Indian Pipe. What makes them parasites is they do not photosynthesize like other plants so they get their sugar by stealing it from nearby trees.

Another interesting discovery was the Pelecinid wasp, which has a long ovipositor (long abdomen modified to allow the female to lay eggs in grubs - beetle larvae underground).

"It's impressive looking but harmless to humans," said Wolf.

During the hike, Wolf will talk about what a scientist might look at when they're



Photo contributed
Emilie Wolf will lead a Hike & Sketch through Black Rock Forest this Saturday.

in the field and the different terms used to describe shapes.

Participants will also learn to keep their own field journal like the naturalists of the past while discovering flora and fauna in the forest.

Depending on the group, there will be three to five opportunities to stop and sketch,

take photos, write, or just observe the surroundings. The breaks will typically last between 15 and 20 minutes.

Although her background is in science, Wolf said she enjoys sketching unique leaf shapes or favorite species that are flowering.

"The idea is when you look at the forest, what you see is not just a screen of green, but within that green there are dozens of species. It's about getting to know our local plants."

To RSVP, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/sketch-and-hike-at-black-rock-forest-tickets-69056875975> or call 845-534-4517.

Hikers should bring a sketchbook, drawing tools, drinking water, snacks or a light lunch (if desired), comfortable walking shoes, and insect/tick repellent.