

WINTER 2023

A GUIDE TO THE **Forest Preserves of Cook County**



feel free

fpdcc.com

Have You **Watched** Wild & Wonderful?



tinyurl.com/wildwonderful101

The Wild & Wonderful video series teaches young children and people of all ages about our native plants and wildlife.



**Wild &
Wonderful**



**Project
Rainbow**
A Cook County Initiative



**FOREST
PRESERVES**
of Cook County



The FPCC is committed to providing equal, integrated participation for individuals with disabilities. Please contact the Nature Center of your program choice 72 hours in advance to request reasonable accommodations and to obtain more information about site accessibility. To obtain information about accommodations for specific camping and outdoor recreation activities throughout the Forest Preserves, please contact us at experience.nature@cookcountyil.gov or at **708-386-4042**.





Wintertime in the Forest Preserves of Cook County is magical: snow-covered landscapes sparkle, the air is crisp and refreshing, and nature provides both tranquil and exciting ways to experience the season.

For those looking to escape the hustle and bustle of holidays, consider enjoying a peaceful walk in the woods. Our programming team offers numerous guided wellness walks throughout the County, or our web map can help find a nearby Forest Preserves trail for a self-guided experience.

Visitors can also enjoy a variety of educational programming at nature centers and beyond that highlight seasonal topics ranging from cold-hardy birds to identifying trees without their leaves.

And for those looking for more exhilarating activities, try snowshoeing, cross-country skiing or sledding! There are also plenty of volunteer opportunities—complete with a brush pile burn—that will help folks get in a unique workout and warm up while helping our natural areas thrive.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Toni Preckwinkle". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Toni" and last name "Preckwinkle" clearly distinguishable.

Toni Preckwinkle, *President*
Forest Preserves of Cook County



feel free

fpdcc.com

How to use this Guide:

Whether you’re looking for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and sledding locations or fun and educational events or programs at nature centers and sites throughout the County, this guide will help you create your own adventure in the Forest Preserves.

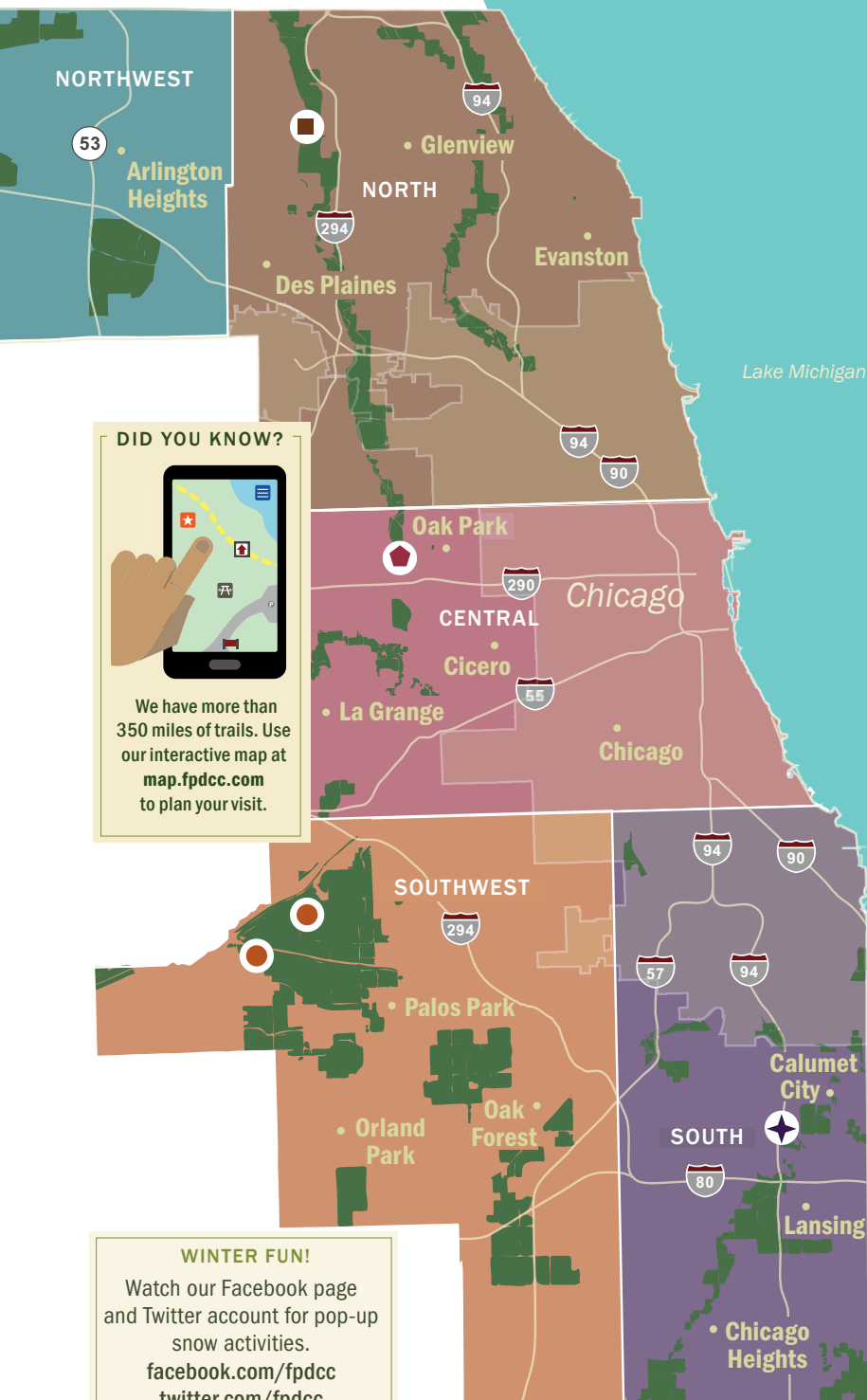
By using the designated zone colors and shapes below, find events and amenities close to home, or explore nearly 70,000 acres of wild and wonderful.

Come by yourself, or with your family and friends. There’s no better place to feel free.



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Entrance to Nature Centers is free; some programs and zone-based activities require a small fee.
Building and Grounds Closed Christmas and New Year's Day



Seasonal Offerings

throughout Cook County



2024 Permits on sale now
fpdcc.com/permits

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING & SNOWSHOEING ▲ ●

Visitors can cross-country ski in all parts of the Forest Preserves, except for golf courses and nature centers. All areas are open to snowshoeing.

Sagawau Environmental Learning Center offers a complete Nordic Ski Program, including groomed trails and lessons. Campgrounds offer snowshoes and cross-country skis for rent by campers. Check our website for details on snowshoe rentals at nature centers.

EQUESTRIAN ■ ●

Horse riders can enjoy miles of trails throughout the Preserves.
fpdcc.com/equestrian

ICE FISHING* ▲ ■ ● ✦

Ice fishing is permitted at 22 designated waterbodies, from 8 am–sunset.*

ICE SKATING* ▲ ■ ●

Visitors can ice skate from 8 am–sunset on six designated lakes.

JUICED BY SHIC ●

Swallow Cliff

Days/hours are weather dependent.
708-827-5344

Calumet Sag Rd/Rte 83, west
of La Grange Rd/96th Ave, IL 60464

OFF-LEASH DOG AREAS ■ ◆ ●

Membership info at fpdcc.com/dogs

Beck Lake

East River Rd & Central Rd, Des Paines

Bremen Grove

Oak Park Ave, south of 159th St

Tinley Park

Miller Meadow-South

1st Ave, south of Roosevelt Rd
Forest Park

*Fish and skate at your own risk—ice conditions are not monitored by the Forest Preserves. A minimum of 4 inches of solid ice over the entire lake is strongly recommended.

ZONE KEY

▲ Northwest ■ North ◆ Central ● Southwest ✦ South



SLEDDING ▲ ■ ◆ ● ✦

We offer four sledding hills with lighting, open 10 am–7:30 pm, Sunday–Thursday and 10 am–8:30 pm Friday–Saturday:

Dan Ryan Woods–Chicago

Caldwell Woods–Chicago

Westchester Woods–Westchester

Swallow Cliff–Palos Park

We offer five sledding spots without lighting, open 10 am–sunset:

Pioneer Woods–Willow Springs

Ted Lechowicz Woods–Chicago

Schiller Woods–Schiller Park

Deer Grove, Grove 4–Palatine

Deer Grove, Grove 5–Palatine

Open when there is at least 3 inches of snow on frozen ground.

SNOWBOARDING ✦

Snowboarding is allowed at Dan Ryan Woods on the snowboarding hill only. (At least 6 inches of snow required).

SNOWMOBILING ▲ ● ✦

Snowmobiling is allowed in four designated areas from 10 am–10 pm:

Ned Brown Meadow–Rolling Meadows

North Creek Meadow–Lansing

Morrill Meadow–Palos Hills

Turtlehead Lake–Orland Park

Illinois Snowmobile Registration required. For details, visit fpdcc.com/snowmobiling.

VOLUNTEER ▲ ■ ◆ ● ✦

Join a stewardship volunteer day, Adopt-a-Site or support public safety efforts. fpdcc.com/volunteer.



PAVILION RENTALS ▲ ■ ◆ ● ✦

Host your next event with us. Our five affordably priced rental pavilions are ideal venues for weddings, family reunions, birthday parties and much more. Choose from restored historic buildings or new energy-efficient facilities—all located in beautiful natural areas.

Reserve your space: Call 773-558-2003 or email info@forestpreserveevents.com. Learn more at fpdcc.com/pavilions.

Dan Ryan Woods Pavilion

8700 S Western Ave, Chicago

Mathew Bieszczat Volunteer Resource Center

6100 N Central, Chicago

Rolling Knolls

11N260 Rohrssen Rd, Elgin

Swallow Cliff Pavilion

IL Rt 83 & US Rt 45, Palos Park

Thatcher Woods Pavilion

8030 Chicago Ave, River Forest

PARTNERS CLASSES & EVENTS

Northwest Passage, info@nwpassage.com
REI, rei.com/learn

Trailbound Trips, trailboundtrips.com

Hike the Preserves

Get some exercise, meet new people, and learn about your local forest preserves with these programs out on the trails.

Walk & Talks

For curious minds who want to know more about the Forest Preserves, these hikes will be led at a slower pace with frequent stopping and interpretation.

North Zone ■

Know your Preserves!*

Get to know the Forest Preserves! Learn about the Forest Preserves while taking a slow hike.

Tower Road Boat Launch–Tower Rd, west of Forestway Dr, Northfield
Thursday, Dec 21 • 10 am–Noon

Black History Month Celebration*

Learn about the importance of Black environmentalists and how the Forest Preserves' trails relate to the Underground Railroad Movement.

LaBagh Woods–Grove 1, W Foster Ave, N Cicero Ave, Chicago
Thursday, Feb 22 • 10 am–Noon

Central Zone ◆

Chicago Portage National Historic Site*-1 mi.

Chicago Portage National Historic Site, S Harlem Ave, south of 47th St, Lyons
Wednesday, Jan 3 • 10 am

Sundown Meadow -2.5 miles

S La Grange Rd, north of 67th St, Countryside
Saturday, Jan 6 • 10 am

Southwest Zone ●

Black Partridge Woods-2 mi.

Bluff Rd, east of I-355
Wednesday, Dec 27 • 10 am

South Zone ✦

Oak Forest Heritage Preserve-East-1.6 mi.

Fieldcrest Dr, southwest of Crawford Ave, Oak Forest
Saturday, Jan 20 • 10 am

Kickapoo Woods -1 mi.

Halsted St, south of W 144th St, Riverdale
Saturday, Feb 17 • 10 am

Fitness Hikes

Fitness Hikes are for those looking to get some exercise outdoors. Fitness hikes will be faster paced with little to no stopping or interpretation.

Central Zone ◆

Brezina Woods*-6 mi.

N La Grange Rd, south of W Cermak Rd
Sunday, Dec 10 • 9:30 am

Southwest Zone

Country Lane Woods-5 mi.

95th St, east of Flavin Rd/Willow Springs Rd
Thursday, Dec 28 • 9:30 am

Wolf Road Woods-5.5 mi.

Wolf Rd, south of 95th St, Willow Springs
Wednesday, Jan 24 • 9:30 am

ZONE KEY

▲ Northwest

■ North

◆ Central

● Southwest

✦ South



#birdthepreserves



Teason's Woods-4 mi.

S Willow Springs Rd, south
of Calumet Sag Rd/Route 83
Wednesday, Feb 14 • 9:30 am

South Zone ✦

Eggers Grove-5 mi.

E 112th St & S Ave E, Chicago
Saturday, Dec 16 • 10 am

Sauk Trail Woods-Central-3.4 mi.

Forest Preserve Dr, south of W
26th St, South Chicago Heights

**Registration required. Go to
experience.nature@fpdcc.com
to register unless otherwise noted.*



*Kestrel at Somme Prairie Nature
Preserve, by Lisa Musgrave*

Christmas Bird Count

Between December 14-January 5
each year, novice and experienced
birders head outdoors looking, listening,
recording and submitting data to the
longest-running community science bird
program in the nation.

For more information and to find
your local Audubon chapter visit,
Audubon.org



FOREST PRESERVES OF COOK COUNTY

CAMPING

fpdcc.com/camping • 1-855-YES-CAMP

Camp Reinberg • Camp Bullfrog Lake • Camp Sullivan

RATES: NOV-DEC

COOK COUNTY
RESIDENT

NON-RESIDENT

Type	Capacity	Sun-Sat	Sun-Sat
Tent/RV Electric	6	\$28	\$37
Tent (Non-Electric)	6	\$22	\$32
Small Cabin	8	\$43	\$53
Large Cabin	10	\$104	\$116
Small Bunkhouse	16	\$121	\$133
Large Bunkhouse	36	\$158	\$168

Camp Dan Beard

RATES: NOV-DEC

COOK COUNTY
RESIDENT

NON-RESIDENT

Type	Capacity	Sun-Sat	Sun-Sat
Tent (Non-Electric)	6	\$22	\$32
Small Cabin	8	\$43	\$54
Large Cabin	10	\$90	\$100
Group Site Pricing	30-60	\$22/tent	\$32/tent

CAMPGROUNDS



Camp Reinberg

1801 N Quentin Rd
Palatine

Camp Bullfrog Lake

9600 Wolf Rd
Willow Springs

Camp Sullivan

14630 Oak Park Ave
Oak Forest



Camp Dan Beard

200 Portwine Rd
Northbrook

Camp Shabbona Woods

15810 S Torrence Ave
South Holland
Closed Oct 31-Mar 31

Camping permits for 2024 now available.
Camp Shabbona Woods closed for winter. Reopens April 2024.

Contact campgrounds for information and group site availability. 1-855-YES-CAMP.



CAMPGROUNDS OFFERINGS

Winter Bonfire ■

Celebrate the start of the winter season with a giant bonfire.

Camp Dan Beard

Saturday, Dec 2 • 4–8 pm



Winter Fire Building Workshop* ■ ▲ ●

Learn fire building skills and stick around for a story & s'mores around the fire. All ages. Programs begin at 6 pm.

Camp Dan Beard

Thursday, Dec 14

Camp Reinberg

Thursday, Jan 11

Camp Sullivan

Friday, Feb 15

Snowshoe Walk* ● ▲

Enjoy the Preserves of snowshoes. Snowshoes provided; 4" of snow required. If no snow is present, we will enjoy a winter walk.

Saturdays • 1 pm

Camp Sullivan-**Jan 6**

Camp Reinberg-**Jan 27 and Feb 24**

Camp Bullfrog Lake-**Feb 10**

Teen Exploration Day: Snowshoeing and Fire Building*

Enjoy the Preserves on snowshoes then learn different methods for fire building outdoors and make s'mores! Snowshoes provided; 4" of snow required.

Camp Bullfrog Lake

Wednesday, Dec 27 • 1–3:30 pm

**Registration required. For info and registration, contact:*

— **experience.camping@cookcountyil.gov** —

ZONE KEY

▲ Northwest

■ North

◆ Central

● Southwest

★ South



Become a Concessionaire

in the Forest Preserves
of Cook County

Applications now available for 2024
fpdcc.com/permits/concessions



Conviértase en un concesionario

con el Forest Preserves
de Cook County

Las solicitudes se pueden
completar visitándonos en
fpdcc.com/permits/concessions



Northwest Zone



Winter Camp*

Explore activities while learning the significance of the winter season in Native American culture.

Presented by Trickster Cultural Center. Call 847-301-2090 to register.

Thursday-Saturday, Jan 4-6
10 am-2 pm

Rolling Knolls
11N260 Rohrssen Rd, Elgin

Winter Workshops

Rolling Knolls
11N260 Rohrssen Rd, Elgin

Woodworking*

Repurpose the common European buckthorn into something new. Equipment provided. Ages 10 & up.

Thursday, Jan 25 • 10 am-Noon

Phone-tography 101*

Enjoy a morning in the Preserves and learn the basics of photography using a smartphone.

Saturday, Feb 3 • 10 am-Noon

Pottery*

Join us for our themed sessions as we explore pottery. Ages 13 & up.

Saturday, Feb 24 • 10 am-Noon

DECEMBER

Forest Therapy Walk*

A Certified Forest Therapy guide will help you awaken your senses and renew your bond with nature. Ages 18 & up.

Thursday, Dec 14 • 1 pm

Rolling Knolls Pavilion
11N260 Rohrssen Rd, Elgin



MLK Service Day Celebration*

Participate in restoration, celebrate the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr., and warm up with hot beverages.

Ages 10 & up.

Saturday, Jan 13 • 10 am-Noon

Rolling Knolls,
11N260 Rohrssen Rd, Elgin

Unless otherwise noted, to register, call 773-758-8899.

EXPLORE MORE



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Crabtree

NATURE CENTER



3 Stover Rd, Barrington, 847-381-6592

Building: 9 am – 4 pm, *closed Fridays*, Grounds: 8 am – 4 pm daily, Free Admission



Snowshoe Rentals

Snowshoes are available when snow is 4" or greater. Equipment is limited and loaned on a first come, first served basis.

THROUGHOUT *the* SEASON

Wee Wanderer Wednesdays

For children ages 2–6 w/caregiver. Limited tickets on a first come, first served basis starting at 9:30 am.

Wednesdays, Dec 6, Jan 10, Feb 7 • 10 am

Buckthorn Busters

Gloves, tools and eyewear provided. Ages 8 & up w/adult. Teens may earn service hours.

*Saturdays, Dec 9, Jan 27, Feb 17
10 am–Noon*

DECEMBER

Conservation@Home: Promoting Pollinators In Your Winter Garden

An introduction to some practices that benefit overwintering pollinators in your garden.

Sunday, Dec 3 • 1 pm

Owl Prowl*

Join us for a short presentation to learn about our local owls and observe them on the trail. Ages 12 & up.

Friday, Dec 8 • 7 pm

Owl Program

Join us for an indoor presentation to learn about unique adaptations of owls that make them silent, skilled nocturnal hunters.

Saturday, Dec 16 • 1 pm

Winter Solstice Lantern Walk*

Thursday, Dec 21 • 7 pm

Winter Play Day

Drop in for outdoor and indoor family fun. Visit the self-directed activity stations and discover seasonal nature through play and exploration.

Saturday, Dec 30 • 1–3 pm

MLK Day Restoration

Put on some gloves and join us to remove invasive species. Tools, eye protection provided. Children 8 & up w/adult. Teens can earn service hours.

Monday, Jan 15 • 1 pm

JANUARY

Ani-mail

Special delivery! Young visitors can help us deliver the mail correspondence of our animal ambassadors inside the nature center.

Throughout January



The Science of Snow

Learn about snowflakes through hands-on indoor and outdoor activities.

Sunday, Jan 7 • 1 pm

Stories of the Stars*

View the constellations and hear their mythical tales while enjoying a treat around the campfire.

Friday, Jan 12 • 7:30 pm

Picidae

Woodpeckers are well adapted for their environment. Join us for a short presentation and a stroll to observe these wonderful woodland birds.

Sunday, Jan 14 • 1 pm

Salamanders

Join us for an indoor presentation as we investigate amazing and unique salamanders and their importance in local ecosystems. Ages 12 & up.

Saturday, Jan 20 • 1 pm

Coffee and Feeders

Bring your favorite coffee with you and enjoy watching the bird feeders from inside our newly renovated exhibit room.

Sunday, Jan 21 • 9 am

Full Moon Walk*

Discover Crabtree at night by the light of the Wolf Moon. Ages 8 & up.

Thursday, Jan 25 • 7 pm

Crabtree Hygge

Celebrate the Danish tradition of coziness with hot chocolate and nature books.

Sunday, Jan 28 • 11 am–3 pm

FEBRUARY

This Old Birdhouse*

Prepare a house for the upcoming nesting season. Limited space. One birdhouse per family. \$5 suggested donation. Ages 10 & up.

Sunday, Feb 4 • 1 pm

Resting Reptiles

Pick up a self-led guide and enjoy a half mile walk to discover how native reptiles are surviving winter.

Saturday, Feb 10 • 9 am–3 pm

Spark in the Dark*

Enjoy a self-guided walk on a candlelit trail and warm up by the fire with your special someone.

Saturday, Feb 10 • 7–9 pm

Super Bowl Pregame Hike

Enjoy a 3-mile hike before the big game.

Sunday, Feb 11 • 10 am

Beginning Birding for Seniors

Learn birding basics in the warmth of our newly remodeled nature center.

Thursday, Feb 15 • 10 am

CSI: Critter Scene Investigation

Can you guess what animals have been visiting from the clues they've left behind? Learn about tracks, scat and more.

Sunday, Feb 18 • 1 pm

Black History Month Celebration

Learn about the importance of Black environmentalists and how the Forest Preserves' trails relate to the Underground Railroad Movement.

Saturday, Feb 24 • 1 pm

MicroSafari: The Beginning

Using a microscope, let's go on a safari through the waters of Crabtree to see all the tiny creatures busily preparing for spring.

Sunday, Feb 25 • 1 pm

**Registration required for events
with asterisk.*

847-381-6592



Playing Tree Detective in Wintertime

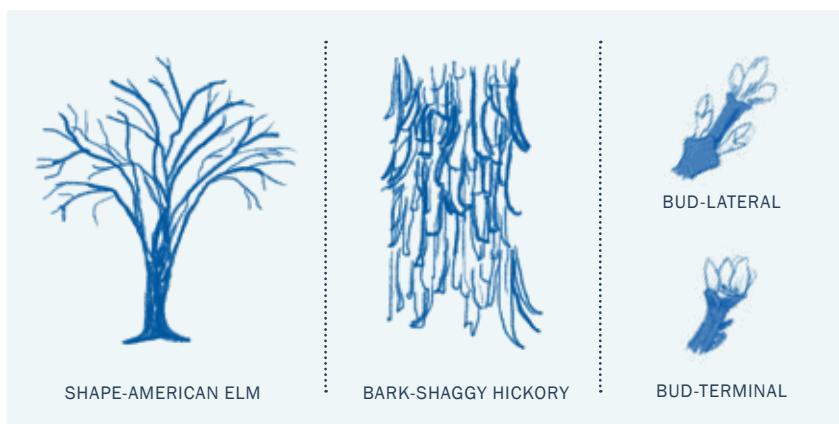
Without leaves, how do you identify them?

The Forest Preserves are the home to more than 10 million trees and more than 100 species. To identify those species, the foremost clues that many amateur arborists use are the size and shape of leaves.

But in wintertime in Cook County, trees have no leaves. So what's a tree detective to do? Here are several tips and tricks for making those identifications while you're out for a snowy stroll:

Consider the location: Different ecosystems and landscape features can help narrow down the options. For example, savannas are more likely than thick woods to feature trees that like sunlight, such as bur oaks.

Observe the shape: Trees gain distinct shapes from branches that sprout at varying angles. American elms, to illustrate, have a vase-like form, with sharply angled arms.



Look at the bark: The texture and patterns of bark varies significantly by species, ranging from solid with prominent ridges, to thin and tightly wrapped, to papery and easy to peel off. Shagbark hickory, for instance, hangs off the tree trunk in “shaggy” fashion.

Focus on buds: Often the most precise way to ID trees in winter, looking at buds starts with differentiating among lateral buds (on the sides) and terminal buds (on the end). Oak trees, for example, have a grouping of terminal buds; most trees have just one.



Experience the Health Benefits of the Woods

in the Wintertime

Winter in a climate like Cook County can take a toll on your health, both physically—since you’re hibernating from the cold—and mentally, since you’re more separated from other people. But taking the road less traveled into a setting like your local Forest Preserve could make all the difference—and be just what the doctor ordered.

“Often times, people feel closed in, and isolated,” says Claudia Gunter, conservation and experiential programming aid in the Forest Preserves of Cook County’s South Zone. “Especially when they might not have knowledge of some of the things they can do. There’s

always an opportunity in the Forest Preserves to try something new, and meet someone new.”

Those opportunities can include exercise for the body—like ice skating, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, sledding, or simply going on a winter hike—as well as expansions of the mind and soul. The latter span watching the Northern lights, getting to know flora and fauna that can be observed during the winter, writing in a journal to record what you’re seeing and feeling, and peacefully meditating in the forest, known as “forest bathing.”

Continued, page 36

North Zone

WINTER WORKSHOPS

Mathew Bieszcztat Volunteer Resource Center
6100 N Central Ave, Chicago-Unless otherwise noted.

Registration required, call 773-758-8899.



Phone-tography 101 Walk

Enjoy an afternoon in the Preserves and learn the basics of photography using a smartphone.

Thursday, Dec 7 • 1-3 pm

Harms Woods-Central, Harms Rd,
south of Old Orchard Rd, Glenview

Printmaking

Calling all creatives! Join us for our themed sessions as we explore printmaking.

Thursday, Jan 11 • 10 am-Noon

Watercolors

Explore the beauty of nature through watercolor painting. Drop in available for additional watercolor activities. Registration required for demos; please call 773-758-8899.

Thursday, Jan 18 • 5-7 pm

Knitting

Join us for our themed sessions as we explore knitting. Ages 13 & up.

Thursday, Feb 8 • 10 am-Noon

Woodworking

Repurpose the common European buckthorn into something new. Equipment provided. Ages 10 & up.

Thursday, Feb 15 • 5-7 pm

Prehistoric Play Day

Learn about the amazing world of Ice Age Illinois through a series of family-oriented games and activities.

Ages 5 & up.

Thursday, Feb 1 • 4-6 pm

Mathew Bieszcztat Volunteer
Resource Center
6100 N Central Ave, Chicago

No registration required.

EXPLORE MORE



PAGES 4-9

River Trail

NATURE CENTER

3120 Milwaukee Ave, Northbrook, 847-824-8360

Building: 9 am – 4 pm, closed Fridays. Grounds: 8 am – 4 pm daily

Free Admission



SAVE THE DATE

Maple Syrup Festival

Celebrate the arrival of spring with a special day of activities including crafts, games, tree tapping and maple syrup history.

Sunday, Mar 17 • 11 am–3 pm

THROUGHOUT *the* SEASON

Wildlife Connections

Stop by the visitor center to learn about reptiles, mammals and birds from the residents of Misericordia-Heart of Mercy.

Tuesdays • 10:30 am–Noon

Snowshoe Lending AT RIVER TRAIL

Snowshoes available for use on-site when snow is 4" or more. Limited number available on a first come, first served basis. Call for more information.

Small Serendipity

Nature stories, crafts and activities. Children ages 3–6 w/adult.

*Tuesdays, Dec 5 & 19, Jan 9 & 23, Feb 6 & 20
10 am*

Fridays in the Field

Discover something new in nature with University of Illinois Extension volunteers.

Fridays, Jan 26 & Feb 23 • 10 am–Noon

Volunteer Workdays*

Help us work to make River Trail even better. Ages 10 & up; children under 15 w/adult.

*Saturdays, Dec 9, Jan 13, Feb 10
10 am–Noon*

Winter Walk*

Learn about our wildlife in winter while on a guided walk.

Sundays, Dec 10, Jan 7 & 21, Feb 18 • 1:30 pm

Animal Encounters

Join our staff for an up-close look at one of our animals.

*Tuesday, Dec 26; Sunday, Jan 14; Mondays,
Jan 15 & Feb 19 • 1:30 pm*

DECEMBER

Bird Feeding

Drop in to learn the basics about winter bird feeding and pick up a do-it-yourself pinecone bird feeder craft.

Sunday, Dec 3 • 11 am–2 pm

Evening Owl Prowl*

A guided walk on our trails to search for local owls. Registration required by Dec 13. Ages 8 & up.

Friday, Dec 15 • 7 pm

Whoooo Are the Owls in Your Neighborhood?

Join us and a special guest for a talk about owls.

Sunday, Dec 17 • 1:30 pm



Beginner Beekeeping Class*

Join our beekeepers and learn about the process of beekeeping during this five-week class. \$100/person. Call 630-207-4255 for additional information and to register.

*Tuesdays, Jan 10, 17, 24, 31;
Feb 7 • 6–8 pm*

JANUARY

A “Winters” Night*

Join us for a guided walk in the dark woods and learn about nocturnal animals. \$3/person. Registration required by Jan 18.

Saturday, Jan 20 • 7 pm

Insects in Winter

Search our trails for the mighty snow flea and learn about other winter insects.

Sunday, Jan 28 • 1:30 pm



Sweetheart Night Hike*

Couples and friends are invited to enjoy the nature center grounds at their leisure. Walk our candlelit trails, relax around a campfire, or warm up inside with dinner and drinks. \$25/person.

Registration required by 1/30.
Ages 21 & up.

Saturday, Feb 3 • 6–9 pm

FEBRUARY

Groundhog Day

Learn the story behind this peculiar holiday.

Sunday, Feb 4 • 1:30 pm

Superb Owl Party

Help us celebrate owls and learn what makes them so unique!

Sunday, Feb 11 • 1:30 pm

Sunrise Nature Photography*

An outdoor workshop focusing on amazing winter scenes. Registration required by Feb 15. Ages 13 & up.

Saturday, Feb 17 • 6–9 am

Sap's Rising*

Walk in the sugar maple forest to learn about the sweet process of making maple syrup.

*Saturday & Sunday, Feb 24 & 25 • 10:30 am
& 1:30 pm*

**Registration required at least
2 days in advance of the events
marked with asterisk.*

*Note: All events are all ages unless
specified differently.*

847-824-8360

Central Zone



All About Fire

Drop in to learn safe practices for fire building and containment, make fire-inspired art, build your own fire and roast a marshmallow. Free, all ages.

Saturday, Jan 27 • 10:30 am–1:30 pm

Thatcher Woods, Chicago Ave,
west of Thatcher Ave, River Forest

DECEMBER

Nature Treasure Hunt

Kids and families are invited to search for various natural items on a short-looped trail. Find all the treasure and win a prize!

Wednesday, Dec 6 • 10 am–Noon

Bemis Woods-South, Grove 7,
Ogden Ave, west of Wolf Rd,
Proviso Township

Winter Pop-Up Fun

Borrow a pair of our snowshoes, help with litter pickup, warm up by a fire and play in the snow!

Saturday, Dec 16 • 10 am–12:30 pm

Evans Field, Bloomingdale Ave &
Thatcher Ave, River Grove

Winter Break-Out Adventure

School is out! Join us for fun and adventure during winter break. Snowshoeing hikes, tracking, shelter building and other winter activities.

Thursday, Dec 21 • 10:30 am–1:30 pm

Thatcher Woods, Chicago Ave, west
of Thatcher Ave, River Forest

JANUARY

Animal Olympics Trail

Kids and families can walk a short, looped trail in a fun test of human versus animal abilities! Prize awarded after completion.

Wednesday, Jan 10 • 10 am–Noon

Bemis Woods-South, Grove 7,
Ogden Ave, west of Wolf Rd



Teen Exploration Day: Day of Service

Teens and families, give back this MLK day. Join us for a litter clean-up in celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Saturday, Jan 13 • 10 am–Noon

Miller Meadow-North, Grove 2,
Roosevelt Rd, east of 1st Ave,
Maywood

For more information, call 312-533-5751. Continued on page 23.



Study at Brookfield Zoo while earning your Master's Degree from **Miami University**



The Chicago Zoological Society, which manages Brookfield Zoo, and Miami University of Ohio offer an Advanced Inquiry Program that awards master's degrees in biology and for teaching of biological sciences.

And it's all extremely affordable!

Visit CZS.org/AIP
for more information.



CHICAGO BOTANIC GARDEN

LIGHTSCAPE

Buy tickets now for a holiday favorite!

An enchanting, after-dark, illuminated trail
November 10 – January 7, select dates
chicagobotanic.org/lightscape

  Supported by    



Don't Trash the Preserves!

Each year the Forest Preserves of Cook County spends resources cleaning up waste from contractors and residents who dump in the Preserves!

- **Dumping waste** here hurts plants and wildlife
- **Chemicals** can contaminate our water supply
- **Clean-up** costs the Forest Preserves (taxpayers) time and money.

Not convinced?

Violators are liable for the cost of repair, replacement and the cost of restoring the land.

**Call
708-771-1000
if you see
suspicious
behavior**

Central Zone continued.



Creative Sustainability Workshop

Give items a second life by turning them into an ornament, decoration or birdfeeder. Learn how to extend the life of clothing with simple mending techniques. Supplies provided or bring your own.

Wednesday, Jan 17 • 9:30–11:30 am

Thatcher Woods Pavilion, Chicago Ave,
west of Thatcher Ave, River Forest

Accessibility Trail Outing

Walk with us on a short, 1.7-mile looped and paved trail with resting points throughout. Walk designed for people using wheelchairs or with mobility issues and will be held at a slower pace.

Wednesday, Jan 31 • 10 am

Miller Meadow-South, Grove 6, 1st Ave,
south of Roosevelt Rd, Maywood



Winter Exploration Day

In partnership with the Portage Creek Boy Scouts, join us for an afternoon of winter activities including hikes, broom hockey, orienteering and more.

Saturday, Feb 10 • 10 am–1 pm

Thatcher Woods, Chicago Ave,
west of Thatcher Ave, River Forest

FEBRUARY

Poetry Trail: Black History Month

In honor of Black History Month, walk a short, looped trail and read poetry for children written by Black authors along the way.

Wednesday, Feb 7 • 10 am–Noon

Bemis Woods-South, Grove 7, Ogden
Ave, west of Wolf Rd, Proviso Township

**Registration required. To register or for information on any Central Zone programs please call 312-533-5751 unless otherwise noted.*

EXPLORE MORE



PAGES 4–9

TRAILSIDE

Museum of Natural History

738 Thatcher Ave, River Forest, 708-366-6530

Building: 9 am–4 pm, *closed Fridays*, Grounds: 8 am–4 pm daily,

Free Admission



Snowshoe Rentals

Snowshoes are available when snow is 4" or greater. Equipment is limited and loaned on a first come, first served basis.

Ice Traction Shoe Cover Lending

Ice traction covers go over your boots or hiking shoes to help you gain tracking on icy surfaces. Available on a first-come, first-served basis. Call for more information.

THROUGHOUT *the* SEASON

Bone Appetit po polsku

Rejestracja pod numerem: 708-366-6530

Niedziela, 3 Grudnia • 2 pm

Bone Appetit en español

Sin registracion necesario.

Domingo, 14 de Enero • 2 pm

Bone Appetit

Join us during feeding time to learn about Trailside's outdoor resident animals.

Sunday, Feb 11 • 2 pm

Story Trail:

Walk a short trail and read the posted story then pick up a craft and activity bag.

"The Snowy Day"

Friday, Dec 15–Friday, Jan 12 • 9 am–4 pm

"Over and Under the Snow"

Friday, Jan 26–Friday, Feb 16 • 9 am–4 pm

DECEMBER

History Hike: Isabel Basset Wasson*

Explore Thatcher Woods while learning about the inspiring life of a local pioneering environmental educator. Ages 13 & up.

Saturday Dec 2 • 1:30 pm

DIY Holiday Bird Feeder Wreath*

Help birds by making a festive birdseed wreath! Materials provided. Ages 13 & up.

Saturday, Dec 9 • 1 pm

Animal Homes Hike*

Bring the family on a guided hike to discover where our local animals will spend the winter.

Saturday, Dec 16 • 1 pm

Dawn Owl Prowl*

Listen for owls as part of the annual Christmas Bird Count with John Elliott of Chicago Audubon. Ages 10& up.

Sunday, Dec 17 • 5:30 am

Winter Secrets Hike*

Bring the family on a walk to see what is happening above, within, and beneath the snow.

Wednesday, Dec 27 • 1:30 pm

JANUARY

New Year's Resolution Walk*

Fulfill your resolution of being more active by taking a brisk guided walk on our trails at Trailside. Ages 18 & up.

Tuesday, Jan 2 • 10 am



Family Winter Scavenger Hunt and Campfire

Enjoy a winter afternoon on a self-guided scavenger hunt. Afterwards, enjoy refreshments around the campfire.

Thursday, Jan 4 • 1–2:30 pm

Winter Artist Showcase

Local artist Judy Steed's Natural Reflections glass mosaic exhibit will be on display.

Exhibit Opening and Artist meet and greet

Friday, Jan 12 • 6 pm

Exhibit on display from

Jan–Mar • 9 am–4 pm

Bird Painting Workshop Step-by-Step: Dark-eyed Junco*

Sketch and paint a 9x12 canvas of a dark-eyed junco using acrylic paints. Ages 13 & up. \$5/person.

Friday, Jan 19 • 1–3 pm

Walk with a Steward*

Learn about ecological gems and the restoration process with volunteer site steward, Cathy Bloom. Ages 18 & up

Saturday, Jan 27 • 1:30 pm

Schiller Woods–West–Grove 6,
W Irving Park Rd, east of Des Plaines
River Rd, Schiller Park

FEBRUARY

Owls of Trailside*

Bring the family and meet one of our ambassador owls. Learn about the fascinating owls that call Trailside home.

Saturday, Feb 10 • 1:30 pm

Winter Bird Walk*

Join us for a casual bird walk to observe our resident birds and their behavior. Binoculars available to borrow.

Saturday, Feb 17 • 9 am

Amazing Winter Residents*

Bring the family on a walk on our scenic trails! We will discuss some of the amazing year-round residents of the Preserves.

Sunday, Feb 18 • 10:30 am

Conservation@Home:

Go Native & Get Wild–Virtual*

Learn about gardening using native plants and its benefits to you and to the environment. Zoom presentation.

Saturday, Feb 24 • 10:30 am

THATCHER WOOD EVENTS

Thatcher Woods Pavillion
8030 Chicago Ave, River Forest



Evening Film:

"The Magic Stump"

View a screening of "The Magic Stump," the story of an Illinois tree stump that's attracted many wintering raptors through the years. Meet the filmmaker, Bob Dolgen. Ages 13 & up.

Wednesday, Dec 6 • 6–9 pm

Makin' Music Bluegrass Jam

Get ready to jam! Make a simple musical instrument from repurposed invasive plants with us or bring your own instrument.

Sunday, Feb 4 • 1–3 pm

**Registration required at least
2 days in advance of the events
marked with asterisk.*

708-366-6530

Make Nature Your Venue



Host your special day surrounded by 70,000 acres of wild and wonderful.
Book a Forest Preserves campground or indoor facility for your event.



CAMPING 1-855-YES-CAMP fpdcc.com/camping

INDOOR FACILITIES 773-558-2003 fpdcc.com/indoor-events

Southwest Zone



Stairs, Stories & S'mores

Families, drop in and challenge yourself by climbing to the top of Swallow Cliff stairs. Then, try the story trail, sledding, snowshoeing, s'more making and more. Sledding/snowshoeing weather permitting.

Saturday, Dec 9 • 11 am–2 pm

Swallow Cliff Woods-North
Calumet Sag Rd/Rte 83, west
of La Grange Rd/96th Ave

JANUARY

Creative Sustainability Workshop

Give items a second life by turning them into an ornament, decoration or birdfeeder. Learn to extend the life of clothing with simple mending techniques. Supplies provided or bring your own.

Thursday, Jan 18 • 9:30–11:30 am

Swallow Cliff Woods-North, Calumet Sag Rd/Rte 83, west of La Grange Rd/96th Ave

FEBUARY

Life in the Snow

Join a naturalist and explore the forest. We'll investigate animal tracks, identify deciduous trees and observe the winter birds.

Friday, Feb 2 • 3–5 pm

Pulaski Woods-Grove 1, Wolf Rd, south of 95th St, Willow Springs

Woodworking with Invasives*

Build your own walking stick using buckthorn, an invasive species. Please bring your own work gloves. Ages 12 & up. Registration required; call 312-533-5751.

Friday, Feb 16 • 5:30–7:30 pm

Swallow Cliff Woods-North–Calumet Sag Rd/Rte 83, west of La Grange Rd/96th Ave

Photography Walk

Join a naturalist for a walk around Spears Woods on a quest to capture some magical winter photos.

Wednesday, Feb 21 • 9:30 am

Spears Woods-96th Ave,
south of W 87th St, Willow Springs

Winter Pop-Up Fun

Check out a pair of our snowshoes, help with litter pickup, warm up by a fire, and play in the snow!

Saturday, Feb 24 • 10 am–12:30 pm

Cherry Hill Woods-S Willow Springs Rd,
north of McCarthy Rd, Palos Park

**Registration required. For more information, unless otherwise noted, please call 312-533-5751.*

EXPLORE MORE



PAGES 4–9

Little Red Schoolhouse Nature Center

9800 Willow Springs Rd, Willow Springs, 708-839-6897
Building: 9 am – 4 pm, *closed Fridays*, Grounds: 8 am – 4 pm daily,
Free Admission

THROUGHOUT *the* SEASON

Little Red's Snowshoe Roulette

Snowshoe hikes offered during any days that we have over 4" of snow! Free snowshoe rental with an ID on a first come, first served basis.

Dec-Feb • 1 pm

Nature's Art Box

Join us for nature-based art and activities. Supplies provided. Ages 3–6 w/adult.

*Thursdays, Dec 28, Jan 18, Feb 22
10:30 am*



S.E.N.I.O.R.S.

Seniors Enjoying Nature Inside/
Outside Rain or Shine! Ages 55 &
up. Join us for a nature-inspired
adventure for seniors.

*Thursdays, Dec 7, Jan 11,
Feb 8 • 10:30 am*



R.I.P. Stewardship*

Join us as we **R**emove **I**nvasive **P**lants with bowsaws or loppers. Tools, gloves and a snack provided. Closed-toed shoes recommended. Ages 18 & up; under 17 years w/adult.

*Saturday, Dec 9, Jan 13, Feb 10
10 am–Noon*

Sunrise Hikes

Join us for a “before hours” hike to experience the dawning of a new day.

Sundays:

Dec 10 • 6:45 am

Jan 14 • 7 am

Feb 11 • 6:45 am

Dark Sky Walk

Walk in the world's largest Urban Night Sky Place during the darkest night of the month.

Tuesday, Dec 12 • 6 pm

Thursday, Jan 11 • 6 pm

Friday, Feb 9 • 7 pm

Cub Scout Adventure Series

Scouts are invited to attend these specialized programs.

Sundays • 2:30–4 pm

Dec 17–Wolf: Paws on the Path

Jan 21–Bear: Fur, Feathers and Ferns

Feb 18–Webelos: Into the Wild



Moon Walk

Let the full moon be our guide as we hike in the largest Urban Night Sky Place in the world. Join us for a bonfire afterwards.

Thursday, Jan 25 • 7 pm

Saturday, Feb 24 • 8:30 pm

Yoga in the Woods

Take in the natural beauty of our grounds while enjoying an all-levels yoga class with Maura, a certified instructor. Ages 18 & up.

Sundays, Jan 28 & Feb 25 • 10–11 am

DECEMBER

Fire Basics

Learn the basics of starting a fire and explore the different types of campfires. S'mores and hot cocoa provided. All ages.

Saturday, Dec 2 • 1 pm

Teens Behind the Scenes

Join a naturalist and learn how we care for our animals at the nature center. Ages 13–19.

Sunday, Dec 3 • 2 pm

Snowbirds

Enjoy a leisurely nature hike with stops at feeding stations to observe birds' amazing winter behaviors.

Saturday, Dec 16 • 1:30 pm

Winter Solstice Night of Lights Walk

A self-guided candlelit walk through our woods will delight visitors as we celebrate the shortest night of the year.

Thursday, Dec 21 • 6:30–9 pm

Aromatherapy

Various scents can relax and soothe us. Learn about natural aromas and their healing effects. Ages 21 & up.

Saturday, Dec 30 • 10:30 am

JANUARY

Winter Break Camp

Children will enjoy three fun-filled days with outdoor activities, art making and s'mores at the fire. \$35/child. Ages 9–12.

Tuesday–Thursday, Jan 2–4 • 10 am–Noon

Birding & Board Games

Watch and learn about winter birds at our feeders while playing nature-themed board games. Ages 14 & up.

Saturday, Jan 6 • 1–3 pm

Freeze Frames

Use your camera to observe nature on a guided photography walk. All levels and camera types. Ages 13 & up.

Saturday, Jan 20 • 10 am

Feeding Frenzy

Learn what, why and how staff feed the great diversity of birds, fishes, reptiles and amphibians at the nature center.

Saturday, Jan 27 • 1:30 pm

FEBRUARY

Winter Whereabouts

Learn how different native animals survive during the colder winter months.

Saturday, Feb 3 • 10 am

Lunar New Year*

Celebrate the Year of the Dragon with art and activities.

Saturday, Feb 4 • 10 am

Resident Raptors

Learn about the natural and individual histories and husbandry of our ambassador raptors.

Saturday, Feb 17 • 1:30 pm

Registration required unless otherwise noted.

Call 708-839-6897 or stop by in person to register.

Sagawau Environmental Learning Center

12545 W 111th St, Lemont, 630-257-2045

Building: 9 am – 4 pm, Grounds: 8 am – 4 pm daily, Free Admission



THROUGHOUT *the* SEASON

Cross-country skiing starts Dec 16, as soon as conditions are skiable (frozen ground and 5" snow).

Sagawau Nordic is open daily from 9 am–4 pm. Trails will be open and groomed as snow conditions permit and could include a late start or an early finish. Watch our [Facebook page](#) or call 630-257-2045 for the most up-to-date trail conditions.

Please note programs are weather dependent and denoted as follows:

(+) With snow **–** Without snow

Beginner Cross-Country Ski Lessons* **(+)**

Learn to ski with a certified Professional Ski Instructor of America. \$20/person. Ages 12 & up. Registration required. Visit website for additional information.

Saturdays & Sundays, Jan 6–Feb 25 • 9 am

Cross-Country Ski Seminar* **–**

Learn the basics of cross-country ski equipment and how to prepare for your first cross-country skiing experience.

Saturday, Dec 2; Sunday, Dec 10 • 1 pm

Wax Clinic* **–**

Learn how simple it is to care for your skis. We'll discuss ski maintenance for waxable and waxless skis.

Sunday, Dec 3; Saturday, Dec 9 • 1 pm



Restoration Workday* **–**

Join a naturalist as we help restore our ecosystems by removing invasive species. Ages 10 & up.

**Saturdays & Sundays, Dec 30 & 31,
Jan 27 & 28, Feb 24 & 25 • 9:30–11:30 am**

Moonlight Ski* **+**

Ski by the light of the full moon. Ski rentals limited. Skiers with their own equipment must wear a free trail pass. Reservations required via [SignUpGenius](#).

**Wednesday–Friday, Jan 24–26;
Friday–Sunday, Feb 23–25 • 4–8 pm**

DECEMBER**Clear the Trail* -**

Help brush back the ski trails. Ages 10 & up.

Saturday and Sunday, Dec 16 & 17

9:30-11:30 am

Experience Winter* -

Bring the family and enjoy a trail hike with a naturalist.

Winter Residents:

Saturday, Dec 23 • 10 am

Nature Hike:

Sunday, Dec 24; Wednesday, Dec 27 • 10 am

JANUARY**Feeder Watch* -**

What birds are visiting the feeding station?

Enjoy watching the feeders on a paved surface. Binoculars available for loan.

Saturday, Jan 6 • 10 am

**Birdy, it's Cold Outside* -**

Learn about some of the surprising adaptations and behaviors birds use to survive winter's deep freeze with an indoor presentation.

Sunday, Jan 7 • 1 pm

Winter Insects* -

Believe it or not, some insects are active through the winter. Search for these cold-hardy survivors. Ages 14 & up.

Saturday, Jan 13 • 1 pm

Skier 101* -

Come with all your cross-country ski questions! Find your answers by attending this crash course before hitting the snow.

Saturday, Jan 20 • 1 pm

Winter Tree ID* -

Join a naturalist as we discover several ways to identify trees in winter. Ages 18 & up.

Sunday, Jan 21 • 1:30 pm

FEBRUARY**Black History Month Exhibit**

Learn about Black skiers and challenges faced in winter sports.

Thursday, Feb 1-Thursday, Feb 29

Groundhog Week (+)

Will Sagawau Sam see his shadow on the ski trails this year? Ski by our outdoor exhibit to learn about groundhogs and other winter hibernators.

Thursday, Feb 1-Sunday, Feb 4

Ski the White Winter Wave

Join a fun Polynesian spin on winter by skiing the "frozen wave," relax and enjoy surfing videos and updates from Oahu's North Shore.

Saturday, Feb 10; Sunday, Feb 12

9 am-2 pm

Fossil Lab -

Have you ever wondered how paleontologists study fossils? Visit our lab as we break down features of invertebrate fossils.

Saturday, Feb 17 • 1 pm

Birkie Week (+)

Ski with wood skis and wool knickers or dress like a Viking to win a prize. Answer daily trivia question about the Birkebeiner Ski Race.

Sunday, Feb 18-Saturday, Feb 24

**Registration required for events
with asterisk.*

630-257-2045

South Zone

THOUGHTOUT *the* SEASON

DAN RYAN WOODS EVENTS
S Western Ave & 87th St, Chicago
unless otherwise noted.

at the **VISITOR CENTER**

Mingle in the Morning: Senior Walking Club

Come meet and mingle with members of the community with a shared interest in health, wellness and the outdoors.

Wednesdays in Dec, Jan, Feb • 8–9 am

Open Nature Play Day

Bring your little one for open nature play time. Enjoy the Dan Ryan Woods Nature Play space while helping your children connect with nature.

Wednesdays • 10 am–Noon

Winter Wellness Walk*–3.4 mi.

Experience the health benefits that nature provides on a slow-paced winter walk.

Ages: 13 & up.

Saturday, Dec 2 • 10 am

Sauk Trail Woods-Central
Forest Preserve Dr, south of W 26th St,
South Chicago Heights



Snowshoeing

Explore the Preserves via snowshoe!
If conditions are not favorable for snowshoeing (4" or more of packed snow), hikes and other activities will be offered.

11 am–2 pm

Saturday, Jan 13

Dan Ryan Woods Visitor Center

Saturday, Feb 3

Eggers Grove, E 112th St & S Ave E,
Chicago

Kwanzaa Celebration

Seven days of music and nature-based activities following the seven principles of Kwanzaa.

Dec 26–Jan 1 • 11 am–1 pm

See page 37 for details.

Teen S'mores Night Visitor

Hang out by the fire with friends.

Friday, Jan 12 • 6–8 pm

Birds and Bagels

Start your morning with birds and bagels! Enjoy a treat while observing local birds at our feeders. Bagels, light refreshments provided. Binoculars available to borrow. Accessible site.

Saturday, Jan 27 • 8 am

Black History Month Story Trails

Join us in celebrating Black History Month with a story trail. Each story will showcase a prominent Black figure.

Wednesdays in Feb • 10 am–3 pm

at the **PAVILION**

Art in Nature*

Spend time in nature and be inspired to create art. Register at 312-415-2970.

Saturday, Dec 23 • 10 am–Noon

Winter Exploration Day

Bring the whole family and enjoy winter in the Preserves with snowshoeing, nature hikes, art, campfires and more!

Wednesday, Jan 3 • 11 am–2 pm

BIPOC Faces in Green Spaces

Shift your focus from daily hassles during an outdoor wellness and journaling session.

Saturday, Feb 10 • 9:30 am–12:30 pm



MLK Day of Service

Learn what it takes to keep our forest healthy and participate in a day of service.

Brush Pile Burn: S'mores provided.
Eggers Grove
E 112th St & S Ave E, Chicago
Monday, Jan 15 • 10 am–2 pm

Litter clean-up: Crafts and cocoa!
Dan Ryan Woods Pavilion
S Western Ave & W 87th St,
Chicago

For groups of 10 or more,
email Kelvin.Boyd@cookcountyil.gov.

Monday, Jan 15 • 10 am–1 pm

Celebration of Lunar New Year

Activities to educate and celebrate the Year of the Dragon.

Saturday, Feb 17 • 10 am–Noon

Conservation@Home: Seed Swap & Plant Exchange

Plant lovers unite! Native plant presentation followed by seed and plant sharing. All are welcome. Bring a mug; warm beverage provided.

Thursday, Feb 15 • 4–7 pm

**Registration required. Please call 312-415-2970, unless otherwise noted.*



BE A BETTER BIRDER

All events are virtual via Zoom

Birding Ethics*

Learn about ABA birding ethics and how to ensure other people and—most importantly—birds are minimally impacted during your trip.

Register: [BABBethics.eventbrite.com](https://babbethics.eventbrite.com).

Thursday, Dec 28 • 6 pm

Getting Started*

This program is great for beginners who want to learn about building a birding kit, techniques and finding resources.

Register at:

babb2024-1.eventbrite.com.

Thursday, Jan 25 • 6 pm

Backyard Bird Feeding*

Discover how to make your yard and home bird friendly. Learn about bird feeders, types of foods, garden opportunities and more.

Register: babb2024-2.eventbrite.com.

Thursday, Feb 15 • 6 pm

Intro to Bird ID*

Learn the basics of bird identification by identifying birds using size and shape as well as the lingo used by birders.

Register: babb2024-3.eventbrite.com.

Thursday Feb 22 • 6 pm

EXPLORE MORE



PAGES 4–9

Sand Ridge

NATURE CENTER AND CAMPUS

15891 Paxton, South Holland, 708-868-0606

Building: 9 am – 4 pm, *Exhibit room closed Fridays*, Grounds: 8 am – 4 pm daily,
Free Admission



Holiday Past

Visit our pioneer cabins as we celebrate winter holiday traditions. Play with handmade toys, make a craft, and see what's cooking on the open fire.

Sunday, Dec 3 • 11 am–3 pm

THROUGHOUT *the* SEASON

Poetry Trail

Enjoy a collection of poems inspired by nature and the changing seasons as you walk Pines Trail.

Live Healthy, Discover Nature! Walk*

Venture out on our scenic trails for a 3- to 4-mile walk led by our nature education staff.

Saturdays, Dec 2, Jan 6, Feb 3 • 1 pm

Winter Birding*

Join us as we explore and look for winter's resident birds. Binoculars available for lending.

Saturdays, Dec 9, Jan 13, Feb 17 • 9 am

Wee Wonders*

Preschoolers with an adult are invited to learn about nature through music, movement, stories and crafts.

Wednesdays • 10 am

Dec 13-Tracks

Jan 10-Making Snowflakes

Feb 14-Skins & Skulls

Meet Our Birds

Learn more about our animal ambassadors and discover their unique adaptations.

Sundays, Dec 17, Jan 21, Feb 11 • 1:30 pm

DECEMBER

Candle Lantern Walk*

Walk the trails with a candle lantern as you discover signs of nighttime forest activity.

Friday, Dec 8 • 6–8 pm

Winter Bonfire

Join us as we celebrate the beginning of winter with a large bonfire, artmaking, nature walks and more.

Saturday, Dec 16 • 3:30–7 pm

Camp Shabbona Woods,

15810 S Torrence Ave, South Holland



Winter Solstice Potluck*

Celebrate the shortest day of the year with a potluck and s'mores by the campfire.

Thursday, Dec 21 • 2–4 pm



Underground Railroad Walks

Join us on a self-guided journey that follows the Underground Railroad route connected to the Calumet Region during the mid-1800s.

*Saturday, Feb 24; Sunday,
Feb 25 • 10 am–3 pm*

Winter Break Craft Camp*

Get creative and learn some new skills. Projects will include woodburning, painting and fiber arts. Ages 9–13 & families.

*Wednesday & Thursday, Dec 27 & 28
9 am–3 pm*

Winter Feeder Big Sit

Join us for an up-close look at the brave birds staying local during winter at our feeders. Hot chocolate provided.

Saturday, Dec 23 • 8–10 am

JANUARY

Resolution Walk*

Take steps towards your health goals during this light, 1-mile nature walk.

Tuesday, Jan 2 • 11 am

Restoration and S'mores*

Help staff remove invasive plants through a brush pile burn and treat yourself to s'mores. Ages 10 & up.

Saturday, Jan 20 • 10 am–Noon

Woodburning & Watercolors*

Be inspired by the winter landscape and create pieces of art using woodburning or pyrography techniques and watercolor paints. BYOB. Ages 21 & up.

Friday, Jan 26 • 4:30–6:30 pm

FEBRUARY

Super Bowl/Superb Owl

Enjoy a brief introduction to owls and their amazing adaptations and skills followed by a short walk on our trails to see if we can spot any wintering owls!

Saturday, Feb 10 • 6–7:30 pm

Build a Birdhouse*

Welcome back migrating birds by making a birdhouse just in time for spring nesting season. Ages 18 & up or ages 13–17 w/adult.

Saturday, Feb 24 • Noon–2 pm

MLK Day of Service

Stop by the nature center to participate in a self-led litter pick-up. Garbage bags and disposable gloves available.

Monday, Jan 15 • 9 am–2 pm

**Registration required for events
with asterisk.*

708-868-0606



“We tap into their inner child to explore and know that life continues even in the wintertime,” says Gunter, who coordinates a variety of winter activities as part of her role. “It just helps to beat those winter blues. I tell people it reduces stress, it puts you in a better mood, and the physical activity kicks in those endorphins.”

**“...time spent outdoors
boosts attention spans and
creative problem-solving skills
by as much as 50%...”**

Claudia Gunther

Research has shown that one hour of hiking can burn 500 calories, hiking and walking can help reverse osteoporosis, and being active in nature significantly cuts the risk of coronary heart diseases as well as the chances of colon cancer, diabetes or high blood pressure. On the brain health side, time spent outdoors boosts attention spans

and creative problem-solving skills by as much as 50%, while protecting brain function in older people.

Gunter challenges those who feel hesitant to step out into the cold to “try those new things that are on your list, and maybe you haven’t had a chance to do before. Challenge yourself and trust yourself.” Of course, dress for the elements with layers, thick socks, sturdy shoes, and something to cover “your digits,” she stresses.

From a physical activity standpoint, Gunter emphasizes there’s no pressure to compete. “Do you. Work at your own pace,” she says. “The Forest Preserves is offering a lot of things to do in the winter months. And they’re free! If you’ve never tried snowshoeing and don’t want to invest in the equipment, you can try it for free. That’s a big plus.”



Kwanzaa Celebration

Seven days of music and nature-based activities
following the seven principles:

Dec 26–Jan 1 • 11 am–1 pm

Dan Ryan Woods Visitor Center
S Western Ave & W 87th St, Chicago

Day 1: Dec 26 - Umoja (Unity)

Day 2: Dec 27 - Kujichagulia (Self-Determination)

Day 3: Dec 28 - Ujima (Collective Work & Responsibility)

Day 4: Dec 29 - Ujaama (Cooperative Economics)

Day 5: Dec 30 - Nia (Purpose)

Day 6: Dec 31 - Kuumba (Creativity)

Day 7: Jan 1 - Imani (Unity)





Sustain

Is your idea of winter fun in the Preserves invigorating exercise, a peaceful walk in a winter wonderland, or family bonding time? Or perhaps you prefer hibernating with a good book, but you're grateful that the Preserves keep working to sustain our ecosystems? Much like the Preserves sustain us in the winter months, the Forest Preserve Foundation helps sustain the Preserves.

forestpreservefoundation.org

Toni Preckwinkle, *President*

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feel free

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