

the Conservationist

A Quarterly Publication of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County

Winter 2023

Getting to the Bottom of Brumation

Snowshoes: 6,000
Years in the Making

Winter Calendar



Forest Preserve District of DuPage County

from the president



Happy New Year! I hope this edition finds you and your family well and enjoying all the events and programs offered here at the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County.

In December the District's Board of Commissioners approved the agency's budget for 2023, which includes a number of restoration and capital projects with no increase to DuPage property taxes paid to the District.

This year we're continuing to make significant progress on the implementation of our 2019 master plan, which includes 32 high-priority projects — 11 to restore large natural areas. The most prominent project underway is at Willowbrook Wildlife Center. On-site preparation work has begun, and construction of the new visitor center itself will start next year. Overall, we will be investing over \$62 million in our preserves, education centers, trails, roads, restrooms, and bridges.

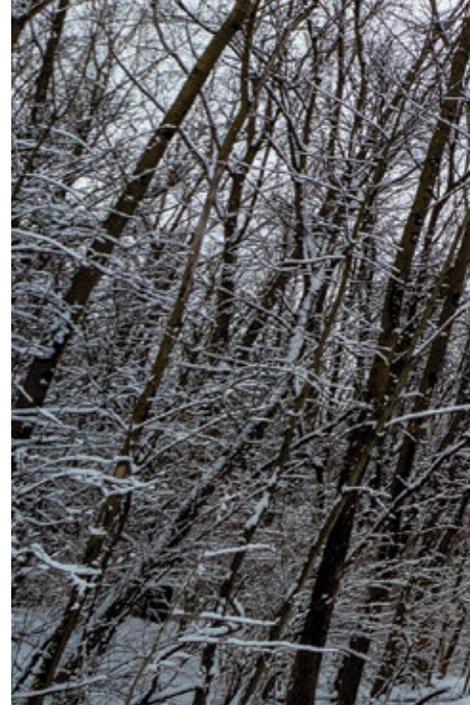
Exterior renovations at Mayslake Hall will be completed this summer, meaning the interior will again be open, and we have begun to work on the master plan for the entire forest preserve. We've also started master planning for Maple Meadows Golf Course with assistance from well-known and respected golf course architect Greg Martin. And golfers, food enthusiasts, and nature lovers alike can now enjoy the new Greenway Tap at The Preserve at Oak Meadows year-round!

In 2023 we'll also continue to focus on the safety of visitors and our staff and will install cameras at our most popular preserves. We started deploying cameras last year and have already seen a significant drop in theft and other property-related crimes. With over 6 million visitors each year, public safety is a top priority.

We wish you all the best in 2023 and hope to see you on the wintery trails!

Daniel Hebreard

President, Forest Preserve District of DuPage County



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Karie Friling



BOARD MEETINGS

For schedules and agendas or to watch live or recorded meetings, visit dupageforest.org.



THE CONSERVATIONIST

Winter 2023, Vol. 60, No. 1



FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT OF DUPAGE COUNTY

35580 Naperville Road, Wheaton, IL 60189
630-933-7200, TTY 800-526-0857

dupageforest.org

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OUR *Mission*

To acquire and hold lands for the purpose of preserving the flora, fauna and scenic beauty for the education, pleasure and recreation of DuPage County citizens



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news & notes

HABITAT WORK CONTINUES AT HERRICK LAKE

This winter, crews will continue habitat improvement work at the 887-acre Herrick Lake Forest Preserve by removing invasive shrubs and trees throughout oak, prairie, and wetland ecosystems. These efforts will create healthier habitats (including the already-restored prairie below) for the 545 native plant and 238 native wildlife species that live at the preserve – some state-endangered, state-threatened, or rare. When completed, the project will create a mosaic of 550 acres of restored habitat, one of the largest such areas in the county.

Trail fans should note, though, that the work will require closing a section of the Green Heron Trail and the spur leading to Herrick Road through mid-March. The Forest Preserve District will post signs to let visitors know where these stretches begin and end.



COLLECTIONS *Corner*

As temperatures drop and the seasons change, artifact displays change, too. For instance, Kline Creek Farm seasonally moves textiles and other pieces from display to storage to protect them from fluctuations in temperature and relative humidity in the 1890s farmhouse, which can dramatically shorten the life of some materials. Periodic rotation to a climate-controlled storage environment can also safeguard items from dangers such as light, dust, and mold.

These seasonal changes may take some textiles off display this time of year, but they allow Kline Creek Farm to instead interpret other historical artifacts related to winter life on the farm, such as the ice saw and ice hatchet.

Ice saws (pictured at the right) were used in the 1890s to cut blocks from frozen lakes. Ice hatchets were used to chip odd shapes from the resulting blocks so the blocks would fit tightly together in the icehouse, helping preserve the ice well into summer. Ice saws are common artifacts, but because the ice hatchet is not an easily recognizable tool (and has an odd shape not useful in woodworking), few remain.

This winter, follow the farm on TikTok or Facebook to see Forest Preserve District staff demonstrate ice harvesting and interpret other activities and relics of the past.



2023 ANNUAL PERMITS

Purchase 2023 annual permits for off-leash dog areas, archery, private watercraft, and model boats and aircraft online 24/7 at dupageforest.org. Just click “Registration & Permits” and “Purchase Permits,” scroll to the one you want, click “Add to Cart,” and follow the instructions. You’ll receive your permit via U.S. mail.

Interested in picnic or family camping sites? You can make reservations 24/7 at dupageforest.org up to a year in advance. For details call Visitor Services at 630-933-7248 Monday – Friday 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.





THANK YOU *for Being a Friend*

Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County 501(c)(3) advances the vision of the Forest Preserve District through philanthropic endeavors, helping to maintain and sustain nearly 26,000 acres at 60 forest preserves; care for 166 miles of trails; and operate six centers. We are pleased to acknowledge the generosity of individuals, corporations, and foundations for their gifts from June through September, which supported habitat restoration in the preserves, wildlife conservation, educational and recreational programs, green-energy initiatives, and master plan projects.

As we begin the new year, consider becoming part of our Ambassadors Circle or Community Partners programs. Learn more at dupageforest.org/friends or contact our partnership and philanthropy team at fundraising@dupageforest.org or 630-871-6400. You can also mail a check payable to the Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County at 35580 Naperville Road in Wheaton, 60189.

Estate of Pamela Hoehl \$15,362 — Willowbrook Wildlife Center	Girl Scout Troop 55557 \$1,000 — Willowbrook Wildlife Center	Frances Holbrook \$500 — Greatest needs
Kline Creek Farm Visitors \$7,006 — Kline Creek Farm	Glen Ellyn Library Foundation \$1,000 — Education	Girl Scout Troop 56172 \$500 — Blanding's turtle head-start program
Jeffrey Jens \$5,000 — Willowbrook Wildlife Center	Marilyn Schweitzer and Michael Firman \$1,000 — Education, natural resources, and Willowbrook Wildlife Center	H. Susan Jones Charitable Fund of DuPage Foundation \$500 — Greatest needs
Willowbrook Wildlife Center Visitors \$4,845 — Willowbrook Wildlife Center	Michael Kerr \$1,000 — Greatest needs	Johathan Helmus \$500 — Greatest needs
Estate of Lila Heichel \$3,000 — Willowbrook Wildlife Center	Red Oak Disposal Services \$1,000 — A Night for Nature sponsor	Keith Tomes \$500 — Willowbrook Wildlife Center
ComEd, an Exelon Company \$2,500 — Community partner	Stantec Consulting Services Inc. \$1,000 — A Night for Nature sponsor	Steve and Megan Shebik \$500 — Danada Equestrian Center
V3 Companies \$2,500 — Community partner	The Richard Laurence Parish Foundation \$1,000 — Greatest needs	The Conservation Foundation \$500 — A Night for Nature sponsor
Friends of the Glen Ellyn Public Library \$1,000 — Education	Wight & Company \$1,000 — A Night for Nature sponsor	Wheaton Lions Club \$500 — A Night for Nature duck race sponsor
Galusha Farms \$1,000 — A Night for Nature sponsor	Adtalem Global Education \$500 — Natural resources	

LIVE *and on Demand*

Can't make it to a board meeting? Find schedules and agendas and watch it live or on demand at dupageforest.org under "Our Board." You can also link directly to live streaming video from the Forest Preserve District's Facebook page at facebook.com/dupageforest. Commission meetings and planning sessions are open to the public and held at Forest Preserve District headquarters at 35580 Naperville Road in Wheaton. Normally, commission meetings are at 8 a.m. on the first and third Tuesdays of the month; planning sessions, 8 a.m. on the second and fourth Tuesdays. At both the board hears public comments and staff reports, discusses business, and votes on agenda items.

**FOR MORE NEWS & NOTES
SEE PAGE 16.**



Debspoons/Shutterstock.com

6,000 Years in the Making

by **JENNIFER RYDZEWSKI**, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SERVICES

A fresh blanket of powdery snow glistens in the morning sunlight. With these conditions, who can resist the urge to blaze a trail, making the first tracks across the winter wonderland? With some preparation and practice, a pair of snowshoes can help you get outside this time of year, giving you a way to stay active and soak in sunlight and fresh air.

Snowshoeing has gained popularity as a recreational activity over the past few decades. With minimal gear, expenses, or expertise, you can strap snowshoes onto winter boots and start exploring. Snowshoeing is an easy-to-learn, low-impact, strength-building activity suitable for all ages that lets you “float” across deep snow instead of sinking in. Today’s snowshoes are often used for recreation, but early snowshoes were designed exclusively out of necessity for winter survival.

Archaeological evidence and written records are scarce, but the consensus is that snowshoes originated in central Asia at

least 6,000 years ago. Perhaps people noticed how animals with large feet such as lynx, snow leopards, and hares expertly navigated through deep snow. By distributing one’s weight across a larger surface area, an animal or human uses less energy to move and doesn’t sink into the snow as much.

The first snowshoes were more like “shoe-skis,” each a large patch of leather with a block of wood attached to the foot. As people migrated from central Asia and adapted to living in other parts of the world these “shoe-skis” adapted, too. In northern Europe, the wooden blocks became longer and longer, developing into today’s cross-country skis. For people who migrated across the Bering Sea land bridge into North America, “shoe-skis” became wider, eventually evolving into today’s snowshoes.

Most early snowshoes were made of large thin branches — typically ash, spruce, birch, elm, or hickory — and woven animal sinew or the hides of caribou, moose, or deer. (Four



© Alexi Jeltzen

- ▲ Originating among woodland tribes of central Canada and the Midwest, the Ojibwa shape has an upturned nose with pointed tails. This long narrow shape was designed to carry heavy loads across flat open land and to increase agility and speed for hunting. Some of the earliest designs were over 7 feet long!



Denise Gerdes/Shutterstock.com

- ▲ The Athabaskan, or Alaskan, style originated in Alaska and along the Canadian west coast. The lacing has a looser weave to move through heavy, wet snow and slush. Its shape is similar to the Ojibwa, but it is usually longer for carrying heavy loads and keeping up with sleds.

early designs are featured in the photos accompanying this article). Between the 1950s and 70s new materials changed the snowshoe, although the goal of flotation remained the same. Modern frames are aluminum, plastic, or foam, making shoes more lightweight and maneuverable, with rubber or plastic straps and bindings, making them easier to tighten with less maintenance than leather and laces. As an added feature, metal cleats improve traction on slippery or hilly surfaces.

It's important to note, though, that traditional snowshoe designs are still in use today. Canadian First Nations and Indigenous Peoples continue to make them by hand as an art form and as a skill passed between generations. Over the centuries people developed variations based on regional resources and needs, and in many areas snowshoes remain essential for winter life.

In DuPage, if you find yourself ready to give snowshoeing a try, start with one of the Forest Preserve District's established trails. You can find maps on individual forest preserve pages at dupageforest.org. Pick a shorter route first, though, so you can get used to your gear and your fitness level. If you venture off trail, watch for hazards such as snow-covered ponds or creeks. And because snowy trails are popular with cross-country skiers, look for set ski tracks along the edges and walk only in the center of the trail. As with all winter activities, wear warm layers, stay hydrated, and protect your skin from sun and wind.

Interested in hitting the trails but not quite sure if you're ready to invest in a pair of snowshoes? The Forest Preserve District can help! When there's plenty of snow on the trails, you can rent from the Fullersburg Woods Nature Education Center Monday through Saturday and at the Blackwell snow tubing hill, when open. Hours, fees, and other details are on Page 10.

So bundle up, grab a pair of snowshoes, and experience a fun (and historic) way to enjoy DuPage forest preserves in winter! •



Sergey Novikov/Shutterstock.com

- ▲ The recognizable racquet shape of the Huron, or beaver tail, snowshoe has a rounded, upturned nose and comes together in the back with a narrow stabilizing tail to navigate through deep, powdery snow across open, flat land.



marekulisz/Shutterstock.com

- ▲ The bear paw is short and wide and has intricate, tightly woven lacing. Its strong, lightweight design provides more surface area to float better in the dry, powdery snow and hilly terrain of the far north. The tailless, oval shape loses speed but gains maneuverability through thicker underbrush.

winter calendar



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January

- 1** Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 2** Volunteer Restoration Workday
Peabody's Pages Book Club Three-Part Program
Morning Discussions Begin
- 6** The Challenge: Trivia Quiz Game
- 7** Fishing: Hard Water Classic
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 8** Archery: Families
Healing Salves in the 1890s: Camphor Ice
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 10** Peabody's Pages Book Club Three-Part Program
Evening Discussions Begin
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 14** Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 15** Healing Salves in the 1890s:
Camphor Ice
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 16** Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 21** Archery: Adults
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 22** Marvelous Monarchs
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 28** Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 29** Volunteer Restoration Workday

February

- 4** Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 5** Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 9** History of St. James Farm
- 10** Nature Date Night: Romantic Night Hike
- 11** Nature Date Night: Romantic Night Hike
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 14** Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 17** The Challenge: Trivia Quiz Game
- 18** Archery: Families
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 19** Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 23** Native Landscaping: Intro to Native Gardening
The Other McCormick of DuPage: Chauncey McCormick
- 25** Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 26** Volunteer Restoration Workday



Registering on dupageforest.org?

Here's a quick way to find your program online.

1. Visit dupageforest.org and click "Registration & Permits."
2. In the search box, enter the five-digit number next to the program name in this calendar.
3. If a program has more than one date, time or location, click "More" to find the one you want.

March

- 3** Fresh Air Friday
- 4** Maple Sugaring
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 5** Maple Sugaring
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 7** Native Landscaping: Creating Your Garden Plan
- 9** Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 10** The Challenge: Trivia Quiz Game
- 11** Maple Sugaring
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 12** Maple Sugaring
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 14** Native Landscaping: Creating Your Garden Plan
- 16** Cocktails & Conservation: Home-Grown Happy Hour
- 18** Maple Sugaring
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 19** Maple Sugaring
- 21** Native Landscaping: Creating Your Garden Plan
- 23** Native Landscaping: Intro to Native Gardening
- 25** Haiku Walk
Maple Sugaring
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 26** Maple Sugaring
Native Landscaping: Creating Your Garden Plan
Nature Detectives: Signs of Spring
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 28** Native Landscaping: Creating Your Garden Plan
Volunteer Restoration Workday



Winter Pop-Up Programs

Various Locations

Once the snow starts to fall and the ice gets thick, we'll begin scheduling a series of fun fishing, snowshoeing, and scavenger hunt pop-up programs that'll get you ready for winter in the forest preserves.

For updates, text EVENTS to 866-743-7332, and we'll text you when one pops up!





More Ways to Play

SNOW TUBING

Blackwell

When there's plenty of snow on Mount Hoy (usually more than 3 inches) take a thrilling 800-foot ride down the hill. Only Forest Preserve District inner tubes are allowed. Rentals are \$10 per tube per day and end at 3:30 p.m. Credit card or exact cash only. Questions? Call 630-933-7248.

Weekends Through Feb. 26 (except Dec. 25)

Plus Dec. 23, Dec. 27 – 30, Jan. 3 – 6, Jan. 9,

Jan. 16 & Feb. 20

10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

SNOWSHOES

Blackwell & Fullersburg Woods

Rentals are \$10 per day and are only available when there's plenty of snow on the trails. Credit card or exact cash only.

- When snow tubing at Mount Hoy is open, rent at the base until 2 p.m.
- Rent Monday – Saturday 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (last rental at 2 p.m.) at Fullersburg Woods Nature Education Center. Call 630-850-8110 in advance for availability.

Plants & Wildlife

Marvelous Monarchs 22636

Learn about our beautiful native monarchs and how you can help butterflies and other pollinators. Ages 12 and up; under 18 with an adult. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-933-7248.

Jan. 22

2 – 3 p.m.

St. James Farm

Nature Detectives: Signs of Spring 22637

Bring your family on this signs-of-spring scavenger hunt, and sharpen your nature observation skills as you enjoy the seasonal features of the preserve. Ages 5 – 11 with an adult. \$5 per child. Register online or at 630-933-7248.

March 26

2 – 3 p.m.

St. James Farm

The Indoor Riding Arena

St. James Farm

Sign up for these great ways to spend time at the indoor riding arena with your horse!

RIDING YOUR HORSE IN THE INDOOR RIDING ARENA

Exercise and school your horse at this historic venue.

Ages 12 and up; under 18 with an adult. \$10 per horse-rider combo per hour. Register at 630-580-7027.

OBSTACLE COURSE PLAY DATE 22667

Exercise and school your horse at your own pace through a series of obstacles, which may include bridge, cake top stand, fishing pole, maypole, carrying items, parallel parking, or gate work. Share the arena with up to three other riders, or register and pay for all four slots and have the arena all to yourself for one hour. Ages 12 and up; under 18 with an adult. \$10 per horse-rider combo. To register by phone instead, call 630-580-7027.

Jan. 14, 15, 28 & 29

Feb. 11, 12, 25 & 26

March 11, 12, 25 & 26

11 a.m. – Noon, 12:15 – 1:15 p.m.,

1:30 – 2:30 p.m., and 2:45 – 3:45 p.m.



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3. If a program has more than one date, time or location, click "More" to find the one you want.

Ways to Play

Archery: Adults 22660

Whether you're new to the sport or looking for a refresher, join us to learn safety tips, proper shooting techniques, and basic skills. Equipment provided. Ages 18 and up. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-933-7248.

Jan. 21	11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	St. James Farm
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Archery: Families 22662

Whether you're new to the sport or looking for a refresher, join us to learn safety tips, proper shooting techniques, and basic skills. Equipment provided. Ages 8 and up; under 18 with an adult. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-933-7248.

Jan. 8	11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	St. James Farm
Feb. 18	11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	St. James Farm

Fishing: Hard Water Classic 22665

Take part in the only competitive ice-fishing tournament in DuPage, and then stick around for door prizes and awards. Bring your own equipment and bait. All ages; under 18 with an adult. \$20 per person in advance; \$25 at the event. Register online or at 630-933-7248.

Jan. 7	Noon – 3:30 p.m.	Blackwell
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2023 Summer Camps

Multiple Forest Preserves

We'll have a great lineup of camps for kids entering kindergarten through eighth grade, many focusing on nature's relationship with science, technology, engineering, and math. With time for team-building, exploration, and play, kids might not realize they're firing up new neurons as they're making new friends! For descriptions, visit dupageforest.org/camps starting Feb. 1.

Feb. 15 Early-bird registration starts for DuPage residents at dupageforest.org

March 1 Open registration begins

Nature Date Night: Romantic Night Hike 22697

Experience the magic of an evening walk along lantern-lit trails on a self-guided, 1- to 2-mile journey. Follow the candlelight to roaring fires, roasting marshmallows, and hot chocolate. Hikes leave at 6, 7, and 8 p.m. Ages 18 and up. \$12 per person. Register online or at 630-933-7248.

Feb. 10 & 11	6 – 9 p.m.	Fullersburg Woods
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The Challenge: Trivia Quiz Game 22627

Challenge your friends and neighbors, and show off your knowledge as you compete for prizes during this friendly quiz game featuring categories to test your familiarity with music, animals, geography, history, and more! Register as a team of up to five, or have our quiz masters help you find a team. Ages 18 and up. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-876-5900.

Jan. 6	7 – 8:30 p.m.	Oak Meadows
Feb. 17	7 – 8:30 p.m.	Oak Meadows
March 10	7 – 8:30 p.m.	Oak Meadows

Health & Well-Being

Fresh Air Friday 22633

Enjoy a relaxing lunch hour of mindful walking and immersive nature-based ways to tune in to the present. The walk can cover as much as one mile on crushed limestone and grass trails. Ages 18 and up. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-933-7248.

March 3	9:30 – 10:30 a.m.	St. James Farm
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Haiku Walk 22634

Learn about haiku (a poetic form that originated in Japan) on a leisurely walk; then create your own haiku inspired by your fresh experiences. Ages 12 and up; under 18 with an adult. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-933-7248.

March 25	10:30 – 11:45 a.m.	St. James Farm
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winter calendar



Healing Salves in the 1890s: Camphor Ice 22619

Learn about camphor ice, a popular 1890s ointment for healing chapped skin made with camphor oil, beeswax, and lard, and take home a sample made on the farm's wood-burning stove. Ages 12 and up; under 18 with an adult. \$10 per person. Register online or at 630-876-5900.

Jan. 8 & 15 11:30 – 11:50 a.m. Kline Creek Farm

1890s Living

Kline Creek Farm

Suggested admission donation of \$5 per person ages 3 and up to enter the farm. Registration not required for these all-ages programs. Questions? Call 630-876-5900.

FARMHOUSE TOURS: KEEPING YOUR FAMILY HEALTHY IN WINTER

On these special guided tours, hear about a common winter experience: taking care of a sick family member. Learn about "sick foods" in the 1890s, how candy was used as medicine, and how the first-floor bedroom acted as the sick room.

Jan. 2 – Feb. 27

Thursday – Monday 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. on the hour

FARMHOUSE TOURS

Join us in the farmhouse for a look at 1890s home life with themes that change to reflect the seasons.

March 3 – 31

Thursday – Monday 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. on the hour

FARM LIFE IN WINTER

Help prune the orchard or stack wood for fuel, or see how blacksmithing skills helped farmers. Join us for the ice harvest if the lake freezes, or watch as we shear the ewes in preparation for lambing in March. There's a new lineup every day, so follow us at [facebook.com/klinecreekfarm](https://www.facebook.com/klinecreekfarm) for activity updates.

Jan. 2 – Feb. 26

Thursday – Monday 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Living Green

Cocktails & Conservation: Home-Grown Happy Hour 22696

Learn how to craft easy and delicious cocktail and mocktail recipes using native plants. Enjoy two drink tastings while learning about edible native plants, and create a garden-to-bar favorite concoction to take home. Ages 21 and up. \$25 per person. Register online or at 630-933-7248.

March 16 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. Oak Meadows

Native Landscaping

Creating Your Garden Plan 22676

Share drawings or photos of your yard prior to a one-on-one online meeting, and then get customized recommendations from a plant expert who will help you select native plants to match your gardening goals and growing conditions. Ages 18 and up. \$30 per session. Register online or at 630-933-7248.

March 7, 14, 21 & 28 3 – 4 p.m. & 6 – 7 p.m. Online

March 26 1 – 2 p.m., 3 – 4 p.m. & 6 – 7 p.m. Online

Intro to Native Gardening 22673

Learn about the benefits of native plants from the comfort of your own home! Find out how natives differ from other garden plants, and get tips and tricks for planting natives in your own yard. Find out how to select appropriate plants, how to create basic garden designs, and which species will attract hummingbirds, butterflies, and other wildlife. Ages 18 and up. \$10 per person. Register online or at 630-933-7248.

Feb. 23 7 – 8:30 p.m. Online

March 23 7 – 8:30 p.m. Online



Registering on dupageforest.org?

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1. Visit dupageforest.org and click "Registration & Permits."
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3. If a program has more than one date, time or location, click "More" to find the one you want.

Heritage

History of St. James Farm 22635

Get an in-depth look into St. James Farm's fascinating history through stories and historic photographs, and learn about the people who were part of its legacy. Ages 18 and up. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-933-7248.

Feb. 9 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. St. James Farm

Maple Sugaring

Discover how sap becomes syrup as you try tapping with tools from the 1890s, check the collection buckets, watch sap thicken over the fire, and try a taste of real maple syrup. All ages. The program is free, but there's a suggested admission donation of \$5 per person ages 3 and up to enter the farm. No registration. Questions? Call 630-876-5900.

March 4 – 26 1 – 4 p.m. Kline Creek Farm
Saturdays & Sundays

The Other McCormick of DuPage: Chauncey McCormick 22666

Chauncey McCormick of St. James Farm was a farmer, gentleman, and philanthropist whose influence is far-reaching but little-known. Get to know the life of this man who played a significant role the county's history. Ages 18 and up. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-933-7248.

Feb. 23 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. St. James Farm

Nature Art & Culture

Peabody's Pages Book Club

Three-Part Program 22640

Sign up for these enriching gatherings where you'll discuss great reads with fellow book fans! In January we'll discuss *What Do You Hear From Walden Pond?*; in February, *Speaking Ill of the Dead*; and in March, *The Art of Making Money*. Titles are subject to change. Ages 18 and up. \$10 per person for all three discussions. Register online or at 630-206-9566.

Jan. 6, Feb. 3 & March 3 10 – 11:15 a.m. St. James Farm
Jan. 10, Feb. 14 6:45 – 8 p.m. Online
& March 14

Volunteer

Volunteer Restoration Workday 22790

Help improve a forest preserve prairie or woodland by collecting seeds or removing nonnative plants. Ages 8 and up; under 18 with an adult. Free. Register online or at 630-206-9630 at least five days in advance (10 days by phone for groups of five or more).

Jan. 1, 2, 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 28 & 29	8:30 – 11 a.m.	Churchill Woods
Jan. 7 & 10	9 a.m. – Noon	Springbrook
Jan. 8	9 – 11:30 a.m.	Willowbrook
Jan. 14	9 a.m. – Noon	Fullersburg Woods
Jan. 14 & 28	9 a.m. – Noon	Maple Grove
Jan. 21	1 – 4 p.m.	Springbrook
Jan. 21	9 – Noon	Willowbrook
Feb. 4, 5, 11, 18, 19, 25 & 26	8:30 – 11 a.m.	Churchill Woods
Feb. 4, 14 & 25	9 a.m. – Noon	Springbrook
Feb. 5	9 – 11:30 a.m.	Willowbrook
Feb. 11 & 25	9 a.m. – Noon	Maple Grove
Feb. 18	9 a.m. – Noon	Fullersburg Woods
Feb. 18	9 – Noon	Willowbrook
Feb. 19	1 – 4 p.m.	Springbrook
March 4, 5, 11, 12, 25 & 26	8:30 – 11 a.m.	Churchill Woods
March 5, 9, 18 & 28	9 a.m. – Noon	Springbrook
March 5	9 – 11:30 a.m.	Willowbrook
March 11	9 a.m. – Noon	Fullersburg Woods
March 11 & 25	9 a.m. – Noon	Maple Grove
March 18	9 – Noon	Willowbrook



© Cliff Fairweather, Long Branch Nature Center

Getting to the Bottom of Brumation

by **DAN THOMPSON**, NATURAL RESOURCES

The groundhog might get all the press for its ability to spend winter hibernating in its den, but it's not the only example of DuPage wildlife that slow things down this time of year.

Animals have a lot of strategies for dealing with winter. In fall, when temperatures and sunlight send clear signals that it's time to prepare for colder weather, some animals fatten up to ready for the leaner times ahead. Others fly south to avoid conditions altogether. A handful of mammals, the groundhog included, hibernate, spending extended periods of inactivity underground, where heart rates, breathing, and body temperatures drop. The county's cold-blooded animals have a similar strategy, although one scientist gives a different name.

"Brumation" is the prolonged period of decreased metabolic rate amphibians and reptiles undergo to cope with winter, but the specifics can vary by species.

Frogs with their thin skins are susceptible to environmental pollutants and can seem rather frail, but they can be tough

in other ways. To cope with the onset of winter, for instance, some frogs settle on the bottom of wetlands or lakes with oxygen-rich waters. Others stay on land and either burrow in the soil or work their way under rocks or logs. Some wood frogs in particular have a simple yet amazing technique: They bury themselves under the leaf litter and freeze.

As a wood frog cools, to conserve moisture, it no longer passes urine. Instead, the urea is added to the animal's blood, where along with glucose from sugars in the liver it acts as a sort of antifreeze that the heart circulates throughout the body. This doesn't stop the freezing process, but it does protect cells as they freeze by retaining critical moisture. As temperatures drop, more of the frog will freeze, and when most of the frog is frozen, the heart and lungs eventually stop. As spring approaches, though, the wood frog begins to thaw and the heart to pump, returning all organs to their normal functions.

It's not surprising that medical doctors are studying the wood frog. An understanding of how its body can



© ncaple

▲ Scientists study wood frogs for their ability to spend winter frozen below the leaves without any tissue damage.



© J.D. Sommer

▲ Brumating aquatic turtles take in oxygen through cloaca bursa near their tails.



© Jesse Rothenbaugh

▲ Box turtles and other terrestrial turtles bury themselves in the soil below the frost line to wait out winter.



© JIMT

▲ Snakes, such as these eastern garter snakes, spend winter in groups in protected areas call hibernacula.

function with exceptionally high glucose levels may lead to breakthroughs in diabetes care. Learning how cells and organs can survive prolonged periods of low oxygen may lead to improved recoveries for stroke and heart attack patients as well as better care for organs used in transplants.

Turtles have similar brumation strategies. In summer a turtle's heart may beat 40 times a minute, but during the coldest part of winter, it may only beat one time every 10! Still, even with such a dramatically reduced metabolic rate, a turtle needs to take in oxygen and to remove carbon dioxide that builds up in the blood. For terrestrial species, such as box turtles, which burrow into the soil below the frost line, this isn't an issue; but for aquatic turtles, such as painted turtles, that settle into the muck at the bottom of ponds or marshes, it takes some special breathing adaptations.

Since aquatic turtles are under the ice, they can't breathe in the normal way by using their lungs. They instead breathe through a process called cloacal respiration. Multipurpose sacs collectively called the cloaca bursa are situated under the turtle's tail. They're used for waste removal and reproduction,

but their numerous blood vessels also allow them to absorb high concentrations of oxygen and to release carbon dioxide. (In a way, this lets some turtles to breathe through their butts!) Some frogs and salamanders are capable of similar respiration.

For snakes, there's a group approach when it comes to brumation. Many species congregate in "hibernacula," chambers (usually underground and below the frost line) that protect snakes from the cold and allow the animals to better moderate the lower temperature while maintaining oxygen and humidity levels with relatively no disturbance. Hibernacula can be in abandoned mammal dens, cracks in the bedrock, or structures such as rock walls, building foundations, or railroad beds. Snakes with less tolerance to cold are the first to enter the hibernaculum to brumate; those with more tolerance will be the last ones in and the first ones out in spring.

It's fascinating to learn and understand the complex abilities animals have to withstand the challenges winter presents. Next spring when you hear the first frogs calling, you'll now understand just a little of what they went through to survive winter's harsh conditions. •

news & notes

WORK BEGINS *at Fischer Woods*

The Forest Preserve District will begin to revitalize oak habitats this winter at Fischer Woods Forest Preserve. The main goal will be to remove invasive shrubs and trees, such as European buckthorn and honeysuckle, which produce dense clumps of leaves. This impenetrable vegetation keeps sun and water from reaching the wildflowers and oak and hickory seedlings that grow below. As a result, the variety of plants and animals that live at Fischer Woods has been declining. Similar work throughout the Forest Preserve District has shown that not only plants but also populations of birds and butterflies can recover once the weedy vegetation is removed. This winter, crews will cut and mow invasive trees and shrubs and will carefully apply herbicides to the cut stumps so the plants can't grow back. They may also chip trees and brush and create and burn brush piles.

Because equipment is large and will be moving at a fast pace, visitors may periodically see "area closed" signs. The Forest Preserve District expects work to wrap up by December 2025.

DISTRICT CELEBRATES IMPORTANT TRAIL CONNECTION

In October, the Forest Preserve District celebrated the opening of a new 1.7-mile section of limestone trail in Pratt's Wayne Woods, an important connection between the forest preserve's trails and the Elgin Branch of the Illinois Prairie Path.

The new trail segment marks the completion of the nearly 20-mile North Central DuPage Regional Trail, which spans northern DuPage County and connects the Elgin Branch of the Illinois Prairie Path on the west to Cook County's Busse Woods in Elk Grove Village on the east. It includes side paths as well as on-road and off-street trails.

The final segment runs along the west side of Munger Road starting at Forest Preserve Drive, crosses Army Trail Road, and ends at Smith Road, where it connects to the Illinois Prairie Path.

The Forest Preserve District received \$1.5 million in Surface Transportation Program funds and \$152,000 from the federally funded locally programmed Transportation Alternatives Program for the construction of this final segment.



EXPANDED PARKING *at Waterfall Glen*

Forest Preserve District visitors can now enjoy expanded access to the trails at Waterfall Glen thanks to a new 180-car parking lot off Bluff Road.

The lot, a 2019 certified master plan project, reduces pedestrian conflicts near the intersection of Cass Avenue and Bluff Road and improves access to the trails. The former 17-car lot could not adequately accommodate the increasing number of visitors to the Rocky Glen area, one of the more popular destinations at the preserve, and frequently resulted in overflow parking on Bluff Road and Cass Avenue. The project not only expanded spots by more than 10 fold but also rerouted the trail and installed a new trailhead. A future 0.3-acre picnic area will further enhance the site.

The new lot was open by Labor Day weekend, weeks ahead of its target completion date.

The project's design was coordinated with an ongoing habitat restoration project at the preserve to lessen effects to natural resources, minimize disruption, and enhance the overall visitor experience.



GRANT TO BENEFIT *Blackwell Forest Preserve*

The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County and the DuPage Birding Club jointly announced that the club awarded a \$2,000 grant to the 501(c)(3) Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County to fund the planting of nearly 100 native tree saplings and shrubs near McKee Marsh at Blackwell Forest Preserve in Warrenville.

The grant will advance a restoration project already begun at the site, which included the removal of nonnative buckthorn and honeysuckle shrubs. Newly planted native trees and shrubs will increase the habitat’s biodiversity, provide needed vegetative structure, and restore resources for native and migratory birds that nest and forage in the woodland’s understory.

The Forest Preserve District expects it will take several years for the saplings and shrubs to reach maturity before the habitat provides the conditions required by understory-nesting birds.

CONSTRUCTION STARTS ON MAJOR RENOVATION PHASE AT WILLOWBROOK WILDLIFE CENTER

After a ground-breaking ceremony this summer at Willowbrook Wildlife Center, construction is fully underway on major improvements at the site, which will include a new visitor center.

After setting up on site, the Forest Preserve District contractor continues to prepare the area for concrete foundations for two new structures and concrete pads for additional animal enclosures. A new raptor flight barn will house rehab and resident raptors and include larger areas for short flights and observation. The carnivore enclosure will house the center’s resident bobcat as well as rehabilitating carnivores transitioning to release.

This phase should wrap up in spring, at which time animals on the exhibit trail will move into their new homes. The District’s consultant is hard at work on permits for the remaining phases of work, which will start south of the existing clinic after the resident animals have moved.



directory



HEADQUARTERS

35580 Naperville Road
Wheaton • 630-933-7200
TTY 800-526-0857
dupageforest.org
forest@dupageforest.org

Visitor Services

630-933-7248
Monday – Friday 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Office

Monday – Friday 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Volunteer Services

630-933-7233

Conservationist Subscriptions

630-933-7085

Partnership & Philanthropy Friends of the Forest Preserve District

630-871-6400

Law Enforcement

630-933-7240

HOURS

Most forest preserves are open daily from one hour after sunrise until one hour after sunset.

ACCESSIBILITY

If you have accessibility needs or concerns, please contact our ADA programs and activities coordinator at 630-933-7537 or TTY 800-526-0857 at least 48 hours before your visit or at least two weeks prior to attending a registration-based program.

EDUCATION *Centers*

DANADA EQUESTRIAN CENTER

35507 Naperville Road
Wheaton • 630-668-6012

Office

Monday – Friday 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Closed Saturdays & Sundays

Barn

Monday – Friday 8 a.m. – 8 p.m.
Saturdays & Sundays 8 a.m. – 6 p.m.

FULLERSBURG WOODS NATURE EDUCATION CENTER

3609 Spring Road
Oak Brook • 630-850-8110

Monday – Saturday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Closed Sundays

KLINE CREEK FARM

1N600 County Farm Road
West Chicago • 630-876-5900

Suggested admission donation \$5 per person ages 3 and up

Thursday – Monday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Closed Tuesdays & Wednesdays

ST. JAMES FARM

25541 Winfield Road • Warrenville
630-580-7025

Office & Visitor Center

Please call for hours.

GOLF *Courses*

THE PRESERVE AT OAK MEADOWS

900 N. Wood Dale Road
Addison • 630-595-0071

MAPLE MEADOWS GOLF COURSE

272 S. Addison Road
Wood Dale • 630-616-8424

GREEN MEADOWS GOLF COURSE

18W201 W. 63rd St.
Westmont • 630-810-5330

MAYSLAKE PEABODY ESTATE

1717 W. 31st St.
Oak Brook • 630-206-9566

Due to work on the exterior, the interior of Mayslake Hall will not reopen until July 2023. For updates, visit dupageforest.org.

WILLOWBROOK WILDLIFE CENTER

525 S. Park Blvd.
Glen Ellyn • 630-942-6200

Animal Admittance

Daily 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Outdoor Exhibit Trail

Daily 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Due to ongoing work at the center, the exhibit trail will close for the remainder of the year in late winter or early spring.

Visitor Center

Although Willowbrook continues to accept animals, the visitor center will be closed until a new building opens in 2024. For updates, visit dupageforest.org.

PARTNER *Sites*

DANADA HOUSE

Wheaton • 630-668-5392

FISCHER FARM

Bensenville • 630-766-7015

GRAUE MILL AND MUSEUM

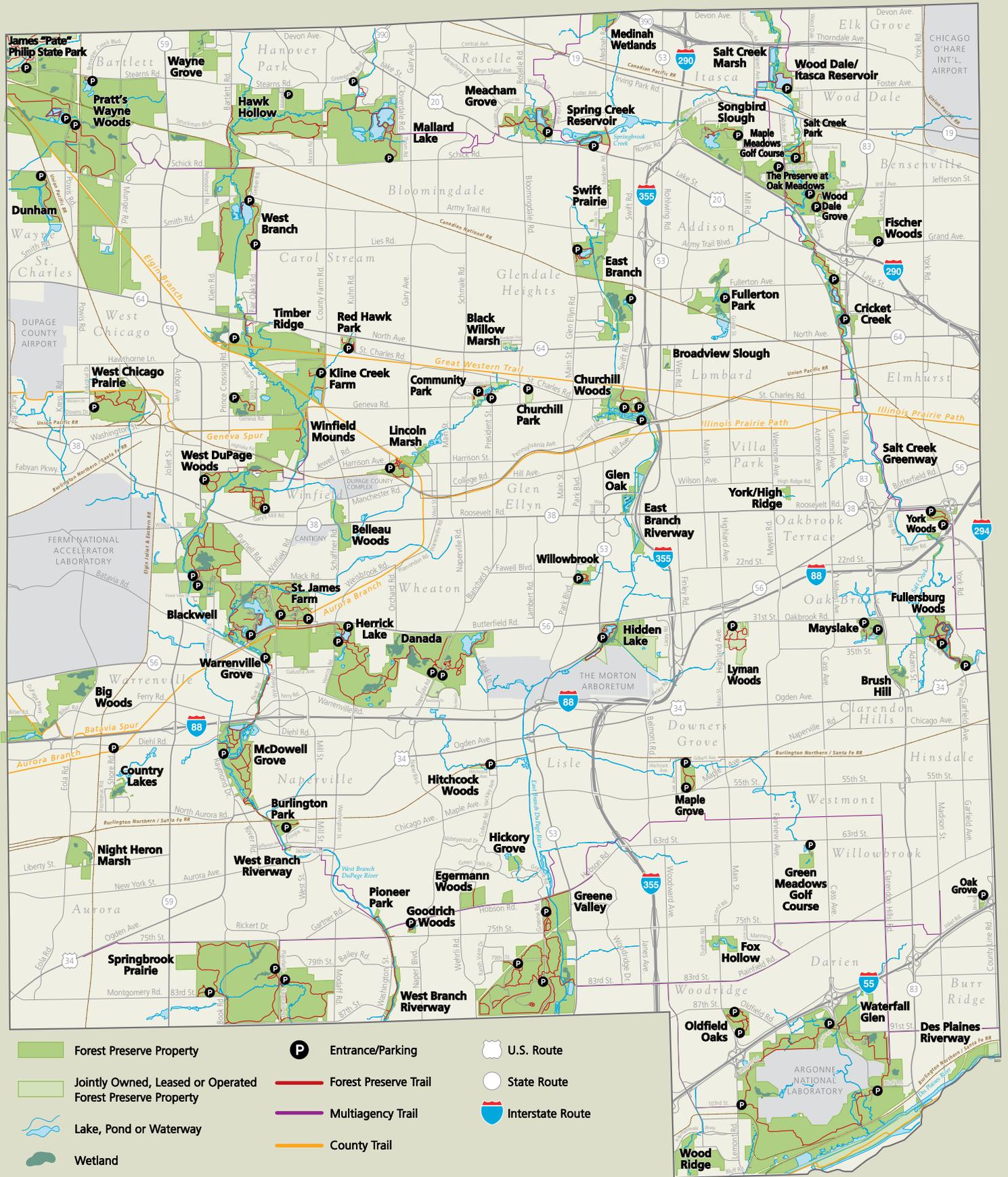
Oak Brook • 630-655-2090

BARTLETT NATURE CENTER

Bartlett • 847-608-3120

LYMAN WOODS NATURE CENTER

Downers Grove • 630-963-9388





**Forest Preserve District
of DuPage County**

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Wheaton, IL 60189

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the Conservationist

A Quarterly Publication of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County

Winter 2023



Dreaming of warmer days to come?
Plan ahead for this summer!

2023 SUMMER CAMPS

Camps are for kids entering kindergarten through eighth grade.

Feb. 1 Descriptions go online at dupageforest.org

Feb. 15 Early-bird registration starts for
DuPage residents

March 1 Open registration begins

