

the Conservationist

A Quarterly Publication of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County

Winter 2021

Winter Wonders

Nature's Sure Seasonal Finds

Recording the Plants of DuPage

Winter Program Calendar



Forest Preserve District of DuPage County

from the president



Happy New Year! As we say hello to 2021 the Forest Preserve District is also welcoming new members to its board and innovative programming to its winter calendar.

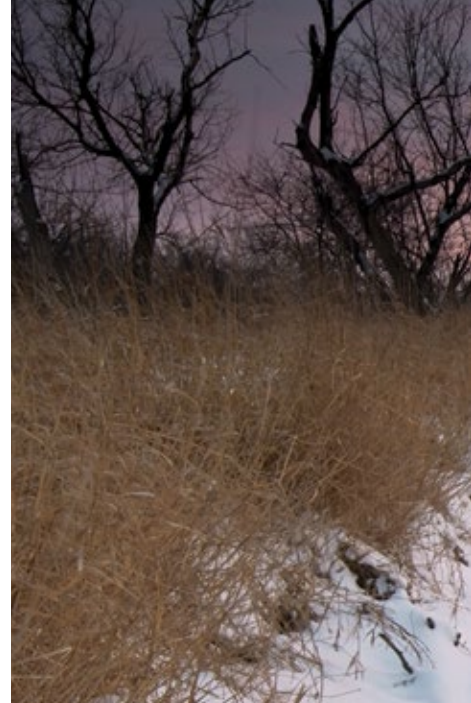
On Dec. 6 the Forest Preserve District had three new members join its Board of Commissioners, each with a strong interest in environmental issues. Tina Tyson-Dunne from District 2 is a Forest Preserve District volunteer and certified master naturalist. Jeff Gahris from District 4 has worked with state and federal agencies to implement various Clean Air Act programs and is a former Glen Ellyn environmental commissioner. And Barbara O'Meara from District 5 is a licensed environmental health practitioner and an adjunct biology professor at Waubensee Community College. We're excited to welcome all three and to continue our work in support of our agency's mission for the residents of DuPage.

As we continue to navigate through the world of COVID-19, we look forward to a day when we can again meet in large groups to learn about the county's great open spaces, their history and ways to experience the preserves. But until we reach that point we've put together some small-group and online winter programs to keep us in touch with forest preserve fans. Learn about 1890s crafting with Kline Creek Farm, or join our popular "Peabody's Pages Book Club." Look for wildlife with a skilled naturalist, or learn how to ready your garden for native plants. (It's never too early to think spring!) Our full lineup starts on Page 8.

Regardless of how you enjoy the preserves, rather online or in person during a wintery stroll on your favorite trail, I hope you'll continue to find what makes you happy in the new year.

Daniel Hebreard

President, Forest Preserve District of DuPage County



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

President

Daniel Hebreard, Woodridge

Commissioners

Marsha Murphy, Bloomingdale — District 1

Tina Tyson-Dunne, Lombard — District 2

Linda Painter, Hinsdale — District 3

Jeff Gahris, Wheaton — District 4

Barbara O'Meara, Naperville — District 5

Al Murphy, West Chicago — District 6

Executive Director

Ed Stevenson



BOARD MEETINGS

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



THE CONSERVATIONIST

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Community Relations Director

Tony Martinez Jr.



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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On the cover: Ice at Springbrook Prairie © Mark Baldwin

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



© Joe Martz

news & notes

PLEASE NOTE

At press time the information in News & Notes is correct, but as Restore Illinois guidelines change, so might the Forest Preserve District's lineup. For the latest, visit dupageforest.org.

WEST BRANCH TRAIL REOPENS AT BLACKWELL

The West Branch DuPage River Trail near Spring Brook Creek at Blackwell Forest Preserve in Warrenville has reopened as the bulk of work wraps up on the adjacent creek restoration project.

Visitors will see a rerouted trail moved to higher ground to prevent frequent flooding. Beautiful views of the meandered creek will feature colorful arrays of native wildflowers once warm weather returns.

Since April 2019 the District has worked along the Spring Brook Creek to improve water quality and wildlife habitat and connect the creek to the floodplain.



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS Meetings

For the safety of visitors as well as staff, until further notice, all Board of Commissioners meetings will be online only. You can link directly to live streaming video from the Forest Preserve District's Facebook page at facebook.com/dupageforest and from dupageforest.org. Details on how to submit public comments and links to agendas, minutes, and recordings of previous meetings are at dupageforest.org under "Our Board."

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.



PARKING IMPROVEMENTS AT MAYSLAKE

Work will wrap up this spring on the complete removal and replacement of the parking lot on the west side of Mayslake Hall at Mayslake Peabody Estate in Oak Brook. The replacement is a certified project of the Forest Preserve District's latest master plan.

Over the years the integrity and durability of the parking lot has been an issue due to the insufficient depth of the aggregate base.

In addition to the new base and asphalt, the project is replacing select concrete curbs and sidewalks and addressing drainage issues along the lot and building.

The parking lot not only supports operations at Mayslake Peabody Estate but also serves as the location of the Forest Preserve District's popular annual native plant sale.

The \$306,947 project is funded through a combination of nonreferendum bond funds and yearly appropriated construction and development funds.

MANY Thanks

The Forest Preserve District thanks the donors who contributed to its efforts between Oct. 1 and Nov. 30, 2020. To learn how your financial support can benefit the District, visit dupageforest.org/friends.

To give to the Friends of the Forest Preserve District, the 501(c)(3) nonprofit fundraising arm of the District, visit dupageforest.org/donate.

Gifts of Note

Judith Anderson

\$1,000 — Willowbrook Wildlife Center

Theodore Utchen

\$600 — Mayslake Peabody Estate

Gifts of Note to the Friends of the Forest Preserve District

Anonymous

\$5,526 — Danada Equestrian Center

Maryann Mahoney

\$1,000 — Greatest needs

Kenneth McAfee

\$1,000 — Willowbrook Wildlife Center

Ann McGill and Kate Welborn

\$1,000 — Willowbrook Wildlife Center

Lisa Savegnago and Ronald Johnson

\$1,000 — Greatest needs

Sebert Landscaping

\$1,000 — Land Management in memory of Geronimo Bryant

John and Marion Tableriou

\$1,000 — Greatest needs

Timothy Whelan

\$1,000 — Greatest needs

Chester and Jeanette Wilczak

\$1,000 — Mayslake Peabody Estate

Brian and Dana Battle

\$500 — Greatest needs

Francine Manilow

\$500 — Blackwell Forest Preserve

Annette Thompson

\$500 — Adopt a Blanding's Turtle

Julie Tumma

\$500 — Greatest needs

Wheaton Lions Club

\$500 — 2020 Duck Race Sponsor



COLLECTIONS Corner

Our last column featured recent archaeological discoveries at Dunham Forest Preserve in Wayne, but in this edition the spotlight is on a site that's been examined for nearly a century: Winfield Mounds in Winfield.

Roughly 1,000 years ago, Native Americans lived along the West Branch DuPage River on land that is today's Winfield Mounds Forest Preserve. Some constructed "effigy mounds" at the site, hills of earth built in simple shapes for religious or other purposes.

Centuries later in the early 1900s, farmers rediscovered the mounds. Subsequent archaeological digs unearthed over 2,000 sherds of pottery and signs of human burials. (They're the only documented account of burial mounds in DuPage.) After decades of excavations and vandalism, though, the mounds were no longer intact, so in the 1990s the Forest Preserve District collaborated with the Illinois Prairie Path and other groups to reconstruct three low round mounds of earth to permanently mark the historically significant site.

Today, visitors can connect not only to nature but also to the county's cultural past at Winfield Mounds. In fact, as the village of Winfield readies for its 2021 centennial year, the rediscovery of the mounds is planned to be a part of the celebration.



SUMMER CAMP 2021

Although programs will look a bit different — smaller groups and an emphasis on social distancing, for instance — the Forest Preserve District is working to unroll a fun summer camp lineup for 2021. Camp descriptions will be posted online at dupageforest.org on Feb. 1. Registration opens for DuPage residents Feb. 15 and for nonresidents March 1, so mark your calendar and think summer!



© Mark Baldwin

Recording the Plants of DuPage

by **SCOTT KOBAL**, NATURAL RESOURCES

When you're a botanist for the Forest Preserve District as I am, one of your most important jobs is knowing which plants grow in the county's forest preserves. But how exactly do we keep tabs on which plants grow where? It's a mix of reading what people have seen in the past with recording for posterity what we're finding in the present.

Botanists have been contributing to our overall knowledge of the flora of DuPage for over 150 years. One of the first was Henry Homes Babcock, who started collecting specimens in the 1860s and whose "Flora of Chicago and Vicinity" from 1872 and 1873 noted the locations and abundance of several species.

Levi M. Umbach, a professor of physical and biological sciences at North-Western College in Naperville (today's North Central College), collected plants from 1884 until his death in 1918, including over 1,000 specimens from DuPage between 1895 and 1912.

William S. Moffatt collected hundreds of plants between 1884 and 1898, including a delightful little flower called harbinger-of-spring. Moffatt noted the plant was "in a tract of woodland, north of Naperville" where the timber had been cut, adding, however, that it "will probably disappear from our DuPage County flora," a prediction that unfortunately proved true. (Harbinger-of-spring hasn't been seen in DuPage for over 100 years.) Accounts like Moffatt's can be discouraging, but they provide valuable information on habitats that might prove suitable for possible reintroductions.

In 1969 Floyd Swink published his revolutionary *Plants of the Chicago Region*, which included a list of all plants recorded in the area. Later editions were co-authored by Gerould Wilhelm, who was often accompanied by former Forest Preserve District ecologist Wayne Lampa, the first to document the flora of DuPage forest preserves. Today, the book's follow-up, the 1,392-page *Flora of the Chicago Region: A Floristic and Ecological Synthesis* by Gerould Wilhelm and Laura Rericha, not only lists each species but also includes distribution maps showing where each grows in the 22-county Chicago area.

Without physical specimens to back up any of these written reports, however, observations are not definitive proof. For that, botanists rely on a herbarium.

A herbarium is a collection of dried plants used for scientific study. The one for DuPage County is housed at The Morton Arboretum in Lisle. Researchers in the field collect individual specimens, press and dry them, and then submit them to the herbarium as a type of permanent record. These "voucher" specimens provide proof that a species grows in a certain location, so researchers can reliably use them to create accurate distribution maps.

In addition to telling us what grows where, herbarium collections provide a record of changes in vegetation. Over time a herbarium shows where certain native species occurred and when nonnative species first made their appearances, data that's valuable even though it can be disheartening. In many

From Habitat to Herbarium

So how exactly does a plant make its way from a DuPage forest preserve into the regional herbarium? At the Forest Preserve District, that's the job of author and plant ecologist Scott Kobal.

Each plant first goes into a special press designed to flatten and dry out the fibers. It may stay in the press for several days. After it dries, it gets a label that includes the scientific and family name, a unique number, the collection date and location, and a list of species growing along with it. The dried specimen and label are then submitted to the herbarium at The Morton Arboretum, where staff and volunteers mount them onto herbarium sheets, give the submission a tracking number, and then add them to the permanent collection.

cases a herbarium is an epitaph for a species, representing the only record of a plant's original distribution in the county.

Since 1991 I have documented over 1,000 specimens in and around the preserves, usually trying to voucher those recorded in literature but never verified, such as the heart-leaved skullcap, which I found just last year. Many times I look for species in their appropriate habitats, but some I often happen upon in the course of my usual duties. For instance, I obtained the previously unrecorded low hybrid ragweed by specifically looking where its parents, common ragweed and western ragweed, occurred. But I happened across Lea's shingle oak, a hybrid between the shingle and black oak, when I least expected it!

In some cases, discoveries of rare native species have altered how the Forest Preserve District approaches a site. It may manage an area more intensively, say with prescription burns and mowing, and carefully monitor how a newly discovered species is doing. In the case of newly identified invasive species, it may target them for removal so they do not spread and threaten native communities.

Combined, historical literature and present-day herbariums can do much to bridge the flora of the past with the current forest preserve landscape. And that's valuable information when it comes to determining how to manage and maintain these vital natural resources. After all, the more we know about DuPage County's ecological past, the better we can plan for its future. •



© Zebulen Collier

- ▲ Heart-leaved skullcap is one of the never-before-recorded plants the Forest Preserve District has added to the county's herbarium.



- ▲ Plant specimens are dried in a special press before being labeled and submitted to the county herbarium for storage.



- ▲ Once pressed, plant specimens, such as this five-fingered aralia, become part of the county's permanent record.

winter calendar



PLEASE NOTE

At press time the information in the winter calendar is correct, but as Restore Illinois guidelines change, so might the Forest Preserve District's lineup. For the latest, visit dupageforest.org.

Plants & Wildlife

Ambassador Tour 18864

Join a naturalist for a tour of the exhibit trail and the ambassador animals that live at the center. Hear about their stories and interesting animal facts; and learn how the center cares for its wild residents. You must wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth. Ages 5 and up; under 18 with an adult. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-942-6200.

Jan. 4 – March 31	10 a.m. & 3 p.m.	Willowbrook
Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays		

Habitat Hike 18854

Explore different habitats, and discover which animals live in each. Find out how habitats provide for wildlife year-round, and look for signs of how animals adapt seasonally. You must wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth. Ages 12 and up; under 18 with an adult. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-942-6200.

Feb. 20	2 – 3 p.m.	W. DuPage Woods
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Hiking With Our Nocturnal Neighbors 18933

Join a naturalist on a search for signs of coyotes, owls, and deer, and learn what it takes to survive Illinois' cold winter nights. You must wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth. Ages 18 and up. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-942-6200.

Jan. 17	4:30 – 6 p.m.	Blackwell
Feb. 6	5 – 6:30 p.m.	Herrick Lake
March 2	6:30 – 8 p.m.	McDowell Grove

Mammoths in Our Midst 18927

Learn about the discoveries of mammoths and mastodons in DuPage County and how these gentle giants lived 13,000 years ago. All ages. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-850-8110.

Jan. 30	7 – 8 p.m.	Online
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Marvelous Monarchs

Learn about our beautiful native monarch butterflies and how you can help them and other pollinators. This program will be presented via Facebook Live at facebook.com/stjamesfarm. All ages. Free. No registration. Questions? Call 630-580-7025.

Jan. 17	1 – 2 p.m.	Online
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Meet an Owl 18862

Learn about the owls that live in DuPage and why winter is a good time of year to look for them. Then, meet one of Willowbrook Wildlife Center's resident owls. Ages 8 and up; under 18 with an adult. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-942-6200.

Jan. 14	4:30 – 5:30 p.m.	Online
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Meet a Sandhill Crane 18861

Celebrate sandhill cranes — DuPage County's largest birds — as they begin to migrate back to the area. Learn how to identify and find these birds, and then check in with the center's resident sandhill, Ichabod. Ages 8 and up; under 18 with an adult. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-942-6200.

March 7	1:30 – 2:30 p.m.	Online
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Meet a Woodchuck 18863

Learn about the anatomy, behaviors and fascinating facts and myths of the county's largest squirrel (including why you won't see one in the wild on Groundhog Day). Ages 8 and up; under 18 with an adult. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-942-6200.

Feb. 2	4 – 5 p.m.	Online
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Nature Detectives: Signs of Spring Walk 18781

Bring your family on this signs-of-spring scavenger hunt, and sharpen your observational skills as you enjoy the seasonal features of St. James Farm. You must wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth. Ages 5 and up; under 18 with an adult. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-580-7025.

March 21	2 – 3 p.m.	St. James Farm
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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.

Wildlife Tracking and Observation 18855

Reconnect with your surroundings, and develop your observational and deductive skills as you look for tracks and other evidence of wildlife. You must wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth. Ages 12 and up; under 18 with an adult. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-942-6200.

Feb. 27	2 – 4 p.m.	Willowbrook
March 20	2 – 4 p.m.	Willowbrook

Wildlife Tracking and Observation Online

18860

Develop your observational and deductive skills as you look for tracks and other evidence of wildlife. Ages 12 and up; under 18 with an adult. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-942-6200.

Jan. 16	2 – 3 p.m.	Online
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Winter Story and Stroll 18782

Join a guided walk to look for signs of wildlife, including the tracks they leave behind. Then, warm up with a wintertime story in the indoor riding arena. You must wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth. Ages 5 and up; under 18 with an adult. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-580-7025.

Feb. 14	2 – 3:30 p.m.	St. James Farm
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Ways to Play

Archery: Families 19022

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

Jan. 18	1 – 2:30 p.m.	St. James Farm
Feb. 15	1 – 2:30 p.m.	St. James Farm

The Challenge: Trivia Quiz Game 18788

Challenge your friends and neighbors, and show off your knowledge during this friendly online quiz game featuring categories such as food, photos, music, history and more! Ages 18 and up. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-876-5900.

Jan. 15	7 – 8:30 p.m.	Online
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More Ways to Play

SNOW TUBING & SNOWSHOE RENTALS

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.

You must wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth when interacting with Forest Preserve District employees or other visitors and must pay with credit card or exact cash. Questions? Call 630-933-7248.

Weekends Through Feb. 28

Plus Dec. 21 – 24, Dec. 28 – Jan. 1, Jan. 15 & 18

& Feb. 15 & 26

10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

SNOWSHOES

Blackwell & Fullersburg Woods

Rentals are \$10 for two hours or \$15 per day and are only available when there's plenty of snow on the trails. You must wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth when interacting with Forest Preserve District employees or other visitors and must pay with credit card or exact cash.

- When Mount Hoy's 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 from the office house. Call 630-850-8110 in advance for availability.

FAMILY ICE FISHING PROGRAMS

Various Locations

Learn about safety, equipment, and techniques, and then try your luck on the lake! Equipment and bait provided. You must wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth. Ages 5 and up; under 18 with an adult. \$5 per person. Registration required.

We'll start to schedule programs once the ice is thick. To receive an email when a program is open for registration, send a request with your email address to forest@dupageforest.org. Questions? Call 630-933-7248.



Health & Well-Being

Fresh Air Friday 18775

Breathe deep on a guided walk through the forest preserve. You must wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth. Ages 18 and up. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-580-7025.

Jan. 1	Noon – 1 p.m.	St. James Farm
Feb. 5	Noon – 1 p.m.	St. James Farm
March 5	Noon – 1 p.m.	St. James Farm

Living Green

Maple Sugaring 18870

Discover how sap becomes syrup as you examine a maple tree, check the collection buckets, see a tapping demonstration, and observe sap thickening over a fire. These 20-minute tours are a great way to spend time with your family in nature and leave at 1, 1:30, 2, 2:30, 3 and 3:30 p.m. You must wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth. All ages. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-876-5900.

March 6, 7, 13, 14, 20, 21, 27 & 28	1 – 3:50 p.m.	Kline Creek Farm
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Native Landscaping: All About Plants 18928

Learn about the benefits of native plants and how their root structures differ from ornamentals'. Get tips and tricks, too, for planting natives in your own yard to attract pollinators and other wildlife. Ages 18 and up. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-850-8110.

Jan. 20	7 – 8:30 p.m.	Online
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Native Landscaping: Attracting Birds and Butterflies 18929

Learn about the benefits of native plants, and get tips and tricks for using them to attract hummingbirds, butterflies and other pollinator to your yard. Ages 18 and up. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-850-8110.

Feb. 10	7 – 8 p.m.	Online
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Native Landscaping: Design

Share drawings and photos of your yard, and get one-on-one help from a naturalist who will help you pick out plants and design your own native oasis. Ages 18 and up. \$15 per person. Call 630-850-8110 to schedule your one-hour appointment between March 1 and April 30.

By Appointment	Online
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Native Landscaping: Prepping Your Garden 18931

Get your garden ready for new native plants! Learn tips and tricks for prepping the soil and creating the best conditions for your plants' first year in your yard. Ages 18 and up. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-850-8110.

March 3	7 – 8:30 p.m.	Online
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Native Landscaping: Species Selection Q & A 18932

Learn how to read plant tags, identify your soil type and estimate how much sun your garden gets. Then, ask questions about specific species and how they will grow in your native garden. Ages 18 and up. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-850-8110.

March 24	7 – 8:30 p.m.	Online
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Heritage

Farm Crafts 18784

Bring the charm of DuPage farming heritage into your life as you follow along and learn how to make a corn husk doll, tiny felted heart or hairwork braid. You will receive written and video instruction, live coaching, and conversation to connect you with the makers of the past. All ages. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-876-5900.

Jan. 9	11 – 11:20 a.m.	Online
Corn Husk Doll		
Jan. 16	11 – 11:20 a.m.	Online
Felted Heart		
Jan. 23	11 – 11:20 a.m.	Online
Hairwork Braid		



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.

Farm Life in Winter

There's a new lineup every day! Watch a working blacksmith sharpen tools and repair equipment; help prune the orchard or stack wood for fuel; or join us for the ice harvest when the lake freezes. In February the focus turns to lambing! Follow us at facebook.com/klinecreekfarm, and check daily posts for activities. You must wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth. All ages. Free. Registration not required. Questions? Call 630-876-5900.

Jan. 2 – Feb. 28	1:30 – 3:30 p.m.	Kline Creek Farm
Thursday – Monday		

History of St. James Farm

Get an in-depth look at the farm's fascinating history through stories and historic photographs, and learn about the people who were part of its legacy from a volunteer whose family worked at the farm. This program will be presented on Facebook Live at facebook.com/stjamesfarm. All ages. Free. No registration. Questions? Call 630-580-7025.

Feb. 11	10 – 11 a.m.	Online
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Mayslake by Moonlight 18789

After the sun sets, enjoy an outdoor walking tour of Mayslake's grounds as you hear about urban legends, tales of hauntings, stories of mischief, and the property's history and ownership. You must wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth. All ages; under 18 with an adult. \$15 per person. Register online or at 630-206-9566.

March 19 & 20	7 – 8:30 p.m.	Mayslake
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Mayslake Hall Exterior Tour 18817

Learn about the history and design of Mayslake Hall in this docent-guided tour of the building's exterior. You must wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth. Ages 12 and up; under 18 with an adult. \$8 per person. Register online or at 630-206-9566.

March 3, 6, 10, 13, 17, 20, 24, 27 & 31	10 – 11:30 p.m.	Mayslake
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Nature Art & Culture

Peabody's Pages Book Club

Three-Part Discussion 18746

Sign up for these enriching virtual meetings where you'll discuss great reads with fellow book fans! (When Restore Illinois recommendations change, we'll again meet in Mayslake Hall's 100-year-old library.) In January we'll discuss *Being a Beast*; in February, *Reading the Landscape of America*; and in March, *The Story of More*. Register for either the three morning or three evening discussions. Ages 18 and up. \$5 per person for all three discussions. (To join all 12 discussions throughout the year for \$20 per person, register for program 18750.) Register online or at 630-206-9566.

Jan. 8, Feb. 5 & March 5	10 – 11:15 a.m.	Online
Jan. 19, Feb. 9 & March 9	6:45 – 8 p.m.	Online

Visiting the Preserves During COVID-19

As the state continues to operate under its Restore Illinois plan, the Forest Preserve District reminds visitors to follow a few simple guidelines when at the preserves.

- Stay home if you're sick or have been near someone who's sick.
- Wear a mask that covers your mouth and nose, especially if you're unable to remain more than 6 feet away from the next person.
- Practice social distancing, and stay at least 6 feet away from the next person.
- Bring your own water.
- Help keep the forest preserves clean. Place garbage in a trash or recycling container.
- Benches and picnic tables are not sanitized. Please bring your own sanitizing wipes or table coverings.
- Stay on the right side of the trail so others can pass. Let other visitors know when you're passing from behind, and stay at least 6 feet away as you do.
- Keep dogs leashed at all times.



Winter Wonders

Hank Erdmann/Shutterstock.com

by **DAVE ANDRUSYK**, FULLERSBURG WOODS NATURE EDUCATION CENTER

Signs of spring and summer may sound appealing right about now, but winter has a wonderful lineup of nature exclusives you can only see if you step outside this time of year.

Juncos, Juncos, Juncos

Summer's warblers, great egrets and many American robins may have flown south for winter, but for some birds DuPage forest preserves and backyards *are* south. The dark-eyed junco is one of them.

Dark-eyed juncos spend summers in northern states and Canada but overwinter in middle and southern states, including Illinois. You'll see these sparrow-sized slate gray birds with pale beaks looking for food under seed-laden plants or millet-filled feeders. Instead of stepping along the ground they hop from spot to spot, scratching up leaf litter looking for hidden morsels. And if there's one junco, you'll likely see several as they like to hang out in groups.

Enjoy watching these gray puffballs now, though, because come spring they'll be on their way back to their northern breeding grounds.

Hoarfrost

To create any type of frost you need moist air and a dew point below 32. This means that at 32 degrees moisture —

usually water droplets — not only clings to the ground (or plants or other cold surfaces) but also freezes.

Hoarfrost “skips” the water droplet stage, though, going from moisture in the form of humid air (sometimes escaping from steamy unfrozen lakes or streams) directly to the ice crystal stage. This specific chain of events creates intricate levels of ice crystals that some call “frost on steroids.” Often, icy hoarfrost needles on the side of a tree, fence or pole will grow toward the source of the moisture.

If you're looking for hoarfrost, though, you'll need to get up early; by midday it's usually gone.

Owl Spotting

Great horned, barred and screech owls all live in DuPage forest preserve woodlands year-round, but in winter the leafless trees make them easier to spot. You might see great-horned owls in particular on the nest or on the move as they teach their young to hunt, so grab your binoculars!

It's thought that owls nest in January and February because owlets stay close to their parents for a long time compared to other birds. They use this extended time with their parents “wisely,” learning the skills they'll need to successfully hunt on their own before the cold of the next winter arrives. (A family of barn owls can consume over 3,000 rodents in one nesting season!)



© Jim Kennedy

- ▲ Great horned owls live in the forest preserves year-round, but it may be easier to spot them in leafless winter trees as they're on the nest.



© Joe Maritz

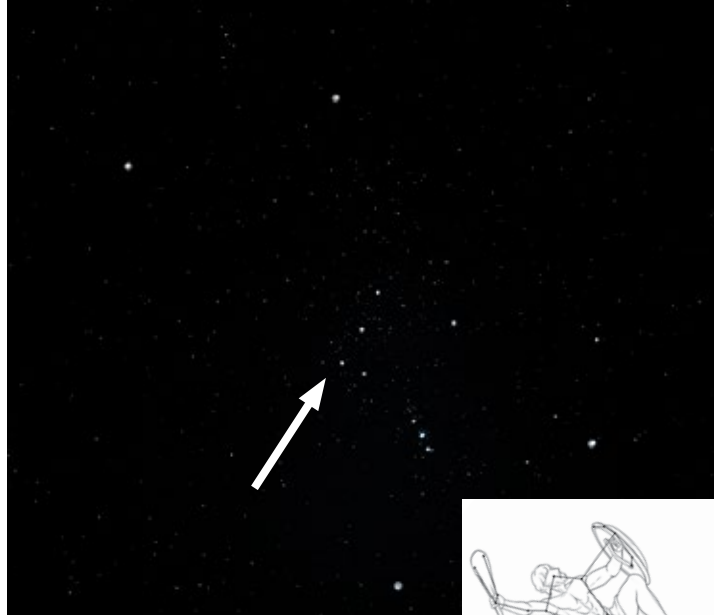
- ▲ The best chance to see the long-needed layers of hoarfrost is early morning.

Natural Ice Sculptures

DuPage forest preserve lakes and rivers are popular destinations in warmer weather for their blue flowing waters, but when temps go below freezing they create some solid natural works of art.

As ice forms and shifts on lakes and ponds it can create myriad geometric shapes, which are easy to see when it's been cold for a while with little snow. (Play it safe and enjoy these patterns from the shoreline, though.)

Rivers and streams create their own designs. When water drips off branches hanging over the shore, icicles begin to form. When flowing, splashing water laps at those icicles, undulating spires of ice take shape. If water levels drop, this action can create tiers of frozen waves. The next time you walk along Salt Creek or either branch of the DuPage River, look for these beautiful natural creations.



Den Rothmosky/Shutterstock.com

ploy2907/Shutterstock.com

- ▲ To find Orion in the southern sky, first look for the three stars that make up his belt.



© Kelly Colgan Azar

- ▲ DuPage County is south for dark-eyed juncos, who spend winters in forest preserves and backyards.

Orion

The forest preserves are closed at night, but that doesn't mean you can't look for this winter constellation in your own backyard. As recognizable as the Big Dipper is in the northern summer sky so is Orion in the south in winter.

The name Orion comes from a mythical hunter, who was shot with an arrow under false pretenses by Diana, the goddess of the hunt. So Orion would never be forgotten, Diana's father, the Greek god Zeus, placed him up among the stars.

Orion is easy to identify by his belt, which is made up of a band of three stars in the southern sky. (In our night sky, the entire constellation is on a bit of an angle.) North of the belt are two bright stars that make up his shoulders. The eastern star, and the brighter of the two, is called Betelgeuse the western, Bellatrix. (Now you movie fans know where writers get names for some of their characters!) •

directory



PLEASE NOTE

At press time, forest preserves are open, but as Restore Illinois guidelines change, so might the Forest Preserve District's lineup. For the most recent information, including which select features are accessible at each center, visit dupageforest.org.

HEADQUARTERS

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

Visitor Services

630-933-7248

Volunteer Services

630-933-7233

Conservationist Subscriptions

630-933-7085

Development & Friends of the Forest Preserve District

630-933-7097

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 call the District's ADA coordinator at 630-933-7683 or TTY 800-526-0857 at least 48 hours before your visit.

EDUCATION *Centers*

DANADA EQUESTRIAN CENTER

35507 Naperville Road
Wheaton • 630-668-6012

FULLERSBURG WOODS NATURE EDUCATION CENTER

3609 Spring Road
Oak Brook • 630-850-8110

KLINE CREEK FARM

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

MAYSLAKE PEABODY ESTATE

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

WILLOWBROOK WILDLIFE CENTER

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

ST. JAMES FARM

25541 Winfield Road • Warrenville
630-580-7025

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

PARTNER *Sites*

DANADA HOUSE

Wheaton • 630-668-5392

FISCHER FARM

Bensenville • 630-766-7015

GRAUE MILL AND MUSEUM

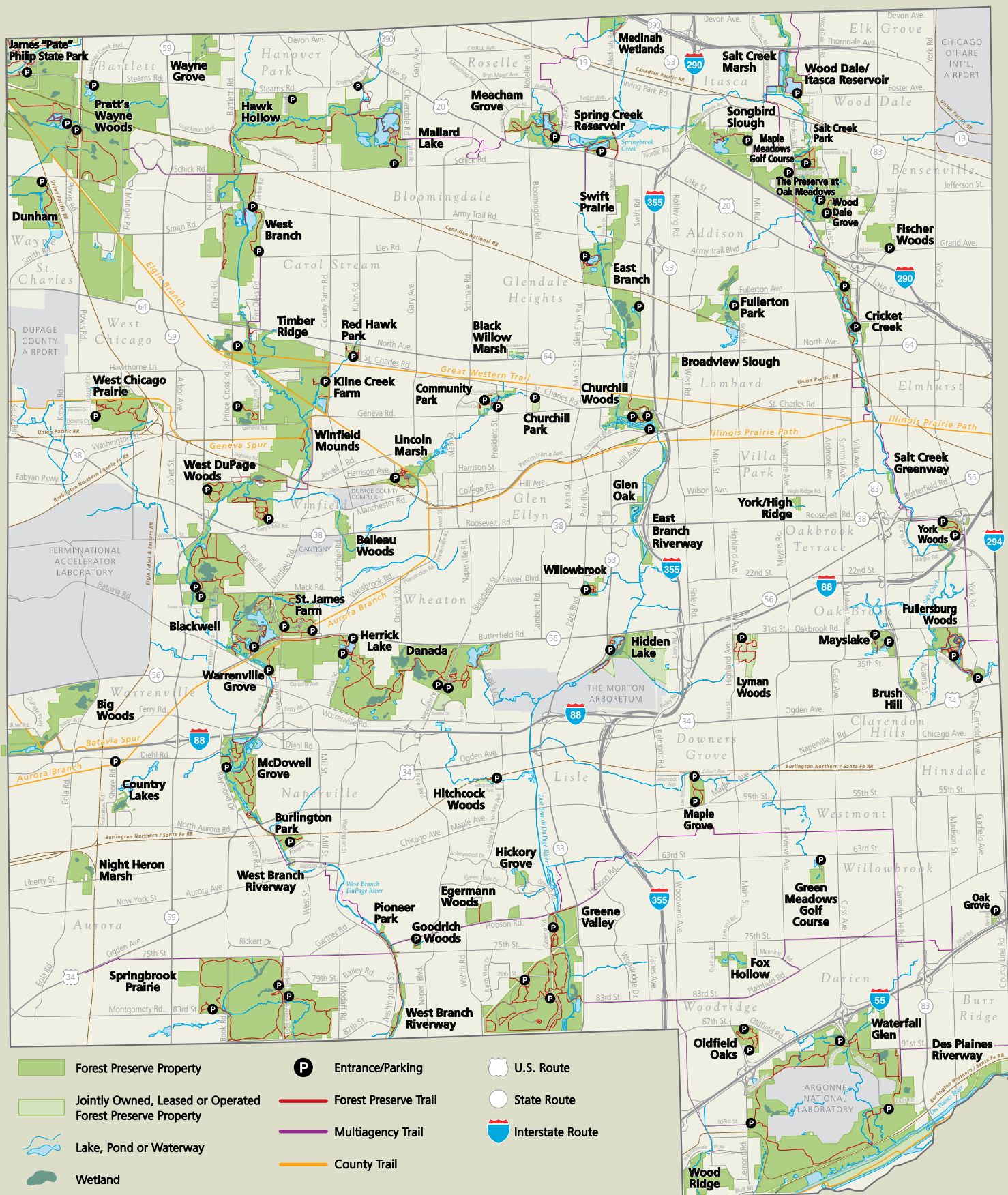
Oak Brook • 630-655-2090

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 2021

Don't drop the ball.

Get your 2021 annual permits today!

2020 permits expire Jan. 31, which will be here before you know it. Buy annual permits for 2021 for off-leash dog areas, archery, private watercraft, stand-up paddleboarding and model crafts online 24/7 at dupageforest.org.

Ready to purchase yours?

Our Visitor Services office is open weekdays, but due to COVID-19 we recommend you purchase your permits for 2021 online. Here's how!

- Visit dupageforest.org.
- Click "Registration & Permits."
- Click "Purchase Permits."
- Follow the directions, and make your secure online purchase.
- We'll send your permit in the mail.

Need assistance?

Call Visitor Services at 630-933-7248 Monday – Friday 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

