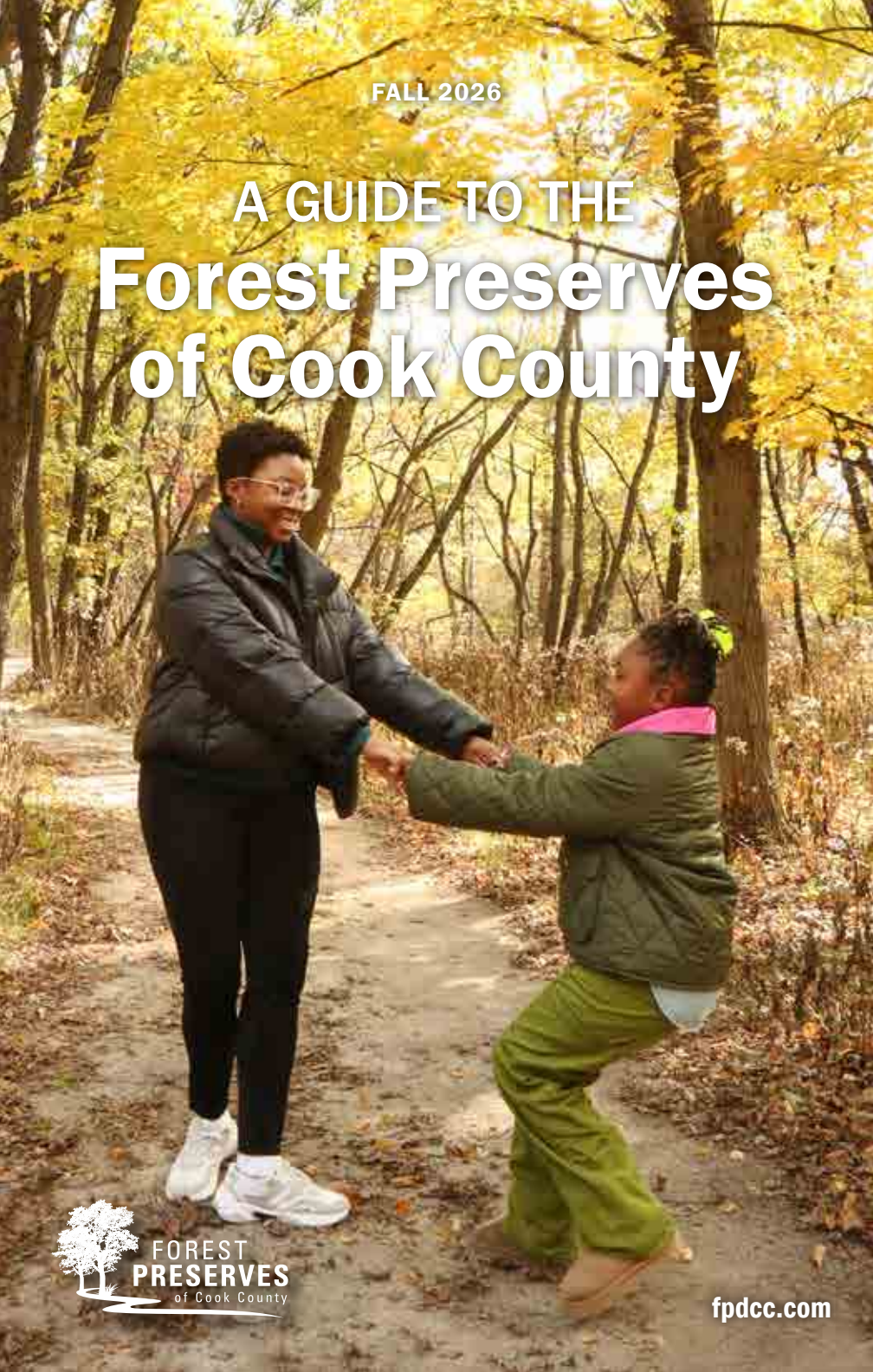
FALL 2026

A GUIDE TO THE Forest Preserves of Cook County



FOREST PRESERVES of Cook County

fpdcc.com

TRUNK *OR* TREAT

Sunday, Oct 25
Noon–4 pm

Eggers Grove
E 112th St & S Ave E
Chicago



Sponsored by the
Forest Preserves and East Side
Chamber of Commerce



The Forest Preserves 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 630.453.7887.**



Some people spend fall chasing brilliant colors. Others are up before sunrise, hoping to spot migrating birds. Some gather around a campfire with friends, while others find joy in a quiet trail where the only sound is the crunch of leaves beneath their feet.

There are so many choices, and there is no right way to experience the natural beauty of autumn in the Forest Preserves of Cook County.

Whether you're looking for family fun, outdoor adventure, peaceful moments or the chance to learn something new, you'll find it in this guide. Celebrate National Public Lands Day, discover the stories woven into our landscapes, enjoy cultural festivals, paddle calm waterways, photograph wildlife, volunteer to care for the land, or simply explore somewhere you've never been before. Across Cook County, every preserve has something different waiting to be discovered.

However you decide to spend the season, I hope you'll make time for the outdoors. Bring your family, invite a friend, or set out on your own. Your next favorite fall tradition may be closer than you think.

Adam Bianchi

Adam Bianchi
General Superintendent
Forest Preserves of Cook County

FOREST PRESERVES of Cook County

feel free

fpdcc.com

How to use this Guide:

Whether you're looking for boat rentals, ziplining, disc golf 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 more than 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 4–12
Seasonal Offerings, Hike the Preserves, Bird the Preserves, Volunteer Opportunities, Camping

Northwest Zone 13–17
Crabtree Nature Center

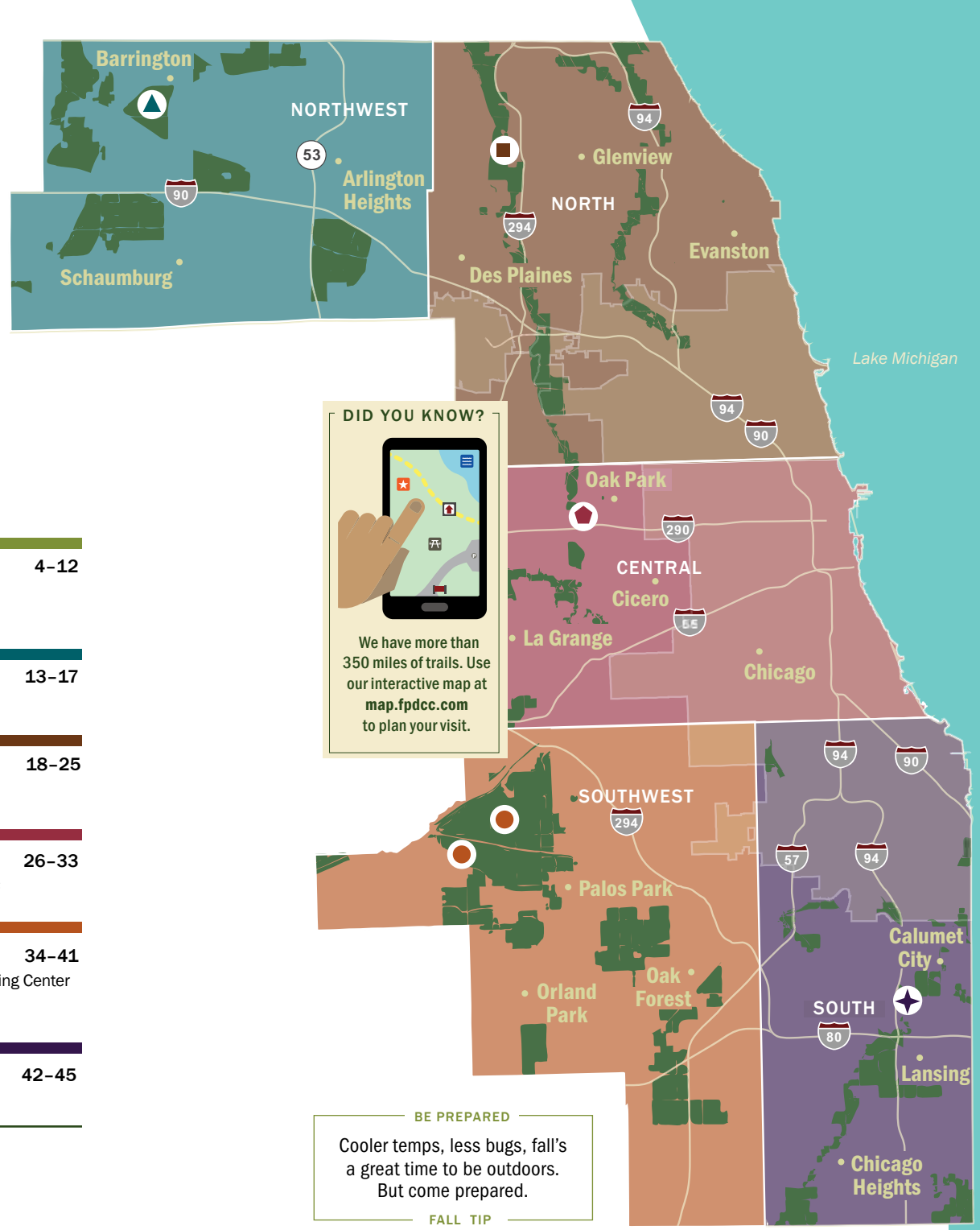
North Zone 18–25
River Trail Nature Center

Central Zone 26–33
Trailside Museum of Natural History, *Finding Purpose in Public Lands*

Southwest Zone 34–41
Little Red Schoolhouse Nature Center, Sagawau Environmental Learning Center
Telling the Lands Story Through Art

South Zone 42–45
Sand Ridge Nature Center

Entrance to Nature Centers is free; some programs and zone-based activities require a small fee.



DID YOU KNOW?

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

BE PREPARED

Cooler temps, less bugs, fall's a great time to be outdoors. But come prepared.

FALL TIP

Seasonal Offerings

Throughout Cook County

BOAT RENTALS

Canoes, kayaks, rowboats or electric motor boats. April–October 31—call ahead for availability. fpdcc.com/boating.

Busse Lake Boating Center
E Higgins Rd, east of I-290,
Elk Grove Village, 224.415.6554

Maple Lake Boating Center
Wolf Rd, south of 95th St, Willow Springs,
forgeparks.com/maple-lake

Skokie Lagoons (Tower Road Entrance)*
Tower Rd, west of Forestway Dr,
Northfield, 847.414.5883

Tampier Lake Boating Center
W 131st St, west of S Wolf Rd,
Orland Park, 708.830.5194

**Canoes and kayaks only*

CONSERVATION@HOME

A partnership with University of Illinois Extension certifies Forest Preserves Friendly gardens. fpdcc.com

DISC GOLF

Rolling Knolls
11N260 Rohrssen Rd, Elgin
fpdcc.com/disc-golf

EQUESTRIAN

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



2026 PERMITS ON SALE NOW

SAVE THE DATE

Event Permits for 2027 go on sale November 17, 2026

GO APE ZIP LINE

Navigate obstacles and ziplines, throw axes, and take on a jungle gym nets course in the forest canopy. Closes November 30. Details & reservations: goape.com.

Bemis Woods-South
1100 Ogden Ave, Western Springs
Open April–November

JUICED BY SHIC

Swallow Cliff Woods-North
Open April–late-October. Hours may vary.
Calumet Sag Rd/Rte 83, west of La Grange Rd/96th Ave
juicedbyshic.com

GOLF

forestpreservegolf.com or call 800.460.0010.

Billy Caldwell
6150 Caldwell Ave, Chicago

Burnham Woods
Burnham Ave & 142nd St, Burnham

Chick Evans
6145 Golf Rd, Morton Grove

Edgebrook
6100 N Central Ave, Chicago

George W Dunne
16310 S Central Ave, Oak Forest

Glencoe Golf Club
621 Westley Rd, Glencoe
glencoegolfclub.com

Harry Semrow Driving Range
1150 E Golf Rd, Des Plaines

Highland Woods
2775 Ela Rd, Hoffman Estates

Indian Boundary
8600 W Forest Preserve Ave, Chicago

Joe Louis
13100 S Halsted St, Riverdale

Meadowlark
11599 31st St, Hinsdale

River Oaks
1 Park Ave, Calumet City

OFF-LEASH DOG AREAS

Membership info: fpdcc.com/olda

Beck Lake
East River Rd & Central Rd,
Des Plaines

Bremen Grove
Oak Park Ave, south of 159th St,
Tinley Park

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

TENNIS

oakparktennis.com



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 Ave, Chicago

Rolling Knolls Pavilion
11N260 Rohrssen Rd, Elgin

Swallow Cliff Pavilion
IL Rt 83 & US Rt 45, Palos Park

Thatcher Woods Pavilion
8030 Chicago Ave, River Forest

VOLUNTEER

fpdcc.com/volunteer

ZONE KEY

Northwest · North · Central · Southwest · South



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. Fitness hikes will be faster paced with little to no stopping or interpretation.

Walk and Talk:

▲ Northwest Zone

History of Poplar Creek

Carl R. Hansen Woods, Sutton Rd/ Rte 59, south of Shoe Factory Rd, Schaumburg

Wednesday, Oct 14 • 10 am

■ North Zone

Skokie Lagoons*

Forest Way Grove, Forest Way Dr, south of Dundee Rd, Glencoe

Saturday, Oct 3 • 10 am

● Southwest Zone

Oak Forest Heritage Preserve-1.6 mi

Oak Forest Heritage Preserve-East, Fieldcrest Dr, southwest of Crawford Ave, Oak Forest

Thursday, Sept 17 • 10 am

Fitness Hike:

● Southwest Zone

Yankee Woods-3 mi

Central Ave, north of 167th St, Tinley Park

Saturday, Nov 14 • 10 am

ZONE KEY

▲ Northwest ■ North ⬟ Central ● Southwest ✦ South

#birdthepreserves

Bird Walks

Join a naturalist as we look for local birds. A limited supply of binoculars available for loan at select events.

Eggers Grove

E 112th St & S Ave E, Chicago

Saturdays, Sept 5 & Nov 14; Sunday, Sept 20; Thursday, Oct 8 • 8 am

Palos Park Woods-South

Please call 630.257.2045 for registration and meet location.

119th St, west of S 86th Ave, Palos Park

Sunday, Sept 20 • 8 am

Busse Lake Boating Center

E Higgins Rd/Rte 72, east of I-290/ Hwy 53, Elk Grove Village

Sunday, Sept 20 • 8 am

McGinnis Slough

S La Grange Rd, south of W 135th St, Orland Park

Thursday, Oct 1 • 8 am

Fall Bird Walks

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

Saturdays, Sept 12, Oct 4, Nov 8 • 8 am

Waterfowl Watch

Ages 13 & up. Bring your own binoculars to view migrating waterfowl.

Crabtree Nature Center, 3 Stover Rd, Barrington

Tuesdays, Nov 3 & 17 • 8:30–10 am

BE A BETTER BIRDER

Get Ready for Urban Birding Festival*

Learn about the Urban Birding Festival and how to prepare, what to bring, where to go! Register: forms.gle/ o8xK6YyL4FmbmJDs9

Thursday, Sept 17 • 6 pm

Understanding Migration*

Many bird species stop-over in Cook County during migration. Learn about why and how birds make this journey. Register: tinyurl.com/9-24-babb

Thursday, Sept 24 • 6 pm

Backyard Bird Feeding*

Discover how to make your home bird friendly. Learn about bird feeders, types of food and more. Register: tinyurl.com/Backyardfeedingbabb

Thursday, Oct 8 • 6 pm

Intermediate Bird ID*

Step up your birding game by learning how to identify the complexities of birds. Register: tinyurl.com/10-22-babb

Thursday, Oct 22 • 6 pm

Tips for Learning to Identify Bird Sounds*

Learn the skills to begin to learn to identify local bird songs. Register: tinyurl.com/11-12-babb

Thursday, Nov 12 • 6 pm

**Registration required. The program will be held virtually via Zoom.*

Volunteer Opportunities





Photo by Scott Shigley.

NEWTS: Stewardship Days for New Volunteers

Learn how to collect seeds of native plants. You'll experience nature in a whole new way and help conserve biodiversity. Beginners welcome! Registration is required. Learn more and sign up at: **fpdcc.com/volunteer**

South Zone–Seeds & Sunsets!

Tuesday, Sept 15 • 4:30–6:30 pm

Bartel Grassland
Flossmoor Rd, west of Central Ave
Tinley Park

Northwest Zone

Sunday, Sep 27 • 9 am–Noon

Spring Creek Penny Road Pond
East Penny Rd, west of Old Sutton Rd
Barrington Hills

Central Zone

Saturday, Oct 10 • 9 am–Noon

Salt Creek Resource Management
500 Ogden Ave
Western Springs

Volunteer with your Group
at a Stewardship Day this Fall

Fall and winter are the best times for groups to join a stewardship day. From school field trips to corporate team-building days, your group can help nature thrive in the Forest Preserves. Opportunities are available September through March.

To get started email,
Volunteer.FPD@cookcountyil.gov







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

FOREST PRESERVES of Cook County

CAMPING 1.855.YES.CAMP fpdcc.com/camping
INDOOR FACILITIES 773.558.2003 fpdcc.com/indoor-events



FOREST PRESERVES OF COOK COUNTY

CAMPING

Contact campgrounds for information and group site availability. For seasonal rates visit fpdcc.com/camping or 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

CAMP REINBERG • CAMP BULLFROG LAKE
CAMP SULLIVAN

RATES: NOV–MAR		COOK COUNTY RESIDENT	NON-RESIDENT
Type	**Capacity**	**Sat–Sun**	**Sun–Sat**
Tent/RV Electric	6	$30	$40
Tent (Non-Electric)	6	$25	$35
Small Cabin	8	$46	$56
Large Cabin	10	$112	$124
Small Bunkhouse	16	$129	$141
Large Bunkhouse	36	$168	$179

CAMP DAN BEARD

RATES: APR–OCT		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	$95	$106
Group Site Pricing	30–60	$24/tent	$34/tent

ZONE KEY

▲ Northwest ■ North ⬟ Central ● Southwest ✦ South

CAMPGROUNDS OFFERINGS

▲ ● Camping 101

Learn basic skills like how to set up a tent, build a fire, dress for the weather and more!

Wednesdays • 5:30–7 pm

Sept 9: Camp Reinberg
Oct 14: Camp Bullfrog Lake

● Fall Open Climb*

Scale the indoor climbing wall! Participants must be over 40lbs. Adult supervision and waivers required. Accessible climbing equipment available.

Camp Sullivan
Thursdays, Sept 17; Oct 1, 15, 29; Nov 12
4–8 pm

⬟ Day Hiking Leadership Training*

For teachers/youth educators! This training gives you all the tools to take groups out into the preserves for the day.

Bemis Woods-North, Wolf Rd,
South of 31st St, Oak Brook
Saturday, Nov 7 • 11:30 am



Party for the Preserves

Celebrate National Public Lands Day with a full day of activities. In partnership with Wilderness Inquiry, Funkadesi & Illinois 4H.

Camp Bullfrog Lake
Saturday, Sept 26 • Noon

Noon–3 pm: 4H Kick off
Famiy Activities
Noon–6 pm: Paddling
5:30 pm: Funkadesi Live Performance
7:30–9 pm: Night Walks
& Telescope Viewing

For programs at Camp Shabbona Woods, see page 45

**Registration required. To register, email experience.camping@cookcountyil.gov.*



RESTORING HABITATS.
PROTECTING OUR PLANET.
SAVING PLANTS.

The Negaunee Institute is a global leader in plant conservation science. So much grows here; join us in our mission to grow more than plants as a member, donor, or visitor.

Pictured: Alula, an endangered Hawaiian plant we're working to save.

chicago botanic garden
NEGAUNEE INSTITUTE

GET INSPIRED

The Chicago Botanic Garden is one of the treasures of the Forest Preserves of Cook County.

NORTHWEST ZONE





Garden Days

Want to get your hands dirty? Help us grow the Trickster Cultural Center gardens! Call 847.301.2090 for more info.

Tuesdays, Sept 1, 15; Oct 6; Nov 3
10–11 am

Rolling Knolls, 11N260 Rohrssen Rd, Elgin

Fall Tree Walk*

Enjoy a guided walk and learn how to identify trees in the fall.

Saturday, Oct 10 • 10 am

Deer Grove-West, Grove 5,W Dundee Rd, east of Northwest Hwy, Barrington

Trickster DaWaag (Fall) Camp*

Free Native American cultural camp. Register: tricksterculturalcenter.org/calendar-of-events.

Friday, Oct 9 • 4–7 pm
Saturday, Oct 10 • Noon –3 pm

Rolling Knolls, 11N260 Rohrssen Rd, Elgin

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

EXPLORE MORE
PAGES 4–12

Crabtree NATURE CENTER

3 Stover Rd, Barrington, 847.381.6592

Building: 9 am–5 pm, *closed Fridays,* Grounds: 8 am–5 pm daily, Free Admission
Starting Nov 1, Building: 9 am–4 pm, Grounds: 8 am–4 pm



THROUGHOUT *the* SEASON

Wee Wandering Wednesdays

Read a story, make a craft and go on an adventure. Ages 2–6 w/ adult. Tickets first come, first served.

Wednesdays, Sept 9 & 23 • 2 pm;
Oct 7 & 21; Nov 4 & 18 • 10 am

Senior Nature Club*

Discover nature through activities. Ages 55 & up.

Thursdays, Sept 10, Oct 8, Nov 5 • 10 am

Meet Our Ambassador Animals

Meet the animals that call Crabtree home.

Saturdays, Sept 12 & Nov 14 • 11 am

Fall Artisan Series*

Get crafty on select Wednesday evenings. Ages 18 & up.

Wednesdays • 7 pm

Sept 16: Flower Press
Oct 14: Felting
Nov 18: Painting

Fall Hiking Series

Wednesdays • 2 pm

Sept 16 & 30: Golden Prairie Walks
Oct 14, 28; Nov 4: Fall Color Walks

Baby Buds

Nature-themed interactive songs and stories. Ages 2 & under w/ adult. Siblings welcome. Tickets first come, first served.

Thursdays, Sept 17, Oct 15, Nov 12 • 9:30 am

Sunset Photography Meetup*

Join Crabtree Nature Photographers' Meetup Group for a guided sunset walk and capture nature in the fading light.

Thursdays, Oct 1 • 5:15 pm & Oct 15 • 5 pm

Little Sprouts Sound Lab*

Explore nature through sensory activities, outdoor listening and sound-making. Ages 2–6 w/ adult. Siblings welcome.

Tuesdays, Oct 13, Nov 10 • 10 am

Restoration Workday*

Ages 8 & up. Children under 15 w/ adult. High schoolers may earn service hours.

Saturdays, Oct 24, Nov 28; Sundays, Sept 20, Oct 11, Nov 15 • 10 am–Noon

SEPTEMBER

National Wildlife Day

Discover and celebrate the wildly wonderful wildlife of Illinois and abroad.

Thursday, Sept 3 • 11 am

National Hummingbird Day

Explore the conservation and historical importance of these birds throughout the Americas.

Saturday, Sept 5 • 10 am–3 pm

10 am–3 pm: Family-friendly activities & crafts
2 pm: Walking presentation for ages 16 & up

Hoarders!

Learn how local animals are scurrying about and stocking up in preparation for winter.

Sunday, Sept 13 • 1 pm

Fall Equinox Forest Bath*

Welcome fall with a guided forest therapy walk with certified forest therapy guide Gayle Byck.

Tuesday, Sept 22 • 6:30 pm

Moon Cake Festival*

Celebrate this Chinese cultural festival with a guided forest therapy walk, moon-viewing, and the sharing of traditional mooncakes.

Friday, Sept 25 • 6:30–9 pm

Celebrate Party for the Preserves: Celebrate Nature!

Saturday, Sept 26 • 10:30 am–3 pm

10:30 am: Spanish/English Bilingual Prairie Walk
11 am–3 pm: Family-Friendly Activities
1:30 pm: Seed Collecting

OCTOBER

World Animal Day

Celebrate Filipino American History Month with this year's theme: See the World Through Their Eyes during this English/Tagalog bilingual program.

Saturday, Oct 3 • 11 am

Oak-tober

Learn what makes oak trees special.

Sunday, Oct 4 • 1 pm

Hispanic Heritage Month Nature Art Studio

Create art inspired by renowned Hispanic artists. All ages. Drop in.

Monday, Oct 5 • 1:30–3:30 pm

Rust at Dusk*

Explore an old farm trail surrounded by tallgrass prairie and relics of the past. Ages 12 & up.

Friday, Oct 9 • 5:45–7:15 pm

Animal Enrichment Studio for Teens

Create enrichment items for our ambassador animals, then see how they are used as an important part of their care.

Saturday, Oct 17 • 11 am

Fall Color Walk

Saturday, Oct 17 • 1 pm

Reptile Awareness Day

Learn about and experience reptiles from Illinois and abroad.

Tuesday, Oct 20 • 11 am

Continued on page 16.

**Registration required. For more information or registration, call*

847.381.6592

Continued from page 15.

Prairie Pages*
Join our adult nature book club with the Barrington Area Library!
Tuesday, Oct 20 • 1 pm

Cicada Pinning Class*
Learn the importance and process of insect pinning. Presented with The Insect Asylum. Cost: $5/person. Ages 14 & up.
Thursday, Oct 22 • 7–9 pm

Pumpkin Scavenger Hunt
Self-guided search for hidden pumpkins on the trail. Costumes encouraged.
Sunday, Oct 25 • 11 am–3 pm



Owl-oween Bash*
Jack-o'-lantern walk, campfire stories and festive fun. Costumes encouraged.
Friday, Oct 30 • 6–9 pm

NOVEMBER

Dia de los Muertos Craft
Decorate a sugar skull to celebrate Day of the Dead. While supplies last.
Sunday, Nov 1 • 1–3 pm

Pride Night*
LGBTQ2S+ individuals and allies can connect, unwind and celebrate nature around the campfire. Presented with the Kenneth Young Center.
Friday, Nov 6 • 6–9 pm

Map and Compass
Learn how to use a map and compass for navigation, then practice on a 1.5 mile walk.
Sunday, Nov 8 • 1 pm

Plants in the Military
Celebrate Veterans Day by learning how plants were used in the military.
Wednesday, Nov 11 • 10 am

How To Do Nothing for Overwintering Pollinators
Learn about the best gardening practices for fostering our native bee species.
Saturday, Nov 14 • 1 pm

Buckthorn Dying Workshop*
Cut buckthorn then create dyed fabric with it during this immersive workshop with Chicago artist Katelyn Patton.
Saturday, Nov 21 • 10 am–Noon

Beaver Moon Sound Bath*
Join Navraaz Kaur Basati from Wandering Paths on this immersive nature walk and sound bath.
Sunday, Nov 22 • 7–9 pm

**Registration required.*
For more information or registration, call
847.381.6592







FREEDOM IN *Motion*

September 8–12

Adaptive Kayaking | Adaptive Climbing | Adaptive Cycling

Provider Training
A hands-on session that equips providers with tools to deliver safe, inclusive recreation for individuals with physical disabilities.

Climbing
Tuesday, Sept 8 • 9–11:30 am
Camp Sullivan, Oak Forest

Cycling
Wednesday, Sept 9 • 9 am–Noon
Busse Lake Boating Center, Elk Grove

Kayaking
Friday, Sept 11 • 9 am–Noon
Camp Bullfrog Lake, Willow Springs

Experience & Skill Development
Participants challenge themselves on fully supported adaptive equipment designed for all ability levels.

Climbing
Tuesday, Sept 8 • 1–3:30 pm
Camp Sullivan, Oak Forest

Cycling
Wednesday, Sept 9 • 4–6 pm
Busse Lake Boating Center, Elk Grove
Thursday, Sept 10 • 10 am–Noon
Bemis Woods South, Western Springs

Kayaking
Friday, Sept 11 • 4–6 pm
Saturday, Sept 12 • 10 am–Noon
Camp Bullfrog Lake, Willow Springs

Learn more:
fpdcc.com/adaptive

North Zone

CALDWELL WOODS WELLNESS CENTER

W Devon Ave & N Nagle Ave, Chicago

THROUGHOUT *the* SEASON

Weekly Programs at Caldwell Woods Wellness Center

Join us for exciting new programs every Thursday (excl. Nov 26)! Visit fpdcc.com, call 773.758.8899 or email northzoneprogram@cookcountyil.gov for details.

Yoga in the Preserves*

Weekly yoga class for all ages. Led by Kim Weber from Be Lightfooted.

Wednesdays in Sept, Oct, Nov
9:30–10:45 am

SEPTEMBER

Chakra Balancing Gardens*

Learn the connection with nature through chakras. Led by Wandering Paths.

Wednesday, Sept 2 • 10 am–Noon

"The Grown-Ups"*

This funny, deeply human play invites audiences to gather close and "lose" themselves in the woods. Presented with The Tramps.

Thursday, Sept 3 • Sunset

Autumn Equinox Celebration*

Experience the health benefits of being in nature with guided forest meditation. Led by Gayle Byck from InTune with Nature.

Thursday, Sept 10 • 10 am–Noon

Pollinator Gardening with Native Plants*

Learn how to use ecologically beneficial plants, sample garden plates and simple design techniques. Led by Master Naturalist Sara Strother.

Thursday, Sept 10 • 7–8:30 pm

Nature Arts for Health*

Experience nature, art and wellness in this fun, interactive class using rocks to create art. Led by University of Illinois Extension.

Thursday, Sept 17 • 1:30–3 pm

Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration*

Celebrate the diverse, vibrant Hispanic culture with a performace by Xochitl-Quetzal Danza Azteca, arts and nature education and local food!

Saturday, Sept 19 • Noon–2 pm

Monarchs & Milkweed

Learn about monarch habitat, conservation efforts and milkweed during a guided walk.

Thursday, Sept 24 • 10 am & 2 pm

OCTOBER

Meditation & Sound Bath*

Monthly guided meditation and immersive sound bath session led by Vibyana. Yoga mats provided.

Thursday, Oct 1 • 9:30–10:45 am



Pumpkinpalooza

Paint pumpkins and bowl, dye buckthorn, play ring toss, maneuver through a fall-themed obstacle course, and more! Supplies limited.

Saturday, Oct 3 • 1–3 pm

Outdoor Skills Workshop*

Develop or master knot tying, tents, fire building and more. Presented with Chicago Voyagers.

Thursday, Oct 15 • 4:30–6 pm



REACH Nature Navigators*

Leave No Trace scavenger hunt featuring Halloween-themed twists! Presented with Refugee Education & Adventure Challenge youth.

Saturday, Oct 17 • 11 am–3 pm

Recycled Fairy Gardens*

Bring old plant pots, toys and other items to create fun planters. Led by Navraaz Kaur Basati from Wandering Paths.

Thursday, Oct 22 • 10 am–Noon

Chicago Voyagers' Fall Jamboree*

Immerse yourself at this event that recreates the spirit of a Chicago Voyagers expedition. Presented with the Chicago Voyagers. Register: chicagovoyagers.org.

Sunday, Oct 25 • Noon–2 pm

NOVEMBER

Candlemaking*

Create dipped candles over a fire and learn about beeswax. Supplies provided.

Thursday, Nov 12 • 3–4:30 pm

Buckthorn Dye Workshop*

Learn about the invasive plant buckthorn, how to process it for dye and take home your own naturally dyed textile.

Saturday, Nov 14 • 5:30–7:30 pm

Rock and Crystal Gardens*

Create small gardens for your home! Participants are encouraged to bring collected rocks and crystals, and recycled plant containers.

Thursday, Nov 19 • 10 am–Noon



TOWER ROAD BOAT LAUNCH

Tower Rd, west of Forestway Dr, Winnetka

History of the Lagoons Paddle*

Explore the Skokie Lagoons by water. Equipment provided. Presented with Chicago River Canoe & Kayak.

Friday, Sept 18 • 5–6:30 pm

Full Moon Paddle*

Enjoy a sunset and moonlit paddle through Skokie Lagoons. Register: Chicagoriver.org/events

Saturday, Sept 26 • 5:30–9 pm

Fall Colors Paddle*

Paddling through the Skokie Lagoons.

Saturday, Oct 10 • 10 am

Continued on page 21

**Registration required. For more information or registration, please email northzoneprogram@cookcountyil.gov or call 773.758.8899.*

EXPLORE MORE

PAGES 4–12

BROOKFIELD ZOO CHICAGO

2026 Special Events

DINOS!

NOW thru October 25

Hispanic Heritage Fest — September 26

Boo! at the Zoo — October 3 - 25

Holiday Tree Trim — November 7 - 8

Reindeer Run — November 14

21+ Holiday Magic® Sip & Stroll — November 20

Holiday Magic® — Begins November 21

FOREST PRESERVES of Cook County

Scan QR For Info and More!

Continued from page 19



Fall Nature Fest

Engage with local environmental groups and businesses while enjoying food, games, Jesse White Tumblers, and animal ambassadors. More info: commissionerdegnen.com/fallnaturefest

Saturday, Sept 12 • Noon–3 pm

LaBagh Woods, Groves 1–4, N Cicero Ave, north of W Foster Ave, Chicago

Additional North Zone Events

SEPTEMBER

Share the Trails: Cycling Pit Stop

Get your helmet fit, tires inflated, bike checked and learn about trail safety. Presented with Ride Illinois.

Sundays, Sept 6, Oct 25 • 2:30–4:30 pm

Nature Wellness Walk*

Practice mindfulness and meditation during this leisure walk. Led by University of Illinois Extension. Ages 18 & up.

Friday, Sept 11 • 10 am–Noon

Linne Woods, Grove 2, W Dempster St, east of Lehigh Ave, Morton Grove



Every Child Matters Powwow

Celebrate Native American culture. Enjoy traditional Powwow, native food, and listen to stories. Register: call 773.883.9100.

Saturday, Sept 26 • 11 am–5 pm

Bunker Hill, Grove 1, N Caldwell Ave, south of W Touhy Ave, Niles

OCTOBER

World Migratory Bird Day Paddle*

Experience the magic of migration with Friends of the Chicago River and Chicago Ornithological Society. Register: chicagoriver.org/events

Saturday, Oct 3 • 10 am–1 pm

Linne Woods, Grove 2, W Dempster St, east of Lehigh Ave, Morton Grove

NOVEMBER

Stars, Stories, & S'mores

Listen to stories, take a night hike, make s'mores and more. Presented with the American Indian Health Services Center.

Friday, Nov 6 • 6–8 pm

LaBagh Woods, Grove 2, N Cicero Ave, north of W Foster Ave, Chicago

River Trail
NATURE CENTER

3120 Milwaukee Ave, Northbrook, 847.824.8360

Building: 9 am–5 pm, *closed Fridays,* Grounds: 8 am–5 pm daily, Free Admission
Starting Nov 1, Building: 9 am–4 pm, Grounds: 8 am–4 pm



SPECIAL EVENT

Fall Festival

Celebrate the season with a special autumn fun day. Beekeeping demonstrations, animal encounters, pumpkin painting, honey sales, activities and more!

Sunday, Oct 18 • 10 am–3 pm

THROUGHOUT *the* SEASON

What's on the Menu?

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

Saturdays & Sundays • 3 pm

Small Serendipity

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

Tuesdays, Sept 8 & 22; Oct 6; Nov 10 & 24 10 am

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

Fridays in the Field

Discover nature with University of Illinois Extension volunteers.

Fridays, Sept 4, Oct 2, Nov 13 • 10 am–Noon

Monday Morning Mood Booster*

Fight the Monday blues and join us for a walk in the woods. Ages 18 & up.

Mondays, Sept 14, 28; Nov 9, 23 • 9:30 am

Forest Therapy Walks*

Relaxing meditative practices and mindfulness led by the University of Illinois Extension. Ages 18 & up.

Sundays, Sept 27, Nov 29; Saturday, Oct 10 1–2:30 pm

SEPTEMBER

Animal Encounter

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

Sunday, Sept 6 & Monday, Sept 7 • 1:30 pm

River Trail Workday*

Help us work to make River Trail even better. Ages 8 & up. Children under 15 w/ adult.

Saturday, Sept 12 • 10 am–Noon

Herbal Tea Party

Learn about native plants you can grow in a garden, then sample different infused teas made from them.

Sunday, Sept 13 • 12:30–2:30 pm

Forest Bathing for the High Holidays*

Experience forest bathing during the "Days of Awe" between Rosh Hashanah and Yorn Kippur.

Tuesday, Sept 15 • 1–3 pm

River Trail Nightlife: Night Hike*

Learn about nocturnal animals and more on a guided hike. Cost: $5/person. Ages 6 & up.

Friday, Sept 18 • 7 pm

National Clean Up Day*

Care for our natural world by making River Trail and the surrounding preserves cleaner. Self-guided. Pick up supplies onsite.

Saturday, Sept 19 • 9 am–3 pm

Insects of Autumn

Look for different insects as fall begins.

Sunday, Sept 20 • 1:30 pm

Conservation@Home: Rain Gardening 101*

Learn about rain gardening and how this water management strategy can benefit your yard. Presented with Master Gardener Sara Strother. Ages 13 & up.

Wednesday, Sept 23 • 7 pm

Party for the Preserves

Celebrate the Forest Preserves on National Public Lands Day.

Saturday, Sept 26 • 10:30 am–2:30 pm
10:30 am: Stick Boat Regatta
1 pm: Wildflower Seed Bomb

OCTOBER

Fall Photography*

Enjoy a guided walk to view and photograph fall colors. For all levels and camera types. Ages 13 & up.

Saturday, Oct 3 • 10 am–Noon

Sugar Shack Time Machine*

Travel through time as we open our sugar shack and learn about the history of maple syrup.

Sunday, Oct 4 • 1:30 pm

Fall Color Walk

View the spectacular fall colors while enjoying a casual walk in the woods.

Sunday, Oct 11 • 10:30 am & 1:30 pm

River Trail Nightlife: The Return of Scary Stories*

River Trail's annual scary storytelling around the campfire. Cost: $5/person. Ages 8 & up.

Saturday, Oct 24 • 8 pm

The Un-Haunted Forest*

A whimsical story-hike to solve a spooky mystery. Children under 10 w/ adult.

Sunday, Oct 25 • 10:30 am & 1:30 pm

Women's Night Out: Full Moon Empowerment*

An evening designed to empower, connect and inspire us. Led by certified forest therapy guide Gayle Byck. Cost: $10/person.

Monday, Oct 26 • 7 pm

Continued on page 25

**Registration required. For more information or registration, call*

847.824.8360



Make Your Gathering Green

The Forest Preserves of Cook County is home for native plants and animals, big and small. You can help protect the Preserves by making your gathering green! Follow the link below to learn about a list of actions you can take on, whether you are using the Preserves for a reunion, birthday or even a small picnic.

fpdcc.com/make-your-gathering-green

FOREST PRESERVES of Cook County

Continued from page 23



Indoor Edible Gardens*

Learn how to grow your own fresh herbs, salad greens and more. Presented with University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners.

Saturday, Nov 21 • Noon

NOVEMBER

GPS Scavenger Hunt*

Learn about and participate in a technology-inspired scavenger hunt.

Sunday, Nov 8 • 11 am, 12:30 pm & 2 pm

River Trail Workday: Seeds & Stewardship*

Learn how to collect native seeds and disperse them for restoration. Ages 8 & up; under 15 w/ adult.

Saturday, Nov 14 • 10 am–Noon

Nature Detective

Learn how to look for clues to figure out nature's mysteries.

Sunday, Nov 15 • 1:30 pm



Photo by Matthew Zuro

River Trail Nightlife: Owl Prowl*

A guided walk on our trail to search for local owls. Ages 8 & up.

Friday, Nov 20 • 5 pm & 7 pm

Nocturnal Hunters: Owls

Learn about the different attributes that make owls unique and fascinating.

Sunday, Nov 22 • 1:30 pm

Cicada Pinning Class*

Learn the process and importance of entomology. Presented with The Insect Asylum. Cost: $5/person. Ages 14 & up.

Sunday, Nov 29 • 11 am–1 pm

**Registration required. For more information or registration, call*

847.824.8360

CENTRAL ZONE



Party for the Preserves: Salsa Dance!

Celebrate National Public Lands Day and National Hispanic Heritage Month with live music, dancing, and more. Programa ofrecido en Espanol y English.

Saturday, Sept 26 • 11 am–2 pm

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

THATCHER WOODS PAVILION

Chicago Ave, west of Thatcher Ave, River Forest

Children's Storytime

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

Wednesdays, Sept 16 (story provided orally & in ASL), Oct 7, Nov 11 • 9:30 am

Fall Equinox: Harvest Celebration

A green corn celebration focused on traditional foods and the harvest season. Presented with the American Indian Center of Chicago.

Tuesday, Sept 22 • 10 am–Noon

Indigenous Scary Storytelling

Enjoy listening to traditional and contemporary supernatural stories shared by the American Indian Center.

Wednesday, Oct 14 • 5:30–7 pm



Spooky Stories & S 'mores

Trick-or-treat, paint a pumpkin, listen to spooky stories and more. Costumes encouraged! Presented with the Linda Sokol Francis Brookfield Library.

Saturday, Oct 24 • 2–5 pm

Hike, Read & Write

Join a naturalist for a hike, followed by a poetry writing workshop. Presented with Poets & Patrons.

Wednesday, Oct 28 • 3–5 pm

America 250: Americana Folk Art*

Learn how to carve a linoleum block and learn about Americana folk art. Materials provided. Ages 12 & up.

Saturday, Nov 14 • 10 am–Noon

Additional Central Zone Events

SEPTEMBER

Faire at the Square

Enjoy our "creative-reuse carnival" with themed games made from repurposed materials! Win prizes and learn about local plants and animals.

Thursday, Sept 10 • 4–7 pm

Cummings Square, 536 N Harlem Ave, River Forest

Kayak the Des Plaines*

Kayak 3 miles, from Schuth's Grove to Plank Road Meadow. Equipment, shuttle provided. Beginners welcome.

Saturday, Sept 12 • 9 am–Noon

Schuth's Grove, W Cermak Rd, west of Des Plaines Ave, Riverside

All About Canines

Learn about the diverse family of canines —from wolves to domestic dogs—and their impact through exhibits and activities.

Wednesday, Sept 30 • 5–7 pm

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

OCTOBER

73rd Annual Powwow

Celebrate Native American culture and enjoy traditional Powwow, food and more. Presented with American Indian Center of Chicago. More info: aicchicago.org.

Saturday, Oct 3 • 11 am–5 pm

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



Eco-Print Dyeing Workshop*

Learn how to make your own plant press and create an eco-print.

Saturday, Oct 10 • 1–3 pm

Evans Field, W Bloomingdale Ave & Thatcher Ave, River Grove

NOVEMBER



Photography Walk

All levels and camera types.

Wednesday, Nov 18 • 10 am–Noon

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

**Registration required. For more information or registration, please email centralzoneprogram@cookcountyil.gov or call 312.533.5751.*

EXPLORE MORE

PAGES 4–12



Finding Purpose in Public Lands

Some come for the birds. Others come for the wildflowers, the trails or the chance to learn something new. What keeps them coming back, month after month, is something deeper.

At Crabtree Nature Center's Senior Nature Club, a room full of strangers quickly becomes a community bound by curiosity, conversation and a shared appreciation for nature. For many participants, the monthly gathering is a chance to discover, reconnect and find purpose outdoors.

"I am a self-described nature nerd," laughed Joy Soderman, who has attended the club regularly since retiring. "I love wildlife, native plants, animals, insects and the environment. I feel comfortable here."

Soderman first discovered the program through the Forest Preserves newsletter, the Forest Way, and has rarely missed a meeting since. Each month brings a new topic, new discoveries and opportunities to learn from the nature center's staff.

Soderman says, "The naturalists are so knowledgeable. I learn a great deal from their experience and I always have to be standing directly next to them so I don't miss a thing."

For Penny Willoughby, the journey began as a way to stay active. Alongside lifelong friends, she started exploring local preserves and nature centers after realizing there was an entire world waiting just beyond her neighborhood.

"The things are so beautiful here and quiet," Willoughby says. "To experience it with friends is really special and important in my life."

Those experiences have inspired more than a love of nature. They have improved her health, introduced her to new friendships and even given her the confidence to lead educational programs herself. Most importantly, they have provided a sense of belonging during a stage of life when many people are searching for new ways to stay engaged and engaged.

"I think most people our age are looking for something," Willoughby says. "Something to make your life a little happier, a little more fulfilled."

That spirit of connection extends beyond the classroom. Karen Serantoni, a longtime Forest Preserves volunteer and restoration steward, sees programs like this as a gateway to understanding the role people play in caring for the land.

"When you get out in nature and learn about the birds, animals, plants and land, you understand how important it all is," she said. "We are the keepers of our land. We should be taking care of it."

As National Public Lands Day encourages people across the country to celebrate and care for shared natural spaces, these women offer a reminder that stewardship begins with connection. Whether attending a program, exploring a trail, volunteering or simply taking time to notice the world around them, they prove that it is never too late to discover something new in nature.

Join a community, try something new, or learn more about local nature at our programs and events: fpdcc.com/events

TRAILSIDE
Museum of Natural History

738 Thatcher Ave, River Forest, 708.366.6530
Building: 9 am–5 pm, *closed Fridays,* Grounds: 8 am–5 pm daily, Free Admission
Starting Nov 1, Building: 9 am–4 pm, Grounds: 8 am–4 pm

SPECIAL EVENTS

Seasons of the Monarch / Temporadas de la Monarca
Celebrate monarch butterflies with a month of programs focusing on their ecological and cultural significance.

Sacred Sounds:
An Aztec Instrument Exhibition
Explore sacred Aztec instruments on display.
Tuesday, Sept 15–Sunday, Sept 27

Sacred Rhythms:
Aztec Dance & Heritage
An engaging cultural event on Aztec traditional dance.
Sunday, Sept 27 • 10 am

Between Worlds:
A Día de Muertos Celebration
Commemorate Día de Muertos with Aztec dancers
Monday, Oct 12 • 10 am

Sacred Offerings:
A Día de Muertos Ofrenda
Visit our traditional ofrenda on display
Monday, Oct 12–Monday, Nov 2

Cultural programs are presented with Kalpulli Piltzintecuhtli.

THROUGHOUT *the* SEASON

Nature Thursdays
Connect to nature through fun themed activities for all ages. Led by University of Illinois Extension Master Naturalists.
Thursdays • 2:30–4:30 pm
Sept 17: "What is climate change?"
Oct 15: "Skeletons from Trailside's Collections"

Bone Appetit
Join us during feeding time to learn about Trailside's ambassador animals.
Saturdays, Sept 19, Oct 10, Nov 21 • 3 pm



Restoration Workdays*
Restore habitat and control invasive species. Equipment provided. Ages 8 & up. Ages 15 & under w/ adult. Register: fpdcc.givepulse.com/event/419785
Sundays, Sept 20, Oct 18, Nov 15
9 am–Noon

Nature Story Trail: "Giving Thanks" by Jake Swamp
Walk a short trail while reading a story.
Saturday, Nov 7–Monday, Nov 30
9 am–4 pm

SEPTEMBER

Twilight Creations-Open Art Space
Artists of all types are invited to find inspiration in our building or surrounding forests and gardens.
Thursday, Sept 3 • 6–8 pm

Ambassador Animal Species Spotlight
Meet one of our reptiles or amphibians and learn about their wild counterparts. Drop-in.
Saturday, Sept 5 • 2 pm

Trailside Fall Jam
Make a simple musical instrument or bring your own and join the jam! All are welcome to join or listen.
Sunday, Sept 13 • 1–3 pm

Harvest Moon Evening Walk*
Ages 18 & up.
Thursday, Sept 24 • 6:30 pm

OCTOBER



Halloween Hoot and Howl
Spooky family fun featuring live music, pumpkin painting and more. Presented with the River Forest Park District and River Forest Public Library.
Friday, Oct 2 • 5–7 pm
Keystone Park,
7920 Central Ave, River Forest

Animal Enrichment Studio
Learn about animal behavior while crafting enrichment items ambassador animals! Ages 10 & up.
Saturday, Oct 3 • 1:30–3 pm

Weaving with Weeds: Cattail Mat*
Learn about the history of basketry weaving techniques and create a small project with a common invasive plant. Ages 18 & up.
Saturday, Oct 11 • 1:30 pm

Nature Book Club:
"Backyard Bird Chronicles"*
Join a lively book discussion about "Backyard Bird Chronicles" by Amy Tan. Register at forestpark.librarycalendar.com/events/month
Thursday, Oct 15 • 7 pm
Forest Park Public Library,
7555 Jackson Blvd, Forest Park

Seed Collecting at Wolf Road Prairie*
Join us for a prairie seed collecting workday and learn about history of remnant prairie. Ages 8 & up. Ages 15 & under w/ adult.
Saturdays, Oct 17 • 1 pm
Wolf Road Prairie Nature Preserve,
31st St, west of Wolf Rd, Westchester

Costumed Scavenger Hunt Walk*
Wear your costume while walking through our autumn woods while searching for hidden (nut-free) treats.
Sunday, Oct 25 • 1:30 pm

Night at the Museum*
Step into the shadows for eerie animal encounters, exploration of the 1876 mansion, live musical performances, and the strange wonders lurking in the night woods. Ages 13 & up.
Thursday, Oct 29 • 7–9 pm

Continued on page 33.

**Registration required. For more information or registration, call*
708.366.6530

4 CHANCES TO WIN
Forest Preserves Prize Packages

NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY

PARTY FOR THE PRESERVES

SEPTEMBER 26 & 27

FREE

Party all weekend with free family-friendly fun!
Pick and choose from seven events, each with a unique mix including live music, paddling, hikes, arts and crafts, games, and outdoor activities.

Camp Bullfrog Lake
Paddling, night walks & Funkadesi
Saturday, September 26, Noon–9 pm

Thatcher Woods Pavillion
Salsa dancing with Latin Street band
Saturday, September 26, 11 am–2 pm

Camp Shabbona Woods
Acoustic music at the campfire
Saturday, September 26, 6–9 pm

Powderhorn Lake
10-person canoe adventure
Sunday, September 27, 10 am–2 pm

Crabtree, River Trail & Sagawau
Nature fun at our nature centers
Saturday, September 26
Check website for times

FOREST PRESERVES of Cook County

RSVP for a party near you:
fpdcc.com/party

Continued from page 31.

NOVEMBER

"A Nation of Nations" Exhibit
Celebrate Native American Heritage Month with an exhibit exploring Great Lakes tribal diversity, sovereign flags, and contemporary Indigenous tribal governments.
November • 9 am–4 pm

Bird Painting Step-by-Step:
Pileated Woodpecker*
For both beginners and more experienced artists. Materials provided. Ages 18 & up. Cost: $5/person.
Friday, Nov 20 • 10 am–1 pm

Cicada Pinning Class*
Learn the process and importance of entomology. Register by 11/20. Ages 14 & up. Cost: $5/person.
Sunday, Nov 22 • 10 am–Noon

Annual Turkey Trot Walk*
Walk off that extra helping of turkey and stuffing. All ages.
Friday, Nov 27 • 1:30 pm



Crisp Air, Calm Forest Walk*
Enjoy a guided trail walk. All ages.
Sunday, Nov 29 • 10 am

**Registration required. For more information or registration, call*
708.366.6530



THATCHER WOODS PAVILION EVENTS

8030 Chicago Ave, River Forest

Senior Fitness Walks*
Moderately paced, 1-mile fitness walk. Led by University of Illinois Extension volunteer. Ages 55 & up.
Wednesdays, Sept 2, 16; Oct 7, 21; Nov 4, 18 • 9 am

Sacred Wanderings
Join Unity Temple of Oak Park as we practice connecting with nature. People with physical challenges are easily accommodated. For info, email mindful@unitytemple.org.
Saturdays, Sept 5, Oct 11, Nov 7 • 8:30–10:30 am

Forest Therapy Walks*
Meditation followed by a forest therapy walk. Led by University of Illinois Extension volunteers.
Sundays, Sept 6, Oct 4 & Saturday, Nov 14 • 1 pm

SOUTHWEST ZONE



SWALLOW CLIFF WOODS EVENTS

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

OCTOBER

Breast Cancer Awareness

Stop by our resource tables to learn more about breast cancer. Presented with Advocate Health Care.

Wednesday, Oct 7 • 4–6 pm

Spooky Shuffle 5k/10k

Race through then pristine Sag Valley Trail System. Presented with Village of Palos Park. Register: palospark.org.

Saturday, Oct 17 • 9 am

Swallow Cliff Woods-South, S La Grange Rd, south of 119th St, Palos Park

Cheers to Nature

Enjoy a relaxing evening with an environment-themed lecture from a naturalist. Accessible building. BYOB. Ages 21 & up.

Thursday, Oct 29 • 7–8:30 pm

Nature Watercolor Painting*

Enjoy the beauty of nature through watercolor painting. All levels welcome. Supplies provided. Ages 18 & up.

Thursday, Nov 19 • 10 am–Noon

America 250: Americana Folk Art*

Learn how to carve a linoleum block. Materials provided. Ages 12 & up.

Saturday, Nov 21 • 10 am–Noon

Additional Southwest Zone Events

SEPTEMBER

Crafternoon: Printmaking

Create a nature print project (tote bag, scarf or bring your own item).

Thursday, Sept 10 • 6–8 pm

Camp Sullivan, 14630 Oak Park Ave, Oak Forest

Landscape Needle Felting*

Explore the natural landscape using natural fibers. Supplies provided. Ages 12 & up.

Saturday, Sept 12 • 10 am–Noon

Saganashkee Slough Boat Launch, 107th St, west of S Willow Springs Rd/104th Ave, Willow Springs

Adult Night Hike

BYOB (no glass) and enjoy the night sky before taking part in a 1.5 mile guided hike. Ages 21 & up.

Wednesday, Sept 16 • 6 pm

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

Annual Palos Night Sky Picnic*

Explore the largest Urban Night Sky Place with live music and telescopes. BYOB and food. Register: fpdcc.com/event/palos-night-sky-picnic-3

Friday, Sept 18 • 5–10 pm

Rain/Cloud Date: Saturday, Sept 19

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

Prairie Birding

Saturday, Sept 19 • 8–11 am

Orland Grassland-South, 104th Ave, south of 179th St, Orland Park

OCTOBER

Underground Railroad Tour*

Discuss the significance of this corridor, learn about the church's role, and take a shuttle to Lyonsville Cemetery.

Saturday, Oct 10 • 9:30 am–Noon

John Husar I&M Canal Bicycle Trail Parking Lot, Willow Blvd, north of Archer Ave, Willow Springs

Eco-Print Dyeing Workshop*

Create an eco-print with fall leaves and learn how to make your own mini plant press.

Sunday, Oct 11 • 1–3 pm

Palos Park Woods-North, Kean Ave, south of Calumet Sag Rd/Rte 83, Palos Park



Fall Color Walk

Travel through beautiful, wooded preserves as we look for colors of the season. 3.4 miles.

Sunday, Oct 18 • 1 pm

Palos Park Woods-North, Kean Ave, south of Calumet Sag Rd/Rte 83, Palos Park

NOVEMBER

Fishing Derby

Join the Village of Palos Park and the Forest Preserves for a fun family day of fishing.

Saturday, Nov 7 • 8 am

Horsetail Lake, 104th Ave, north of McCarthy Rd, Palos Park

Photography Walk

Photograph and view nature. For all levels and camera types.

Tuesday, Nov 24 • 11 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 4–12



LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Forest Preserves of Cook County acknowledges that we are on the lands of the Council of Three Fires—the Ojibwa, Ottawa and Potawatomi—as well as the Miami, Peoria, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Sauk and Meskwaki peoples. As a land management agency, we acknowledge that we have played a role in shaping the histories of local Native Americans by acquiring this land. We also recognize, share and celebrate their immemorial ties to this land.

Read the entire Land Acknowledgment statement here:
fpdcc.com/about/land-acknowledgement

Telling the Land's Story, Through Art

Look closely at the Forest Preserves of Cook County's new Land Acknowledgement artwork and you'll find a story unfolding in every detail. A hummingbird and a bat. Wild berries and medicinal plants. Leaves, flowers and flowing patterns inspired by Indigenous artistic traditions. Together, they create a visual reminder that the lands protected today have long been places of learning, nourishment, ceremony and connection.

The artwork was created by Indigenous artist, educator and storyteller Negwes White, whose roots include Ojibwe, Navajo and Indigenous Mexican heritage. For White, the design began with a simple but powerful idea.

"The whole piece is about balance," White says. "Mother nature takes care of everybody, but she also protects herself."

That philosophy is woven throughout the artwork. The hummingbird and bat represent day and night. Native berries reflect foods that have sustained Indigenous communities throughout the region for generations. Medicinal plants illustrate traditional ecological knowledge that continues to be shared and practiced today. White says the reaction from his community was immediate.

"When they looked at it, they said, 'You got medicine in there.' They understood it right away," he says.

The project was especially meaningful because of White's longstanding relationship with the Forest Preserves. Over the years, he has participated in camps, cultural events, powwows and educational programs held throughout the preserves, helping young people explore while deepening their connection to nature. Today, he works as an educator and remains passionate about teaching amongst the trees.

"This is where all the lessons are," White says. "This is where all the teachings and wisdom are."

Created for the Forest Preserves' Land Acknowledgement, the artwork honors the Indigenous peoples who have cared for these lands across generations. At the same time, it serves as a living reminder that Indigenous cultures, traditions and relationships with the natural world remain vibrant, present and deeply connected to this place.

View Negwes's art at Trailside Museum of Natural History, in River Forest starting September 2026.

Join us and support Native American youth by attending Every Child Matters Powwow Saturday, Sept 26, 11am–5pm Bunker Hill

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

Ecological Restoration Weekend*

Help restore Sagawau's diverse ecosystems by removing invasive plant species. Register: fpdcc.givepulse.com/event/414584

Saturdays, Sept 26, Oct 31, Nov 28 9:30–11:30 am

Bird Banding

Observe bird banding and talk with banders. Drop-in.

Sundays, Sept 13, 20, 27; Oct 11, 18, 25 9 am–Noon

SEPTEMBER



Fall Bees*

Experience fall bees during a guided hike with sweep-netting.

Saturday, Sept 5 • 1 pm

Fall in the Prairie*

Join a naturalist as we take in the sights and sounds of fall in the prairie. Ages 18 & up.

Sunday, Sept 6 • 10:30 am

Hummingbird Photography Workshop*

Indoor presentation and Q&A session followed by outdoor hummingbird viewing and photography.

Saturday, Sept 12 • 1–4 pm

Monarchs*

Learn how monarchs make their journey to Mexico during a presentation, followed by a hike.

Saturday, Sept 19 • 1 pm

Music in Nature*

Listen to specially commissioned musical pieces about migration performed by Chicago-based string ensemble, Missing Piece, followed by a short walk.

Sunday, Sept 27 • 1 pm

OCTOBER

Arach-tober: The Return of the Eight-legged Creatures*

Learn about spiders and why they aren't so scary.

Saturday, Oct 3 • 1 pm

Red Gate Woods: The Dawning of the Atomic Age*

Learn about the world's first nuclear reactor. Presentation at Sagawau before strenuous hike at Red Gate Woods. Ages 18 & up.

Sunday, Oct 4 • 10 am–1 pm

Red Gate Woods, S Archer Ave, northeast of 107th St, Willow Springs

Invertebrate Investigation

Search for insects and arthropods who call tallgrass prairies home.

Saturday, Oct 10 • 1 pm



Photo by Katy Schafer

Fall Fungi*

Short naturalist-led hike to look for local species of fungi. Ages 18 & up.

Sunday, Oct 11 • 1 pm

America's Landscapes: The Palos Preserves

Learn the geological story of the hilly landscape and some of its special land formations. Oral and ASL presentation.

Saturday, Oct 17 • 1 pm

NOVEMBER

Nature Journaling*

Express yourself and the world around you! Learn how to create a nature journal with an art instructor.

Sunday, Nov 1 • 1 pm

Fossil Quarry Tour*

Learn about fossils of the Chicago region, followed by a 1.5-mile walk to visit Sagawau's fossil quarry.

Sunday, Nov 8 • 1–3 pm

Night Hike*

Spend an evening walking through nature with a naturalist.

Saturday, Nov 14 • 5:30 pm

Fall Color Walk

Enjoy a leisurely naturalist-led nature hike to view fall color. All ages.

Sunday, Nov 15 • 1 pm

Clear the Trails*

Help clear overgrowth along the trails in preparation for ski season. Equipment provided. Register: fpdcc.givepulse.com/event/414584

Sunday, Nov 22 • 9:30–11:30 am

Singing Back the Buffalo Film Viewing*

Learn how the relationship with buffalo weaves together the survival of Indigenous nations, nature and humankind.

Sunday, Nov 29 • 1 pm

**Registration required. For more information or registration, call*

630.257.2045

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
Starting Nov 1, Building: 9 am–4 pm, Grounds: 8 am–4 pm

THROUGHOUT *the* SEASON

Everyone in Nature*
Inclusive sensory-based class where individuals of all abilities and homeschool students can learn about nature.
Wednesdays, Sept 9, Oct 14, Nov 11 • 1 pm

S.E.N.I.O.R.S.
Seniors Enjoying Nature Inside/Outside Rain or Shine! Ages 55 & up.
Thursdays, Sept 10, Oct 8, Nov 12 • 10 am

R.I.P. Stewardship*
Remove Invasive Plants with bow saws/loppers. Ages 8 & up. Ages 15 & under w/ adult.
Saturdays, Sept 12, Oct 10, Nov 14
10 am–Noon

Magical Forest Houses
Search for homes built by mythical elves along our Farm Pond Trail.
Saturday, Sept 12-Sunday, Oct 11
During operational hours

Sunrise Hikes
Sundays
Sept 13 • 6 am
Oct 11 • 5:45 am
Nov 8 • 6:30 am

Fridays in the Field
Discover something new with University of Illinois Extension Master Naturalists.
Fridays, Sept 18, Oct 9, Nov 20 • 10 am–Noon

Nature's Art Box*
Ages 3–6 w/ adult.
Thursdays, Sept 24, Oct 29, Nov 19 • 10:30 am

Yoga*
Bring a yoga mat/towel. Ages 18 & up.
Saturdays, Sept 26, Oct 24, Nov 21 • 10 am

Sounds Like Fall
Take your little one on a playful, music-filled nature walk. Ages 3–6 w/ adult.
Mondays, Sept 28 & Oct 5 • 10 am & 11:30 am

Little Red Rocks*
Perform or listen to music and poetry during open-mic night.
Tuesday, Oct 27 • 5:30–7:30 pm &
Saturday, Nov 21 • 1–3 pm

SEPTEMBER

Autumn Wings
Butterfly walk.
Sunday, Sept 6 • 10:30 am

Moth Picnic*
Join us for a nighttime moth attraction hike and see which moths appear on our white sheet under black light.
Thursday, Sept 10 • 8–9:30 pm

Birding Across Habitats
Naturalist-led hike searching for birds in woodlands, prairies and wetlands. All birding levels welcome. Binoculars available for loan.
Saturday, Sept 19 • 8 am

Feeding Time
Feeding demonstration.
Saturday, Sept 19 • 11 am

Beautiful Sounds at Sunset*
Enjoy nature's harmony and soothing instruments around a fire with instructor Gail. Bring a cushion. Ages 18 & up.
Tuesday, Sept 29 • 6 pm

OCTOBER

Fall in Focus
Bring a camera or phone and join a guided photography hike. Ages 10 & up.
Saturday, Oct 3 • 10 am

Nuts About Nature
Explore native nuts.
Saturday, Oct 3 • 1 pm

Tea-time*
Sample a variety of herbal tea blends paired with local honeys. Ages 13 & up.
Saturday, Oct 10 • 1 pm

Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration
Enjoy music by local Mariachi and Folklorico performers.
Sunday, Oct 11 • 10:30 am

Fall into Sounds & Nature*
Join certified instructor Gail for a peaceful walk, where soothing sounds guide you along the trail. Ages 18 & up.
Tuesday, Oct 13 • 10 am

Meet the Birds
Stop by to see our birds at mealtime.
Saturday, Oct 17 • 2 pm

Forest Tales & Mysteries*
Listen to thrilling horror tales around the bonfire with La Grange Park Library and Gail's soothing sound therapy. Ages 13 & up.
Thursday, Oct 22 • 6:45–8:15 pm

Oak-tober
Join us for a hike to celebrate Oak Awareness Month.
Sunday, Oct 25 • 10:30 am

NOVEMBER

Qigong and Urban Stargazing*
Start with Qigong, followed by celestial viewing at an Urban Night Sky Place.
Tuesday, Nov 10 • 6 pm



Fall Sunset Stroll*
Soak in the beauty of sunlight filtering through the trees at golden hour.
Saturday, Nov 14 • 4 pm

Autumn Stories in Chinese
The Naperville Chinese Storytellers share stories and activities. All ages; under 18 w/ adult.
Sunday, Nov 15 • 11 am

Thankful for the Dark Sky-2 mi*
Friday, Nov 20 • 6–7:30 pm

Gratitude Nature Walk
Walk with a naturalist and share what you are thankful for in nature.
Wednesday, Nov 25 • 11 am

Community Conservation Action Day*
Restore the woodland ecosystem by removing invasive plants. Ages 8 & up. Ages 15 & under w/ adult.
Saturday, Nov 28 • 10 am–1 pm

**Registration required.*
For more information or registration, call
708.839.6897

SOUTH ZONE

THROUGHOUT *the* SEASON

Paddle at Beaubien Woods

Paddle along the Little Calumet River. All ages. First come, first served.

Saturdays, Sept 12, Oct 3 • 1–4 pm

Beaubien Woods Boat Launch, E 132nd St, east of S Greenwood Ave, Chicago

SEPTEMBER

Intro to Paddling

Paddle with the Friends of the Chicago River. Register: chicagoriver.org/events

Saturday, Sept 12 • 10 am–2 pm

Wampum Lake, Thornton-Lansing Rd, west of IL-394, Thornton

Hike the Freedom Trail:
Bus and Walking Tour*

Follow the path of Freedom Seekers with Midwest Underground Railroad Network.

Saturday, Sept 19 • 10 am–12:30 pm

Beaubien Woods Boat Launch, E 132nd St, east of S Greenwood Ave, Chicago

Party for the Preserves: Canoeing

Enjoy the lake on 10-person canoes.

Sunday, Sept 27 • 10 am–2 pm

Powderhorn Lake, S Brainard Ave, east of S Burnham Ave/S Ave O, Burnham

OCTOBER

Nature Photography

Bring your own camera.

Thursday, Oct 8 • 8 am

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

Hispanic Heritage Paddle

Join Friends of the Chicago River on a bilingual ride. Register: chicagoriver.org/events

Saturday, Oct 10 • 11 am–2 pm

Powderhorn Lake, S Brainard Ave, east of S Burnham Ave/S Ave O, Burnham

Bachelor's Grove: Conversations, History & Facts

Join this virtual exploration of Bachelor's Grove Cemetery. Register: tinyurl.com/BachelorsGroveHistory

Thursday, Oct 29 • 6 pm
Virtual via Zoom

NOVEMBER

Native American Heritage Month History Walk-3.4 mi

Learn the origin of the name Sauk Woods.

Thursday, Nov 5 • 6:30–8:30 pm

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

DAN RYAN WOODS VISITOR CENTER & PAVILION EVENTS

S Western Ave & W 87th St, Chicago

Tiny Tot Day

Join your little ones and enjoy nature through movement, art and sensory play.

Thursday, Sept 3 • 9 am–Noon

Wellness in the Woods: Yoga

60-min class. Dress in active wear and bring a yoga mat.

Saturdays, Sept 12, Oct 10, Nov 14
11 am–Noon

Buckthorn Dyeing Workshop*

Join Katelyn Patton to learn basics of plant-based dyes and local ecology.

Saturday, Sept 19 • 10 am

Nature Play Day

Help your children connect with nature through stories, art and exploration.

Friday, Sept 25 • 9 am–Noon

Doggie Date Night

Calling all dog lovers! Costume dog parade, crafts, photo booth and raffle prizes. Dogs must be friendly and remain on leash.

Friday, Oct 2 • 3–7 pm

Teen Exploration Day: Archery

Ages 10 & up. Junior archery available for children under 10. Grove 5.

Wednesday, Oct 7 • 4–6 pm

Night of Nature Play

Scavenger hunt, games and crafts under the glowing night (black) lights.

Friday, Oct 16 • 6–8 pm

Stars, Stories, and S'mores

S'mores by the fire, storytelling, astronomy and more.

Friday, Nov 20 • 5–9 pm

KICKAPOO WOODS EVENTS

Halsted St, south of W 144th St, Riverdale

Plant and Paddle

Restore habitat with Friends of the Chicago River. Register: chicagoriver.org/events

Wednesday, Sept 9 & Thursday, Sept 10
9:30 am–1 pm

World Migratory Bird Day Paddle

Celebrate migratory birds through activities, talks and paddling. Presented with Friends of the Chicago River. Register: chicagoriver.org/events

Saturday, Oct 3 • 10 am–1 pm

Fall Colors Paddle

Experience fall from the water. Presented with Friends of the Chicago River. Register: chicagoriver.org/events

Saturday, Oct 24 • 11 am–2 pm



EGGERS GROVE EVENTS

E 112th St & S Ave E, Chicago

Mushroom Walk

Join us for a fun fungal walk as we search for mushrooms and learn about these fascinating organisms.

Friday, Oct 9 • 9 am

Owl Prowl*

Guided evening walk to search for owls.

Wednesdays • 6:30 pm

Oct 14: Register: tinyurl.com/10-14-OwlProwl-2026
Oct 21: Register: tinyurl.com/10-21-OwlProwl-2026
Oct 28: Register: tinyurl.com/10-28-owlprowl-2026

Trunk or Treat

Sponsored by the Forest Preserves and East Side Chamber of Commerce. Enjoy a family-friendly Halloween event, complete with candy!

Sunday, Oct 25 • Noon–4 pm

**Registration required. Please email southzoneprogram@cookcountyil.gov or call 708.771.9632 for more information and to register.*

EXPLORE MORE
PAGES 4–12

Sand Ridge NATURE CENTER

15891 Paxton, South Holland, 708.868.0606

Building: 9 am – 5 pm, *Exihibit room closed Fridays,* Grounds: 8 am – 5 pm daily

Free Admission

Calumet Heritage Day

Explore the Calumet Region's heritage with guided walks, historic skill demos, and programs celebrating native flora and fauna.

Saturday, Nov 7 • 10 am–2 pm



THROUGHOUT *the* SEASON

Live Healthy, Discover Nature! Walk*

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

Saturdays, Sept 5, Oct 3, Nov 7 • 1:30 pm

Wee Wonders*

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

Wednesdays • 10 am

Sept 9: Fall Colors
Oct 14: Owls
Nov 11: Snakes

Sundays • 1 pm

Sept 13: Fall Colors
Oct 18: Owls
Nov 15: Snakes

Green Lake Gardening*

Restore the garden and help pollinators. No experience needed. Equipment provided. Ages 12 & up.

Sundays, Sept 6, Oct 4, Nov 15 • 1–3 pm

Green Lake, 1100 River Oaks Dr, South Holland

Tuesday Mornings are for the Birds!

Observe fall migrants visiting Sand Ridge during their journey south for winter.

Tuesdays, Sept 8, 15, 22, 29; Oct 6, 13 • 8 am

Restoration Sundays*

Help restore our natural areas. Ages 8 & up. Ages 15 & under w/ adult.

Sundays, Sept 20, Oct 25, Nov 15 • 10 am



Owl Prowl*

Introduction to owls followed by a relaxing walk to search for owls.

Friday, Sept 25 & Saturday, Oct 10 • 6 pm

Forest Therapy*

Join a Master Naturalist for a meditative guided walk to connect with nature. Ages 18 & up.

Sunday, Sept 27 • 11 am
Sunday, Oct 25 • 1 pm
Saturday, Nov 21 • 1 pm

The Great Sand Ridge (Tiny) Pumpkin Hunt

Discover hidden pumpkins on a fun scavenger hunt and take home your own pumpkin. Costumes encouraged!

Saturday, Oct 31 & Sunday, Nov 1
Noon–4 pm

SEPTEMBER

Teen Exploration Day: Pond Dipping

Drop in at the Redwing Trail pond to observe wetland inhabitants and macroorganisms. Geared towards teens & their families.

Saturday, Sept 19 • 1–3 pm

OCTOBER

Fall Fungi*

Learn basics of mushroom identification during guided walk. Ages 18 & up. Ages 13–17 w/ adult.

Saturday, Oct 10 • 2 pm



Oak-tober Fall Colors Walk*

Enjoy seasonal color changes and learn about our native oaks. Ages 12 & up.

Saturday, Oct 17 • 1:30 pm

Birding is Accessible: Owl Edition*

Slow-paced accessible stroll to search for owls.

Saturday, Oct 24 • 6 pm

NOVEMBER

Gratitude Gathering

A reflective event on gratitude, sharing cultural teachings about thankfulness. Presented with the American Indian Center.

Saturday, Nov 7 • 10 am

Welcoming Winter Walk-2 mi*

Observe and discuss the ways nature prepares itself for the changing season.

Friday, Nov 27 • 4 pm



CAMP SHABBONA WOODS EVENTS

15810 S Torrence, South Holland

Aztec Dance Performance: La Danza de los Concheros*

Experience a journey into Mexico's ancient Aztec culture of music, song and dance. Presented with Xochitl-Quetzal Danza Azteca.

Saturday, Sept 12 • 1 pm

Party for the Preserves: Acoustics Under the Stars

Celebrate the connection between public lands and folk music with performances, a guided walk and more. BYO instruments to play!

Saturday, Sept 26 • 6–9 pm

Sounds Natural Creative Retreat*

Enjoy art, wellness workshops, food and music. Limited camping spaces available for optional overnight. Presented with Sounds Natural. Register: thebeatbank.net/soundsnatural

Saturday, Oct 10 & Oct 17 • 3–8 pm

**Registration required. For more information or registration, call*

708.868.0606



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.

