

WINTER 2024

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



feel free

fpdcc.com



Explore Even More in Nature

Plan A Visit to Brookfield Zoo Chicago or the Chicago Botanic Garden!

Looking for *free admission days*?

Visit fpdcc.com to learn about free admission opportunities at both the Zoo and the Garden, ranging from free days for all, tickets through Commissioners' offices, library and museum pass programs, and more.



Our free Nature Express Bus program can help your group visit Forest Preserves events & amenities.

Learn more at fpdcc.com/nature-express





Exploring glistening landscapes, experiencing refreshing outings to relieve cabin fever, and warming up while volunteering or cozying up around a campfire—these are some of the many ways folks can enjoy the Forest Preserves of Cook County throughout winter.

This season, you can join our staff for exciting events and programs celebrating Lunar New Year, the winter solstice, winter break from school, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and so much more. Whether you want to participate in exciting recreation like snowshoeing or hiking, or warm up while giving back to nature, you're sure to find an enjoyable way to get outside and into nature.

But for those who prefer to stay indoors, our nature centers offer robust indoor exhibits and programs, with naturalists on site to answer your questions about native wildlife and inspire you to enjoy all the Preserves offer.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eileen Figel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Eileen Figel

Interim General Superintendent
Forest Preserves of Cook County

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.



Seasonal Offerings

4-13

Seasonal Offerings, Hike the Preserves, Bird the Preserves, Camping, Volunteering



Northwest Zone

15-19

Crabtree Nature Center, *Chill Thrills: Winter Camping in the Preserves*



North Zone

20-23

River Trail Nature Center



Central Zone

24-29

Trailside Museum of Natural History



Southwest Zone

30-37

Little Red Schoolhouse Nature Center/Sagawau Environmental Learning Center
Survival in the Preserves: How Wildlife Takes on Winter Elements



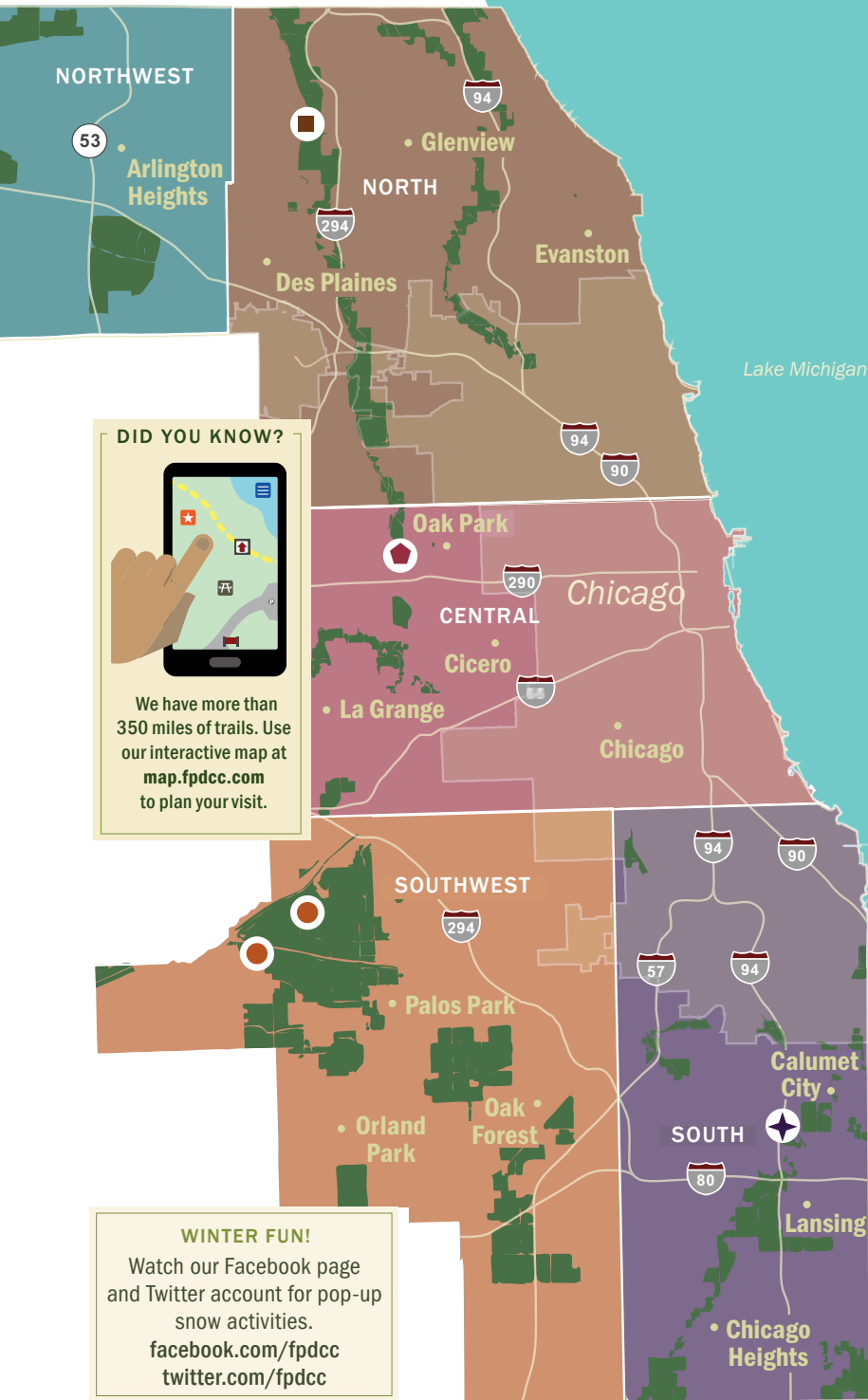
South Zone

38-45

Sand Ridge Nature Center and Sand Ridge Campus

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



DID YOU KNOW?



We have more than 350 miles of trails. Use our interactive map at map.fpdcc.com to plan your visit.

WINTER FUN!

Watch our Facebook page and Twitter account for pop-up snow activities.
[facebook.com/fpdcc](https://www.facebook.com/fpdcc)
twitter.com/fpdcc

Seasonal Offerings

throughout Cook County



2025 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.
juicedbyshic.com, 708.827.5344

Calumet Sag Rd/Rte 83, west of La Grange Rd/96th Ave, Palos Park

■ ◆ ● 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 Bieszcza 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

REI

tinyurl.com/rei-palos24, 773.819.3810, email: experiences@rei.com



Hike the Preserves

Walk & Talk Hikes are for the curious mind who wants to know more about the Forest Preserves and natural areas. These walks will be led at a slower pace with frequent stopping and interpretation.

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

Walk & Talks

■ North Zone

Walk and Talk: Black History Month Celebration*

LaBagh Woods, Grove 1,
N Cicero Ave, north of
W Foster Ave, Chicago

Learn the importance of Black environmentalists and the history of the Forest Preserves' trails as it relates to the Underground Railroad Movement. Register at 773.758.8899.

Saturday, Feb 22 • 10–11:30 am

◆ Central Zone

Sundown Meadow-2.5 mi

S LaGrange Rd, north of 67th St,
Countryside

Wednesday, Dec 11 • 10 am

Chicago Portage National Historic Site-1 mi

S Harlem Ave, south of 47th St, Lyons

Thursday, Jan 9 • 10 am

● Southwest Zone

Oak Forest Heritage Preserve East-1.6 mi

Fieldcrest Dr, southwest of Crawford
Ave, Oak Forest

Friday, Dec 27 • 10 am

ZONE KEY

▲ Northwest

■ North

◆ Central

● Southwest

◆ South

Red Gate Woods-2.5 mi

S Archer Ave, northeast of 107th St,
Willow Springs

Friday, Feb 28 • 10 am

◆ **South Zone**

Kikapoo Woods-1 mi

Halsted St, south of W 144th St,
Riverdale

Saturday, Feb 15 • 10 am

Fitness Hikes

◆ **Central Zone**

Brezina Woods-6 mi

N La Grange Rd, south of W Cermak Rd,
La Grange Park

Saturday, Jan 4 • 9:30 am

● **Southwest Zone**

Country Lane Woods-5 mi

95th St, east of Flavin Rd/Willow
Springs Rd, Willow Springs

Wednesday, Jan 8 • 9:30 am

Pioneer Woods-6.5 mi

107th St, east of S Willow Springs
Rd/Flavin Rd, Willow Springs

Saturday, Jan 25 • 9:30 am

Teasons Woods-4 mi

S Willow Springs Rd, south of
Calumet Sag Rd/Rte 83, Palos Park

Wednesday, Feb 19 • 9:30 am

◆ **South Zone**

Eggers Grove-5 mi

E 112th St & S Ave E, Chicago

Sunday, Dec 22 • 10 am

Sauk Trail Woods-Central-3.4 mi

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

Wednesday, Jan 8 • 10 am

**Registration required. Please call
773.758.8898.*

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

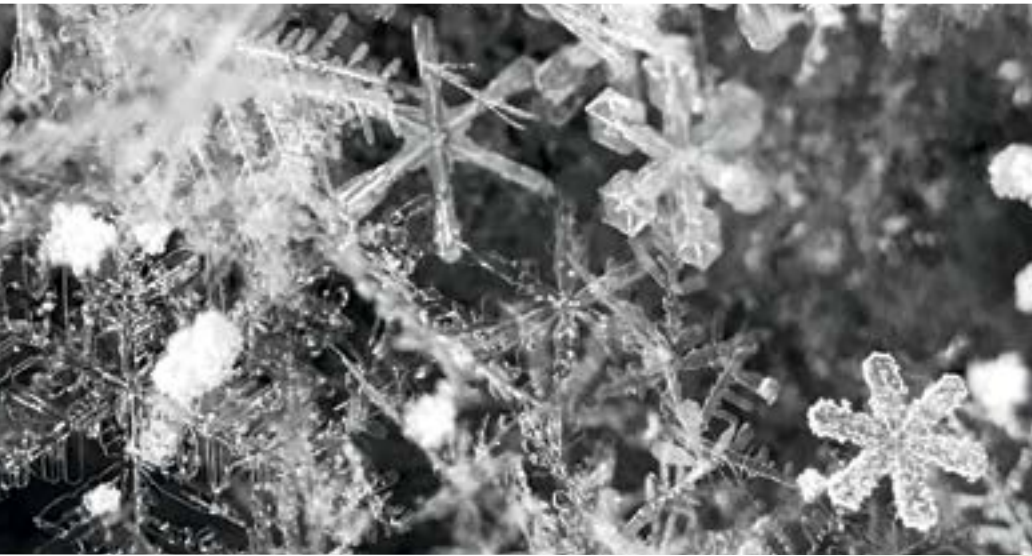
Not convinced?

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



forestpreservefoundation.org



NATURE

is a gift

Let's partner to protect it



#birdthepreserves



Fox Sparrow at River Trail Nature Center, by Katharine Spencer

Be a Better Birder -Virtual via Zoom Thursdays • 6 pm

Registration required for all birding events, unless otherwise noted.

Dec 19: **Birding Ethics**

Learn about ABA birding ethics and how to ensure other people and, most importantly, birds are minimally impacted during your trip. **Register at:** tinyurl.com/5wsmu32w

Jan 23: **Getting Started**

Learn how to build a birding kit, how to start birding and where to find resources. This program is great for beginners. **Register at:** tinyurl.com/4axmptwp

Jan 30: **How Birds Got Their Names**

Learn how scientists name birds, the history of common names for birds and the future changes that bird names may undergo. **Register at:** tinyurl.com/2m8vha68

Feb 6: **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 at:** tinyurl.com/5n78ftw

Feb 27: **Intro to Bird ID**

Learn the basics of bird identification, the lingo used to describe birds and how to identify birds using size and shape. **Register at:** tinyurl.com/2p8upebf

Winter Bonfire

EVENTS

Camp Dan Beard

Saturday, Dec 7 • 4–8 pm

Camp Shabbona

Saturday, Dec 14 • 3:30–7 pm



FOREST PRESERVES OF COOK COUNTY

CAMPING

Contact campgrounds for information and group site availability. Visit fpdcc.com/camping for seasonal rates. Call 1.855.YES.CAMP.

▲ 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
Opens April 2025

**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	\$30	\$40
Tent (Non-Electric)	6	\$25	\$35
Small Cabin	8	\$46	\$56
Large Cabin	10	\$110	\$122
Small Bunkhouse	16	\$127	\$139
Large Bunkhouse	36	\$165	\$176

CAMP DAN BEARD

RATES: NOV–DEC		COOK COUNTY RESIDENT	NON-RESIDENT
Type	Capacity	Sun–Sat	Sun–Sat
Tent (Non-Electric)	6	\$24	\$34
Small Cabin	8	\$45	\$57
Large Cabin	10	\$94	\$104
Group Site Pricing	30–60	\$24/tent	\$34/tent



● Wilderness Survival*

Learn 10 essentials tailored to our local terrain. Gain skills to navigate confidently, find shelter and overcome challenges. Presented by REI. Register at tinyurl.com/wsrei
Camp Bullfrog Lake
Saturday, Dec 7 • 9 am–1 pm

■ Winter Bonfire

Celebrate the start of winter with a giant bonfire.
Camp Dan Beard
Saturday, Dec 7 • 4–8 pm

■ ▲ ● Winter Fire Building Workshop

Learn fire building skills indoors and try out your new talent outdoors. Ages 10 & up. Ages 10–17 w/adult.
Fridays • 6:30 pm

Camp Sullivan
Dec 13

Camp Reinberg
Jan 10

Camp Dan Beard
Feb 7

▲ ● Winter Walk in the Woods

Enjoy an afternoon walk in the Preserves. Snowshoes are provided when snow depth is greater than 4 inches.
Saturdays • 1 pm
Camp Sullivan
Jan 25
Camp Reinberg
Feb 22

● Winter Open Climb*

Join us at Camp Sullivan's indoor climbing wall. Registration, waiver required. Twelve individuals per 30 min time slot. Ages 18 & under w/adult.
Camp Sullivan
Saturday, Feb 1 • 1–4 pm



**Registration required. For info and registration, contact:*
 — experience.camping@cookcountyil.gov —





Winter is a Wonderful Time to Volunteer

When the weather cools down, volunteer opportunities heat up! Join Ecological Stewardship or Tree TLC volunteer days for exercise, fresh air, and fun this winter.

Find volunteer days happening every week at locations across the county: volunteer-fpdcc.givepulse.com.

NEWTS: Stewardship Days for New Volunteers

Beginners welcome! Learn how to remove invasive brush to keep our woodlands healthy.

✦ South

Saturday, Jan 18 • 9 am–Noon

Whistler Woods, Forest View Ave, east of S Halsted Ave, Riverdale

▲ Northwest

Sunday, Feb 9 • 9 am–Noon

Beverly Lake, W Higgins Rd/Rte 72, west of Beverly Rd, Barrington

Tree Trimming, Love and Care

Prune and mulch trees in the picnic grove alongside experienced staff and volunteers.

✦ South

Friday, February 21 • 9 am–Noon

Dan Ryan Woods-Central, Grove 3, S Western Ave, south of W 83rd St, Chicago

Registration required for all opportunities: volunteer-fpdcc.givepulse.com.



Become a Concessionaire

in the Forest Preserves
of Cook County

Applications now available for 2025
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 Workshops

Camp Reinberg,
1801 N Quentin Rd, Palatine



DECEMBER

Winter Workshop Pottery*

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

Saturday, Dec 21 • 1 pm

JANUARY

Winter Workshop Woodworking*

Learn the significance of the winter season in Native American culture while participating in various activities. All ages. Presented by Trickster Cultural Center. Register at tricksterculturalcenter.org.

Thursday, Jan 2–Saturday, Jan 4 • 10 am–2 pm

Rolling Knolls, 11N260 Rohrssen Rd, Elgin

Prehistoric Play Day

Learn about the amazing world of Ice Age Illinois through a series of family-oriented games and activities. Ages 5 & up.

Saturday, Jan 11 • 10 am–Noon

FEBRUARY

Winter Workshop-Woodworking*

Repurpose the common European buckthorn into something new. Equipment provided. Ages 10–16 w/adult. Ages 10 & up.

Saturday, Feb 1 • 10 am–Noon

**Registration required, unless otherwise noted. For more information or registration, call 773.758.8899.*

EXPLORE MORE



PAGES 4–13

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

THROUGHOUT *the* SEASON



Snowshoe Lending at Crabtree

Snowshoes available for use on-site when the snow is more than 4" high. Free equipment is available on a first-come, first-served basis

Wee Wanderer Wednesdays

Join us for a special program for little naturalists. Limited tickets available. The ticket giveaway starts at 9:30 am. Ages 2–6 w/adult.

*Wednesdays, Dec 4, 18; Jan 8, 22;
Feb 5, 19 • 10 am*

Senior Naturalist*

Discover the natural world with a themed activity. Ages 55 & up.

Thursdays, Dec 5, Jan 16, Feb 20 • 10 am

Restoration Workdays*

Put on some gloves and join us to remove invasive species. Equipment provided. High schoolers may earn service hours. Ages 8 & up.

*Saturdays, Dec 14, Jan 25, Feb 1
10 am–Noon*

Winter Play Date

Drop-in for this outdoor/indoor family fun. Self-guided activity stations and learn through play.

Sundays, Dec 22, 29 • 1–3 pm

Junior Naturalist Walk

Earn a Junior Naturalist badge by taking a short walk outside and doing an indoor activity book.

Saturdays, Dec 28, Feb 8 • 1–3 pm

2-miles at 2

Join volunteer Naturalist Cyndi Duda every Wednesday for a hike around Phantom Prairie. Ages 18 & up.

Wednesdays, Jan 8–Mar 26 • 2 pm

DECEMBER

Owl Program

An indoor presentation about these skilled nocturnal hunters.

Saturday, Dec 7 • 1 pm

Owl Prowl*

Learn about our local owls. Ages 12 & up.

Friday, Dec 13 • 7 pm

Winter Solstice Night of Lights*

Celebrate the longest night of the year! Choose a timeslot to walk along our candlelit paths.

Friday, Dec 20 • 6–9 pm

JANUARY

Animail

Come join the Crabtree Postal Service! Young visitors can help us create and deliver postcards and mail to our Animal Ambassadors

Thursday, Jan 2–Saturday, Feb 15

The Bare Bones

Check out this jaw dropping interactive display of animal skulls and bones.

Thursday, Jan 2 • 1-3 pm

Salamanders

Indoor investigation into our amazing, unique and important salamanders. Ages 12 & up.

Saturday, Jan 4 • 1 pm

What I did on my Winter Migration

Discover what migratory birds do at their Central and South American wintering grounds.

Saturday, Jan 11 • 1 pm

Cabin Fever Hike

Join a 2-mile walk on Phantom Prairie.

Sunday, Jan 12 • 1 pm

Full Moon Walk*

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

Monday, Jan 13 • 6 pm

CSI: Critter Scene Investigation

Self-guided investigation to gather clues to learn about wildlife.

*Saturday, Jan 18–Monday, Jan 20
10 am–3 pm*

MLK Day Restoration*

Put on some gloves and join us to remove invasive species. Tools provided. High schoolers may earn service hours.

Ages 8 & up.

Monday, Jan 20 • 1-3 pm

Picidae

Woodpeckers are well-adapted for their environment. Come for a short presentation and a stroll.

Sunday, Jan 26 • 1 pm

Children's Lunar New Year

Let's learn about the holiday through reading, creating, and celebrating together. Ages 2-10 w/adult.

Wednesday, Jan 29 • 10:30 am

FEBRUARY

Whistlepigs!

Learn all about our Chicagoland marmot hibernator.

Sunday, Feb 2 • 1 pm

Winter Paint Night*

Create an acrylic winter scene with follow-along instructions. Ages 18 & up.

Friday, Feb 7 • 7 pm

Trees in Myth

A presentation on how trees affect our imaginations.

Saturday, Feb 8 • 1 pm

Spark in the Dark*

Our evening adult program for those who like to stroll our candlelit trail.

Thursday, Feb 13 • 7 pm

Winter Science

Learn about the wonders of snow and winter weather through hands-on indoor experiments and activities. Ages 7 & up.

Saturday, Feb 15 • 1 pm

Resting Reptiles

Self-guided 0.5-mile walk on winter survival techniques of reptiles.

*Monday, Feb 17–Sunday, Feb 23,
10 am–3 pm*

**Registration required for events with an asterisk. Please call 847.381.6592 for more information and registration.*

Chill Thrills:

WINTER CAMPING IN THE FOREST PRESERVES



As the temperatures drop, a different kind of adventure awaits in the Forest Preserves of Cook County. Winter camping offers a chance to enjoy the great outdoors in a way that many overlook, proving that it is not just a summer activity. While the idea of camping in colder weather may seem intimidating, Forest Preserves Camping Program Coordinator Brian Arnoldt says that with the right preparation, it can be just as enjoyable as in any other season.

“The main thing for winter camping, and it doesn’t matter if you’re spending the day outside or a month outside, is layering,” said Arnoldt. “You need to layer your clothes.”


Starting with a moisture-wicking base layer is crucial.

“People think they’re going to be cold while they’re outdoors doing

things in the winter, but they’re going to sweat faster than they would in the fall or early spring with layers on,” Arnoldt explained. “The layers aren’t to keep the cold out, they’re to keep the warmth in.”

When it comes to sleeping, proper insulation is key. Arnoldt recommends using multiple ground pads to prevent heat loss and investing in a sleeping bag with the appropriate lab-tested temperature rating. Also, using a sleeping bag liner will help add 5 to 15 degrees of warmth while wicking away nighttime sweat.

To start the day on a warm note, Arnoldt suggests a simple yet effective trick: “Put base layer garments in the sleeping bag at night. When you wake up, you’ll have toasty warm clothes to wear.” Staying hydrated is another essential aspect often overlooked



“Treat winter camping like every other camping trip, but be a little smarter about it.”

Brian Arnoldt,
Camping Program Coordinator

in colder climates. “Dehydration is actually a big factor in the winter,” said Arnoldt. “Because you’re cold, you don’t think about dehydration. Often the air is dryer in the winter, sucking the moisture right out of your body.”

Arnoldt says packing plenty of extra garments is a must do and managing moisture inside of the equally as important.

“Do you want to go sledding for three hours and then have nothing to change into? Probably not,” Arnoldt said. “Think about when you’re going to sled, how you’re going to sled, and make sure you bring lots of extra clothes, boots, hats and gloves.

Another tip to enjoy the evening: Before settling in, knock off any snow from boots to keep the interior dry.

“Treat winter camping like every other camping trip, but be a little smarter about it,” advised Arnoldt. Most Forest Preserves campgrounds welcome visitors during the colder months; many offer heated cabins for those who prefer a little added coziness and comfort.

Learn more: fpdcc.com/camping.

CAMPING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Wilderness Survival

Dec 7 • 9 am–1 pm

Camp Bullfrog Lake

Winter Fire Building Workshop

Dec 13 • 6:30 pm

Camp Sullivan

Winter Workshop-Woodworking


Feb 1 • 10 am–Noon

Camp Reinberg

LIGHTSCAPE

Tickets on sale now for a holiday favorite!

NOVEMBER 15 – JANUARY 5



An illuminated trail for enchanting winter nights
created just for the Chicago Botanic Garden

chicagobotanic.org/lightscape



NORTH ZONE

Caldwell Woods Wellness Center,
W Devon Ave & N Nagle Ave, Chicago



THROUGHOUT *the* WINTER

Weekly Wellness Programming

Check fpdcc.com for weekly offerings including time, age appropriateness and other details. Call 773.758.8899 or email experience.nature@cookcountyil.gov for more information. No programming Dec 26, Jan 2.

Thursdays

DECEMBER

Prehistoric Play Day

Learn about the amazing world of Ice Age Illinois through a series of family-oriented games and activities. Ages 5 & up.

Saturday, Dec 14 • 10 am-Noon

Winter Workshop: Woodworking*

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

Thursday, Jan 4 • 5-7 pm

MLK Service Day Celebration*

Give back this MLK day. Join us for a litter clean up in celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. Drop-in.

Saturday, Jan 18 • 10 am-Noon

FEBRUARY

Winter Workshop: Printmaking*

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

Saturday, Feb 22 • 1-3 pm

**Registration required, unless otherwise noted. For more information or registration, call 773.758.8899.*

EXPLORE MORE



PAGES 4-13

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 16 • 11 am–3 pm

Snowshoe Lending

Snowshoes are available when snow is 4" or greater.

Equipment is limited and loaned on a first-come, first-served basis.

THROUGHOUT *the* SEASON

What's On The Menu?

Join us at feeding time to learn about our outdoor ambassador animals and their habits.

Saturdays & Sundays • 3 pm

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

Small Serendipity

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

Tuesdays, Dec 3, 17; Jan 7, 21; Feb 4, 18, 10 am

Fridays in the Field

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

Fridays, Dec 13, Jan 10, Feb 14 • 10 am–Noon

Volunteer Workdays*

Help us work to make River Trail even better. Ages 10 & up; children under 16 w/adult.

Saturdays, Dec 14, Jan 11, Feb 1 10 am–Noon

Winter Walk*

Learn about our wildlife in winter during a guided walk. The program begins at 1 pm if snow depth exceeds 4". Registration required to reserve snowshoes.

Sundays, Dec 15, Jan 5 & 26 • 1:30 pm

Animal Encounters

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

Sunday, Dec 22; Monday, Feb 17 • 1:30 pm

DECEMBER

Trackin'

Let's look for animal tracks and examine some of the evidence animals leave behind.

Sunday, Dec 1 • 1:30 pm

Birds & Bagels*

Visit our indoor bird feeders while enjoying complementary hot drinks and bagels.

Followed by a bird walk. Ages 8 & up.

Saturday, Dec 7 • 8–10 am

Evening Owl Prowl*

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

Friday, Dec 13 • 7 pm

Winter Solstice

Celebrate the shortest day of the year and unlock winter's secrets.

Saturday, Dec 21 • 1:30 pm

Winter Nature Days

Drop in for family fun nature activities including pinecone bird feeders, walking sticks and more.

*Saturday & Sunday, Dec 28 & Dec 29,
11 am–2 pm*

JANUARY**Conservation@Home: Seed Swap**

Bring some and/or take some seeds home at this free swap. Experts will be available for advice Ages 13 & up.

Sunday, Jan 12 • Noon–2 pm

Women's Night Out: Full Moon Walk*

An evening of empowerment for the first in a series of women-centered programming. For women ages 18 & up. \$10/person

Monday, Jan 13 • 6 pm

Conservation@Home: Winter Seed Sowing*

Use native seeds for winter sowing. Make your own winter sowing milk jug and take it home. Supplies provided. Ages 13 & up.

Sunday, Jan 19 • 1:30 pm

Martin Luther King, Jr. National Day of Service

Help us work to make River Trail better on this official day of community service. Ages 10 & up. Ages under 16 w/adult.

Monday, Jan 20 • 1–3 pm

Winter Photography*

An outdoor workshop focusing on amazing winter scenes. Ages 13 & up.

Saturday, Jan 25 • 9–11 am

FEBRUARY**Groundhog Day**

Learn the story behind this peculiar holiday.

Sunday, Feb 2 • 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. \$30/person.

Registration required by 2/1.
Ages 21 & up.

Saturday, Feb 8 • 5:30–9 pm

Superb Owl Party

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

Sunday, Feb 9 • 1:30 pm

Insects in Winter*

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

Saturday, Feb 16 • 1:30 pm

Sap's Rising*

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

*Saturday & Sunday, Feb 22 & 23 • 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

Learn safe practices for fire building and containment, make fire-inspired art, build your own fire, and roast a marshmallow. All ages. Drop-in.

Sunday, Jan 25 • 10:30 am–1:30 pm

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

DECEMBER

Animal Olympics Trail

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

Wednesday, Dec 4 • 10 am–Noon

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

ADA Trail Walk

Guided walk on 1.7-mile paved trail with resting points throughout. Wheelchair accessible; open to all. Meet at trail across from Grove 5.

Friday, Dec 6 • 10 am

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

Winter Solstice Day

Learn about the Winter Solstice through indigenous storytelling, songs and winter activities. Presented with American Indian Center.

Saturday, Dec 21 • 10:30 am–Noon

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

JANUARY

Children's Story Time

Listen to a nature-themed children's book read aloud by the fire, followed by an activity.

Wednesday, Jan 15 • 9–10:30 am

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




Teen Exploration Day: Day of Service

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

Saturday, Jan 18 • 10 am–Noon

Schiller Woods-East, Grove 10, W Irving
Park Rd, west of N Cumberland Ave,
Chicago

*For more information, call 312.533.5751.
Continued on page 27.*



holiday magic[®]

BROOKFIELD



CHICAGO

24 SPARKLING NIGHTS

Dates in Nov & Dec



Get Tickets Today

PRESENTED BY:



comed[™]

meijer

AN EXELON COMPANY

Winter Break

Schools out for...winter break! Join us in the Forest Preserves for fun indoor and outdoor activities for the whole family, including snowshoeing, hikes, artmaking, campfires and more!

■ Winter Nature Days

*Saturday, Dec 28 & Sunday, Dec 29,
11 am–2 pm*

Drop in for family fun nature activities including pinecone bird feeders, walking sticks and more. For more information, please call 847.824.8360.

River Trail Nature Center,
3120 Milwaukee Ave, Northbrook

▲ Winter Camp

Presented by Trickster Cultural Center
*Thursday, Jan 2–Saturday, Jan 4,
10 am–2 pm*

Learn the significance of the winter season in Native American culture while participating in various activities. All ages. Register at tricksterculturalcenter.org. For more information, please call 773.758.8899.

Rolling Knolls, 11N260 Rohrssen Rd,
Elgin

▲ The Bare Bones

Thursday, Jan 2 • 1–3 pm

Check out this jaw dropping interactive display of animal skulls and bones. For more information, please 847.824.8360

Crabtree Nature Center,
3 Stover Rd, Barrington

◆ Winter Secrets Hike*

Monday, Dec 30 • 1:30 pm

The winter can appear barren of wildlife, but surprisingly so much is happening above, within and beneath the snow. Join us for a walk to see what is going on! Please call 708.366.6530. Registration required. Trailside Museum of Natural History, 738 Thatcher Ave, River Forest

◆ Winter Exploration Day

Friday, Jan 3 • 11 am–2 pm

Get outside and enjoy winter. Great opportunity for the whole family to experience hikes, snowshoeing (weather permitting), campfires, art making and more! For more information, please call 224.763.4317.

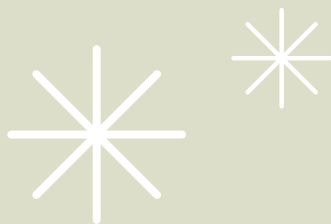
Dan Ryan Woods Pavilion, S Western
Ave & W 87th St, Chicago

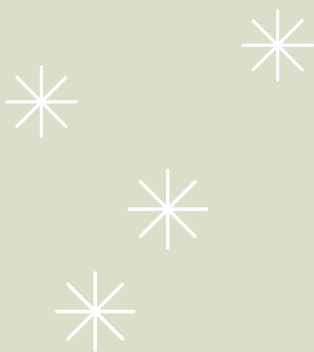
◆ Family Winter Scavenger Hunt and Campfire

Sunday, Jan 5 • 1–2:30 pm

Enjoy a self-guided scavenger hunt for signs of animals and plants, followed by snacks and a campfire. Family program. Please call 708.366.6530.

Trailside Museum of Natural History,
738 Thatcher Ave, River Forest





● Hygee Hangout

Tuesday, Dec 31 • 11 am–1 pm

Choose happiness this winter by joining us indoors for activities, games and refreshments inspired by the Danish practice of Hygge. Call 708.839.6897.

Little Red Schoolhouse Nature Center,
9800 Willow Springs Rd, Willow Springs

● Winter Mammals-Drop-In

Monday, Jan 6 • 11 am–Noon

Join us to learn about the mammals of Cook County by examining our skins and skulls collection. Please call 708.839.6897.

Little Red Schoolhouse Nature Center,
9800 Willow Springs Rd, Willow Springs

ZONE KEY

- ▲ Northwest
- North
- ◆ Central
- Southwest
- ★ South



Central Zone continued.

FEBRUARY

Poetry Trail: Black History Month

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

Sunday, Feb 2 • 10 am–Noon

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

Winterpalooza

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

Saturday, Feb 8 • 9 am–Noon

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

Photography Walk

Join a naturalist for a walk while we embark on a quest to capture some magical winter photos.

Friday, Feb 14 • 9:30 am

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

**Registration required, unless otherwise noted. To register or for information on any Central Zone programs please call 312.533.5751.*

EXPLORE MORE



PAGES 4–13

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

THROUGHOUT *the* SEASON



Snowshoe Lending

Snowshoes are available when snow is 4" or greater.

Ice Traction Shoe Cover Lending

Ice traction covers go over your shoes to help you traverse icy surfaces.

Equipment is limited and loaned on a first-come, first-served basis.

Senior Fitness Walks*

Join us for a 1-mile, easy-paced walk.

*Wednesdays, Dec 4, 18; Jan 8, 22;
Feb 5, 19 • 9 am*

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

Restoration Workdays*

Help restore the natural habitats. Ages 12 & up. Children w/adult. Register at fpdcc.com/volunteer.

Sundays, Dec 15, Jan 19, Feb 16 • 9 am–Noon

Story Trail: "Animals in Winter"-Drop in.

Read a children's story along a short trail. Afterwards, get an activity bag to start your own adventure with crafts and activities.

Friday, Dec 13–Friday, Jan 10 • 9 am–4 pm

DECEMBER

Winter is Coming Walk*

Join us for a walk as we discuss what is happening in nature as winter closes in. Family program.

Sunday, Dec 8 • 1:30 pm

Nature Book Club: "What an Owl Knows" by J. Ackerman*

Enjoy discussing this bestselling book about the research into the deepest mysteries of owls. Register at fppl.org. Ages 18 & up.

Thursday, Dec 12 • 7 pm

DIY Holiday Bird Feeder Wreath*

Making a festive birdseed wreath! Materials provided. Ages 13 & up.

Saturday, Dec 14 • 1 pm

Dawn Owl Prowl*

Listen for owls as part of the annual Christmas Bird Count led by John Elliott from Chicago Bird Alliance. Ages 10 & up.

Sunday, Dec 15 • 5:30 am

Animal Homes Hike*

Take a guided hike to discover where our local animals will spend the winter. Family program.

Saturday, Dec 21 • 1:30 pm

Bone Appetit

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

Saturday, Dec 28 • 2 pm



Winter Secrets Hike*

The winter can appear barren of wildlife, but surprisingly so much is happening above, within and beneath the snow. Join us for a walk to see what is going on!

Monday, Dec 30 • 1:30 pm

JANUARY

New Year's Resolution Walk*

Fulfill your resolution of being more active by taking a brisk guided walk. Ages 18 & up.

Thursday, Jan 2 • 10 am

Family Winter Scavenger Hunt and Campfire

Enjoy a self-guided scavenger hunt for signs of animals and plants, followed by snacks and a campfire. Family program.

Sunday, Jan 5 • 1-2:30 pm

Bird Painting Workshop Step-by-Step: Cooper's Hawk*

Sketch and paint a 9x12 canvas of a Cooper's hawk using acrylic paints. For beginners and experienced artists. Materials provided. Cost: \$5. Ages 14 & up.

Friday, Jan 17 • 9:30 am-Noon

Bird and Bagel Bird Walk*

Join Chicago Bird Alliance for bagels inside followed by a guided bird walk. All birding levels welcome! Binoculars available.

Saturday, Jan 18 • 8:30 am

Bone Appetit

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

Saturday, Jan 25 • 2 pm

FEBRUARY

Makin' Music Bluegrass Jam

Make a simple musical instrument, or bring your own guitar, fiddle, etc. and join the jam! All are welcome to join the jam or just listen. All ages.

Sunday, Feb 2 • 1-3 pm

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

Owls of Trailside*

Learn about the fascinating owls that call Trailside home and meet an ambassador owl! Family program.

Saturday, Feb 8 • 1:30 pm

Nature Book Club: "If Nietzsche Were a Narwhal" by J. Gregg*

Enjoy discussing this often-humorous book comparing human versus animal thought and intelligence. Register at fppl.org/.

Thursday, Feb 20 • 7 pm

Forest Park Public Library, 7555 Jackson Blvd, Forest Park

Winter Bird Walk*

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

Saturday, Feb 22 • 8 am

Go Native & Get Wild*-Zoom Program

Get your questions ready for the Conservation@Home Zoom presentation! Learn about the many benefits of gardening with native plants for you and the environment.

Sunday, Feb 23 • 1:30 pm

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

708.366.6530

SOUTHWEST ZONE



S'mores Party

Families, make a tasty treat with us around a campfire. Activities include a s'more-themed craft, a story trail, guided walks, sledding, snowshoeing and more.

Some activities are weather-dependent. Drop in.

Saturday, Dec 14 • 10:30 am-1:30 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.

Friday, Jan 10 • 6-7:30 pm

Swallow Cliff Pavilion,
Calumet Sag Rd/Rte 83, west of
La Grange Rd/96th Ave, Palos Park

Crafternoon

Let nature inspire art! Try your hand at different crafts suitable for people of all abilities at this accessible site.

Thursday, Jan 16 • 11 am-2 pm

Camp Sullivan, 14630 Oak Park Ave,
Oak Forest

FEBRUARY

**Poetry Trail: Black History Month**

In honor of Black History Month, read poetry written by African American authors at the base of the stairs.

Saturday, Feb 1 • 10 am–1 pm

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

**Winter Pop-Up Fun**

Come check out a pair of our snowshoes (weather dependent), help with litter pickup, warm up by a fire, play in the snow! Drop in.

Saturday, Feb 15 • 10:30 am–Noon

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

Crafternoon: Paint and Sip Hot Chocolate

Paint and sip a nice cup of hot chocolate. Supplies provided. All Ages.

Friday, Feb 21 • 11 am–2 pm

Camp Sullivan, 14630 Oak Park Ave, Oak Forest

**Woodworking with Invasives***

Build your own walking stick using buckthorn, an invasive species. Ages 12-17 w/adult. Ages 12 & up.

Friday, Feb 21 • 5:30–7:30 pm

Swallow Cliff Pavilion, Calumet Sag Rd/Rte 83, west of La Grange Rd/96th Ave, Palos Park

Photography Walk

Join us on a quest to capture some magical winter photos.

Wednesday, Feb 26 • 9:30 am

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

**Registration required. For more information, unless otherwise noted, please call 312.533.5751.*

EXPLORE MORE



PAGES 4–13

Little Red Schoolhouse Nature Center

9800 Willow Springs Rd, Willow Springs, 708.839.6897

Building: 9 am – 5 pm, closed Fridays, Grounds: 8 am – 5 pm daily, Free Admission

THROUGHOUT *the* SEASON



Snowshoe Lending

Snowshoes are available when snow is 4" or greater.

Equipment is limited and loaned on a first-come, first-served basis.

I am a Scientist

Ignite your child's sense of wonder and curiosity as we explore, experiment, and make discoveries in the natural world. Ages 4–5 w/adult.

Wednesdays, Dec 4, Jan 8, Feb 5 • 10 am

Sunrise Hikes

Come join us for a "before hours" hike to experience the dawning of a new day.

Sundays, Dec 8, Feb 9 • 6:30 am

Sunday, Jan 12 • 6:45 am

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

Seniors Enjoying Nature Inside/Outside Rain or Shine! Strengthen your connection to nature by enjoying different nature programs every month. Ages 55 & up.

Thursdays, Dec 12, Jan 9, Feb 13 • 10 am

R.I.P. Stewardship

Join us as we Remove Invasive Plants with bow saws or loppers. Tools provided. Ages 18 & up.

*Saturdays, Dec 14, Jan 11, Feb 8
10 am–Noon*

Nature's Art Box

Come join us for a nature-based art activity. Ages 3–6 w/adult

Thursdays, Dec 19, Jan 16, Feb 20 • 10:30 am

Feeding Time

Learn about the diets of our ambassador animals, their habitats and observe a feeding demonstration

*Saturday, Dec 28, Jan 25, Feb 22
11 am–Noon*

Hygge Hangout

Choose happiness this winter by joining us indoors for activities, games and refreshments inspired by the Danish practice of Hygge.

Tuesday, Dec 31 • 11 am–1 pm

Saturday, Jan 18 • 11 am–1 pm

Sunday, Feb 16 • 11 am–1 pm

DECEMBER



Serenity Walk Under the New Moon

Take a 2-mile walk in the world's largest Urban Night Sky Place. Dependent upon trail conditions. Ages 14 & up.

Sunday, Dec 1 • 5:30 pm

Fire Basics

Learn the basics of fire building and the different types of campfires. S'mores provided.

Saturday, Dec 7 • 1 pm

Winter Ecology

Join us around the fire under a full moon for a discussion about the important role that winter plays in the survival of plants and animals.

Sunday, Dec 15 • 5 pm

Winter Solstice Celebration

Celebrate the longest night of the year with a bonfire and self-guided walk along our Farm Pond Trail. S'mores and hot cocoa provided.

Saturday, Dec 21 • 5-7 pm

Winter Bird Watch

Walk to discover which birds are winter residents and then get warm by a cozy fire. Hot cocoa provided. Ages 14 & up.

Friday, Dec 27 • 9 am

JANUARY**Winter Mammals**–Drop-In

Join us to learn about the mammals of Cook County by examining our skins and skulls collection.

Monday, Jan 6 • 11 am–Noon

MLK Day Moon Walk

Learn how to serve your community by reducing light pollution, while enjoying a walk in the largest Urban Night Sky Place in the world.

Monday, Jan 20 • 6:30 pm

Babies and Booties

Grab your boots and join us for a winter hike for the whole family.

Sunday, Jan 19 • 10 am

FEBRUARY**Black History Month Kickoff**–Drop-in

Enjoy a short viewing of Baratunde Thurston's—an American writer and conservationist—award-winning PBS series America Outdoors. Snacks provided.

Saturday, Feb 1 • 11 am–1 pm

Thankful for the Dark

Learn why light pollution is harmful to people and wildlife while enjoying a hike in the largest Urban Night Sky Place.

Wednesday, Feb 5 • 6–7:30 pm

Seasonal Impressions

Create vibrant nature-inspired art using natural materials found during the different seasons.

Saturday, Feb 15 • 1–3 pm

Black History Month Collaboration Hike

Celebrate this special month by joining a bird hike co-led by Outdoor Afros, followed with a snack by a warm fire.

Saturday, Feb 22 • 1:30–3:30 pm

Yoga

Enjoy an all-levels yoga class indoors with a certified instructor. Ages 18 & up.

Sundays, Feb 23 • 10–11 am

Night Owl

Come walk the trails during a new moon as we look and listen for owls at night

Thursday, Feb 25 • 6 pm

Lunar New Year

Welcome good luck and fortune in 2025 by celebrating the Year of the Snake with activities, crafts and performances.

Saturday, Jan 26 • 10 am–1 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



Cross-country skiing starts Dec 21, 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. All skiers must obtain a free tail pass from the Nordic Center.

Rentals run 9 am–2 pm. Equipment must be returned by 3:45 pm. Reservations for rentals must be made via [SignUpGenius.com](#). Reservation link can also be found at [fpdcc.com](#) and on Sagawau's Facebook page. Reservation link will only be available when snow conditions are skiable.

Please note programs are dependent on if we are open for skiing. Ski programs will run only if we have snow (denoted by +). Non-ski programs will only run if we do not have snow (denoted by (-)).



THROUGHOUT *the* SEASON

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 4–Mar 2 • 9 am

Moonlight Ski* +

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

Saturday–Monday, Jan 11–13;

Monday–Wednesday, Feb 10–12 • 4–9 pm

DECEMBER

Cross-Country Ski Seminar* (-)

Learn the basics of cross-country ski equipment and how to prepare for your first cross-country skiing experience. We'll cover skis, boots, and poles—including classic, skating and telemark equipment.

Saturday, Dec 7; Sunday, Dec 15 • 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 8; Saturday, Dec 14 • 1 pm

Restoration Workday* (-)

Join a naturalist as we help restore our ecosystems by removing invasive species. Register at fpdcc.com/volunteer. Tools and safety gear provided. Ages 12 & up.

*Saturdays & Sundays, Dec 28 & 29,
Jan 25 & 26, Feb 22 & 23 • 9:30-11:30 am*

Clear the Trail* (-)

Snow and trail preparation are needed for great skiing. You can't make snow, but you can help brush back trails to get them ski ready! Ages 16 & up.

*Sunday, Dec 1 & Saturday, Dec 21,
9:30-11:30 am*

Sunrise Hike* (-)

Join a naturalist to experience the stillness and peace of a winter sunrise in the forest preserves. Ages 18 & up.

*Saturday, Jan 18 • 6:45 am
Saturday, Feb 15 • 6:15 am*

Feeder Watch* (-)

What birds are visiting the feeding station? On a paved surface, enjoy watching the feeders. Binoculars available.

Sundays, Dec 22, Jan 5; Friday, Dec 27 • 10 am

JANUARY**"Green Fire: Aldo Leopold & A Land Ethic For Our Time" film viewing* (-)**

"Green Fire" explores the life, legacy, and land ethic of conservationist Aldo Leopold and the many ways his philosophy lives today.

Saturday, Jan 4 • 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 11 • 1 pm

Winter Tree ID* (-)

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

Sunday, Jan 19 • 1 pm

FEBRUARY**Black History Month Exhibit**

Learn about African Americans who ski, and challenges faced in the winter sports.

Saturday, Feb 1-Friday, Feb 28

Polar Vortex* (-)

What causes the extreme, cold temperatures during the winter? Stay warm inside while learning about this cold weather event.

Saturday, Feb 1 • 1 pm

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.

Saturday, Feb 1-Friday, Feb 7

Winter 'Brr'ding* (-)

Enjoy an indoor presentation to learn about our winter and irruptive bird species. Ages 16 & up.

Sunday, Feb 9 • 1 pm

Birkie Week +

Ski with wood skis or wool knickers to win a prize. Test your knowledge of the Birkebeiner Ski Race, answer a daily trivia question.

Sunday, Feb 16-Saturday, Feb 22

**Registration required for events
with asterisk.*

630.257.2045

Survival *in* * *the* Preserves

HOW WILDLIFE
TAKES ON THE
WINTER ELEMENTS

Winters in Cook County can be brutal and for the wildlife in the Forest Preserves, it takes some work to ensure survival until the spring.

While some of the Forest Preserves' mammals do hibernate through the winter, the 70,000 acres of land is home to an abundance of wildlife, including mammals, herpes and fish, which adapt to the snow and low temperatures differently.

Here are some examples of local wildlife and their tricks of survival during frigid Cook County winters:

1



2



3



4



6



5



DID YOU KNOW?

Brumation, like hibernation in mammals, is a period of reduced activity for herptiles during winter or extended periods of low temperatures.

1

HERPTILE: **Spring Peeper**

(*Pseudacris crucifer*)

SURVIVAL STRATEGY:

Hiding and freeze prevention

DETAILS: Spring Peepers rely on existing spaces in logs for shelter. The frogs have evolved to help prevent parts of their bodies from freezing including their liver releasing more glucose.

2

HERPTILE: **Snapping Turtle**

(*Chelydra serpentina*)

SURVIVAL STRATEGY:

Brumation underwater

DETAILS: Snapping Turtles go into brumation. They brumate in lakes and ponds because water underneath ice is above freezing, often warmer than on land.

3

FISH: **Bluegill**

(*Lepomis macrochirus*)

SURVIVAL STRATEGY: Fatten up and slow down

DETAILS: They fatten up throughout fall after recognizing reduction in daylight. By late fall/early winter, they eat less food, go into a torpor state and “sit” or slowly swim in the deeper areas.

4

HERPTILE: **Common Garter Snake**

(*Thamnophis sirtalis*)

SURVIVAL STRATEGY:

Brumation underground

DETAILS: These herptiles **rely on heat from** the environment by going underground, using holes that already exist.

5

MAMMAL: **Thirteen-Lined Ground Squirrel**

(*Ictidomys tridecemlineatus*)

SURVIVAL STRATEGY: Hibernation

DETAILS: Thirteen-Lined Ground Squirrels eat large quantities of food during spring/summer to build up stores of brown fat, and they go underground in burrows below the frost line to hibernate.

6

MAMMAL: **North American Beaver**

(*Castor canadensis*)

SURVIVAL STRATEGY: Store food and spend time in their lodges.

DETAILS: Beavers stash twigs, branches and pieces of sapling trees in the mud underwater. They spend more time inside their lodge to stay warm, rest and mate.

RELATED OPPORTUNITY:

Winter Mammals

Join us examine exhibit items and learn about native mammals.

Monday, Jan 6 • 11 am–Noon

Little Red Schoolhouse

SOUTH ZONE



THROUGHOUT *the* WINTER



Snowshoeing

Come out and explore the preserves via snowshoe. When snow depth exceeds 4". Hikes and other activities will be offered if there is no snow.

Saturday, Jan 25 • 11 am–2 pm

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

Tuesday, Feb 25 • 11 am–2 pm

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

Wellness in the Woods: Yoga

Join us for a 45-minute yoga class. Dress in active wear and bring a yoga mat.

**Saturdays, Dec 7, Jan 4 & Feb 1,
11 am–Noon**

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

DECEMBER

Tiny Tot Adventures

Join us for an adventure in nature through movement, stories and artmaking. Ages 2–5 w/adult.

**Thursdays, Dec 5, 19; Jan 9, 23; Feb 6, 20,
10–11 am**

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

Kwanzaa Celebration

Celebrate community, honor Pan-African Heritage and embrace the seven principles of Kwanzaa. Call for more info.

Tuesday, Dec 31 • 10 am–2 pm

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

Nature Photography

Enjoy the winter landscapes along our trail and bring a camera to capture the beauty.

Friday, Dec 13 • 9 am

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

Winter Wellness Walk

Bundle up and experience forest bathing and the health benefits nature provides. Ages 13 & up. Slow-paced, 3.4-mile walk.

Saturday, Dec 21 • 8 am

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

JANUARY

Winter Exploration Day

Get outside and enjoy winter. Great opportunity for the whole family to experience snowshoeing (weather permitting), hikes, art making, campfires and more!

Friday, Jan 3 • 11 am–2 pm

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

Celebration of Lunar New Year

Activities to educate and celebrate the impact of Lunar New Year-Year of the Snake.

Saturday, Jan 11 • 11 am–2 pm

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

MLK Day of Service & Brush Pile Burn

Learn what it takes to keep our preserves healthy and participate in a day of service removing invasive plant species. S'mores provided.

Saturday, Jan 18 • 10 am–2 pm

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

MLK Jr. Day of Service*

Celebrate MLK with a day of service. Join us for a litter clean-up, crafts and cocoa! For groups of 10 or more, email Kelvin.Boyd@cookcountyil.gov.

Monday, Jan 20 • 10 am–1 pm

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

Teen S'mores Night

Hang out by the fire with friends and enjoy a sweet treat. S'more supplies provided.

Wednesday, Jan 29 • 5–7 pm

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

FEBRUARY

Black History Month Story Trails

Follow a self-guided story featuring a prominent African American figure.

Wednesdays, Feb 5, 12, 19, 26 • Noon–5 pm

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

Conservation@Home:

Seed Swap & Plant Exchange

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

Saturday, Feb 8 • 10 am–2 pm

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



Local Hidden Figures

Join us for an afternoon of stories from our local hidden figures in honor of Black History Month.

Saturday, Feb 22 • 11 am–2 pm

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

BIPOC Faces in Green Space

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

Saturday, Feb 15 • 9 am–1 pm

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

**Registration required. Please call 224.763.4317, unless otherwise noted.*

EXPLORE MORE



PAGES 4–13



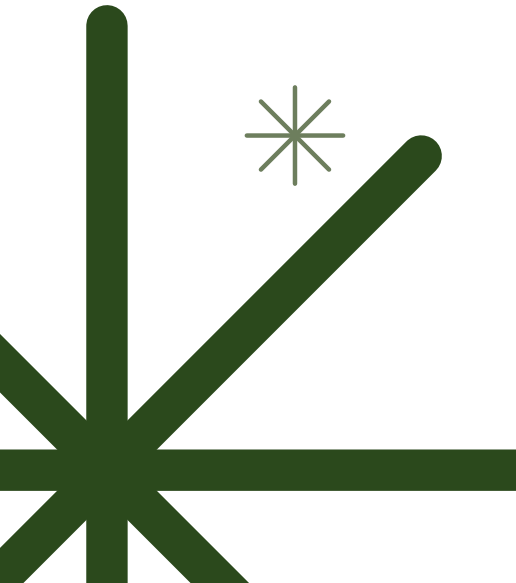
MLK DAY

Join the Forest Preserves of Cook County in celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day by committing to a day of service and giving back to nature.



Find an event:

fpdcc.com/events/tag/mlk/



MLK DAY OF SERVICE EVENTS



■ Litter Pick-up

Saturday, Jan 18 • 10 am–Noon

Caldwell Woods Wellness Center

◆ Litter Pick-up

Teen Exploration Day for teens and families

Saturday, Jan 18 • 10 am–Noon

Schiller Woods-East

✦ Self-led Litter Pick-up

Monday, Jan 20 • 9 am–2 pm

Sand Ridge Nature Center



▲ Restoration

Monday, Jan 20 • 1–3 pm

Crabtree Nature Center

Ages 8 & up. High schoolers may earn service hours. Registration required. Call 847.381.6592.



● Moon Walk

Monday, Jan 20 • 6:30 pm

Little Red Schoolhouse Nature Center

ZONE KEY

▲ Northwest

■ North

◆ Central

● Southwest

✦ South





*Make Nature
Your Venue*



Photos by Shutter Sam Photography

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

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 8 • 11 am–3 pm

THROUGHOUT *the* WINTER

Poetry Trail

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



Restoration Sundays*

Help restore our woodlands by cutting down invasive species and having a brush pile burn. Followed by s'mores and light snacks. Ages 12 & up.

Sundays, Dec 1, Jan 5, Feb 2 • 10 am–Noon

Live Healthy Discover Nature! Walk*

Venture out on our scenic trails for a guided 3- to 4- mile walk.

Saturdays, Dec 7, Jan 4, Feb 1 • 1:30 pm

Wee Wonders*

Learn about nature through sensory experiences, stories and artmaking. Ages 2–5 w/adult.

Wednesdays • 10 am

Dec 11: Hibernation

Jan 8: Snowflakes

Feb 12: Animal Tracks

DECEMBER

Winter Bonfire

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

Saturday, Dec 14 • 3:30–7 pm

Camp Shabbona,
15810 S Torrence Ave, South Holland



Image by Tina Ray

Full Moon Owl Walk*

Join us for an early morning stroll in search of owls followed by hot drinks to warm up.

Sunday, Dec 15 • 6–7 am

Cozy Crafting*

Stay warm inside while making arts and crafts using natural materials. Light refreshments provided.

Sunday, Dec 22 • 1–3 pm

JANUARY

Sit 'N' Sip: Winter Birds

Drop in to see who is visiting our feeders and learn from a Sand Ridge bird nerd! Warm drinks and cookies provided.

Saturday, Jan 11 • 8–10 am

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 20 • 9 am–2 pm

Winter Night Walk*

Embrace the chilly weather with a brisk nighttime walk, then warm up with a hot beverage.

Saturday, Jan 25 • 6–8 pm

FEBRUARY

Underground Railroad Self-Guided Walks

Join us for self-guided historical walks throughout February for Black History Month.

Underground Railroad Presentations

Join us for presentations and guided walks about the Underground Railroad route connected to the Calumet Region during the mid-1800s.

*Saturday, Feb 22; Sunday, Feb 23,
10 am–3 pm*



Valentine's Day Candlelight Walks*

Celebrate love in its many forms with a candlelit walk and light refreshments. Families, friends and couples welcome.

Fridays, Feb 7, 14 • 6–8:30 pm

Build a Birdhouse*

Make a wooden birdhouse for your yard! While supplies last. Ages 14 & up. Ages 14–17 w/adult.

Saturday, Feb 15 • Noon–2 pm

**Registration required for events
with asterisk.*

708.868.0606



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 t 708.386.4042 or at experience.nature@cookcountyil.gov.

WINTER SOLSTICE

Friday, Dec 20 & Saturday, Dec 21



Winter solstice marks the longest night of the year! Join the Forest Preserves of Cook County to learn about this natural phenomenon with storytelling, hikes, campfires and more.

Find an event: fpdcc.com/events/tag/solstice/



Black History Month

Join the Forest Preserves of Cook County in celebrating Black History Month. Learn about Black environmentalists, walk a trail that features poetry written by Black authors, experience a self-guided journey following the Underground Railroad route, and more.



Find an event: fpdcc.com/events/tag/black-history-month/



Are you 16-22 & looking for a **SUMMER JOB?**

Apply for our
Youth Outdoor
Ambassador
program. Accepting
applications
February-March.

Learn more:
fpdcc.com/jobs/

