



SEVERSON DELLS  
NATURE CENTER

# NOTES FROM THE DELLS

Calendar & Newsletter  
January - April 2020 | Volume 41 No. 1





## NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

2020 is the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. It is an opportunity for us all to reflect on how much has been accomplished and how much further we have to go in restoring our relationship with the Earth. At our Severson Dells breakfast this past fall, I contemplated how far we have come and what we need now. Below you will find an excerpt from my remarks that speaks to where we are at today.

Now more than ever, it is imperative that people have a connection with and understanding of nature. We have difficult decisions ahead about how humans interact with the world around us. The call has grown louder for action, not words, when it comes to climate change policy. Youth are standing up and demanding that world leaders take action. We need to do our part to make sure that everyone understands the science and local impacts of climate change so they can begin to do their part to be good environmental stewards. But we also must help people develop a personal connection to the land. Baba Dioum's frequently cited quote is increasingly relevant: "In the end, we will conserve only what we love; we will love only what we understand, and we will understand only what we are taught."

I invite you to take a minute and think about your roots and your connection with nature. Where did it start and with whom? What have you done lately to reconnect your roots with nature?

How can we inspire a connection to nature so people can deepen their roots and get to know a place like they would get to know a person? What questions would they wish to ask of the land, the flora and fauna, if they could? How do we introduce people to the place so they can start their own conversations with the land and develop their own environmental ethic?

While we will never know the true lasting impact of our work, we do see parents bringing their children out to Severson Dells because that's what they

did with their parents or grandparents as a child. Their roots are nurtured by a shared love of nature within their families.

Our mission to connect people to nature through education and research is at the heart of everything we do. Beyond nurturing a relationship with nature, we desire to improve science literacy in our community. With the difficult societal decisions ahead, we are in urgent need of an electorate that understands the process of science to be informed consumers and citizens.

While it is easy to become overwhelmed and paralyzed by the challenges we face as a global community, it is those deep roots we established to the places we love that sustain us through the difficult work ahead. Our love for nature and the next generation inspires us to take action for the world we are leaving them. Hope is created through action and love. Therefore, I encourage you to take the time to reconnect with nature, whether at Severson Dells or your own backyard, and dream of the future that you want to leave our children and grandchildren: healthy creeks they can wade in to catch crayfish, expanses of golden prairie for them to run through, and deep green forests for them to fall in love with just as you have.

Let us make 2020 a year of connection with and restoration of nature!

Happy trails,  
**Ann Wasser**  
Director



## Wildflower Walkabouts return April 29, 2020!

*Explore the wildflowers of our region  
with hikes led by expert naturalists.*

**NATURAL LAND  
INSTITUTE**  
Conserving Land in Wisconsin's Woods

**SEVERSON DELLS  
NATURE CENTER**

[www.seversondells.org/wildflower-walkabouts](http://www.seversondells.org/wildflower-walkabouts)





# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Register for programs at [seversondells.org/events](https://seversondells.org/events) or call 1-815-335-2915

## New Year Hike

**Saturday, January 4 | 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM**

Get out and stretch your legs for the New Year at Severson Dells. Join Nature Educator Ellen Rathbone for a stroll through the woods and grasslands with as we embrace the New Year with a new commitment to reconnect with the natural world around us. **Fee: \$3/ Members; \$5/non-members. Register by 01/03.**



## Yoga at the Dells

**Tuesdays: January 7, February 4, March 3, April 7 | 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM**

Come experience the beauty of nature through yoga on the first Tuesday of the month. This yoga class is open to all levels of practice. We will be holding poses and connecting with our breath to strengthen the body and calm the mind. Please bring a yoga mat and water.

**Fee: Single Session: \$10 (members) \$15 (nonmembers)  
Series of Three: \$25 (members) \$36 (nonmembers)**

## Conservation Crew Restoration Workday

**January 11, 20, February 8, 24, March 14, 23, April 11, 27  
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

Are you looking for a way to give back to the world and love working outside? Join our Conservation Crew Restoration Workdays and be part of the solution. You'll meet other nature enthusiasts and learn together, be active in the fresh air, and you'll make a positive impact on our natural lands by helping us to remove invasive honeysuckle other critical ecological restoration activities. We gather on the second Saturday and fourth Monday of each month. We provide all the tools (and even snacks!). Simply dress for the weather and bring a water bottle. Please email our Naturalist Andrea Wallace Noble for more information or to RSVP at [andrea@seversondells.org](mailto:andrea@seversondells.org).

## Music at the Dells- Kevin Gordon

**Saturday, January 11 | 1:00 PM**

Come out and celebrate the birthdays of a couple of naturalists we know and love - Don Miller, the illustrious Director Emeritus of Severson Dells, and that other famous local naturalist Aldo Leopold - with a musical performance by the Americana/indie swamp musician Kevin Gordon. "Dude's a juke-joint professor emeritus." - Rolling Stone

### Tickets:

**\$18 Severson Dells Members**

**\$20 General Admission**

**\$18 Early Bird General Admission (Until January 3)**

## Tracking 101 - Teens & Tweens

**Saturday, January 18 | 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

Discover how to identify animal tracks, learn how animals move, interpret the mysteries of the forest, and try your skills at following an animal trail with this engaging, interactive workshop especially for teenagers. We start indoors with Nature Educator Ellen Rathbone teaching us the scientist's way of studying tracks and tracking. Topics include the track formula, gait patterns and movement, track measurements, and even scat ID and other wildlife signs (like browse, dens, kill sites). Hopefully we will have snow and we will take to the woods to work on track/trail ID in the field. Bring water and a snack. Dress for indoors and bring outdoor gear. Ages: 11-17 years.

**Fee: Member /\$10; Nonmember/\$15. Please register by January 13.**

## EXPLORE THIS ISSUE



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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Register for programs at [seversondells.org/events](https://seversondells.org/events) or call 1-815-335-2915

## Family Snowfari

**Saturday, January 25 | 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM**

Just because it's cold doesn't mean you should stay inside! Unlock the secrets of forest creatures in the winter by looking for the signs they leave behind. While snow warrants excellent tracking conditions, we will still be able to find signs of animal life if we don't have snow. Join Naturalist/Educator Andrea Wallace Noble on this fun and factual family hike. This program is best suited for families with children elementary-aged and up. **Fee: Member - \$10/family; Nonmember - \$15/family. Please register by 01/22.**

## Paint Night

**Friday, January 31 | 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM**

Learn how to paint a wintery wonderland with the cheerful guidance of Andrea Wallace Noble! Join us for an evening of creativity and fun and learn about winter animal adaptations along the way. No experience necessary and all materials provided. This includes light snacks and drinks in addition to a casual, cozy atmosphere. **Fee: \$30. Please register by January 27.**

## Full Moon Hike

**Monday, March 9 | 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM**

Taking a stroll outdoors with nothing to light your way except moonbeams is a beautiful experience, with no two walks the same. Sometimes we listen to the owls, sometimes we share the mysteries of the dark, and sometimes we gaze at the stars and wax philosophical. If getting out into the grasslands and woods at night is on your bucket list, then come join us for a magical evening. **Fee: \$3/Members; \$5/non-members. Register by 03/07.**

## ALL NEW! Spring Break Day Camp

**March 16-20 | 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM**



Tromp through the woods, frolic across the prairie and work out your winter wiggles with a week at Severson Dells during spring break. Join our educators for hands-on nature activities and more! Come dressed for the weather and bring your sense of adventure! For ages 7-11. **Register by 03/14.**

**Fee:**  
**Members/\$110**  
**Non-members/\$140.**

## TRAVELOGUES

*Spend a Sunday afternoon exploring faraway places with naturalist guides without ever getting on a plane!*

### Costa Rica

**Sunday, February 9 | 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM**



Costa Rica is known for being an ecological gem with lush rainforests, pristine beaches, sublime cloud forests, active volcanoes, and dramatic mountain ranges. This haven for biodiversity is also home to a culture of people who strive to live sustainably with the earth, with 99% of their energy coming from renewable sources. Learn more about this incredible place and Naturalist/Educator Andrea Wallace Noble's journey through its habitats!

**Free. Please register by 02/08.**

### Exploring Cascadia - Washington and Oregon

**Sunday, February 23 | 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM**

The Pacific Northwest region is rich in history, culture, geology and biology. The region harbors a broad diversity of wild lands and wildlife in its mosaic of habitats. Join us for a look at the landscape from ocean shores to deep mossy forests and on up to the high slopes of volcanoes. We'll visit national parks, grand old lodges and back roads looking for birds, mammals and other critters with local naturalist, Barbara Williams.

**Free. Please register by 02/22.**



### A Journey Through Scandinavia

**Sunday, March 1 | 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM**



Travel to the land of Odin on this travelogue through Sweden, Denmark, and Norway. Learn about the diverse and dream-like Nordic landscapes and the progressive attitudes to nature and the environment that make Scandinavia such an intriguing and beautiful place. Join Randy

Mermel and Jessie Crow Mermel as they regale you with their tales of Scandinavian splendor. **Free. Register by 02/28.**



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Register for programs at [seversondells.org/events](http://seversondells.org/events) or call 1-815-335-2915

## Writing Into the Wild with Gavin Van Horn

**Saturday, March 21 | 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

Writing well requires listening with one's whole body. This workshop will engage participants in a sensory conversation with the wild worlds that flow around and through us. Gavin Van Horn will lead the group through a series of invitations and writing prompts focused on slowing down, quieting overactive analytic minds, and deepening bodily attention to the wild landscape and other-than-human beings. The purpose of this workshop is to explore the relationship between inner and outer wilds, hone basic tools for attending to our senses, and make use of practical writing exercises that can awaken us to how our own stories are connected to place. **Fee: \$35/members, \$45/non-members. Space is limited, so register early!**

About Gavin Van Horn: Gavin is the Director of Cultures of Conservation at the Center for Humans and Nature, author of *The Way of Coyote: Shared Journeys in the Urban Wilds*, and co-editor of *City Creatures: Animal Encounters in the Chicago Wilderness and Wildness: Relations of People and Place*.



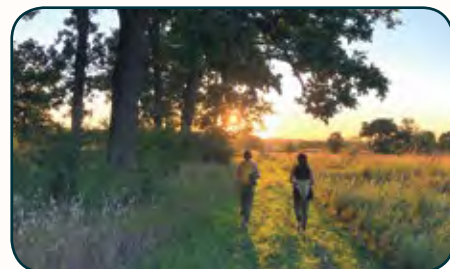
## New Member Hike

**Saturday, March 28 | 9:30 AM - 11AM**

As a welcome and thank you for joining our nature community, we are offering new member hikes for both adults and families to get to know the Nature Center and all we do here. These hikes are led by staff naturalists. Each tour gives you an insider's view of our beautiful grounds, our history and a few fun facts! You'll get the inside scoop on:

- Fun self-guided opportunities
- Special events and educational programs
- Member benefits
- Trail rules and conservation ethics

**Please RSVP by 03/36 by calling 815-335-2915 or emailing us at [ann@seversondells.org](mailto:ann@seversondells.org)**



## BACK-TO-THE-LAND SKILLS WORKSHOPS

### Honeysuckle Hiking Sticks Workshop

**Saturday, February 22 | 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM**

Honeysuckle is an invasive shrub that is wreaking havoc on our local ecosystems. While it doesn't belong in our woods, it could have a wonderful new life as your next walking stick! This workshop will provide all the tools and training you need to whittle, paint, sand, string, or even bedazzle your honeysuckle walking sticks. Nature Educator Ellen Rathbone will be there to facilitate your creativity and teach you something along the way! **Fee: \$10/members; \$15/non-members. Register by 02/17.**

### Family Toy Workshop

**Saturday, February 29, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

Celebrate Leap Year Day with a leap back in time with Nature Educator Ellen Rathbone, learning how to make some simple but fun toys out of the honeysuckle we are removing from our property! Great program for families with children ages 5 years and up. We will be using some basic hand tools, so it will be a great time to start teaching your children these skills. Dress to be outdoors. We will have a fire going in the fireplace and cocoa ready to drink. **Fee: Members - \$15/family; Nonmembers - \$20/family. Register by 02/25.**



### Mocassin Workshop

**Saturday, March 7 | 9:00 AM**

The popularity of Earthing, or Grounding, is gaining momentum. Science backs up the benefits of walking barefoot upon the Earth: direct contact between our bare skin and the planet's surface helps our bodies absorb negatively charged electrons, thus cancelling the adverse effects of free

radicals in our bodies. At Severson Dells we embrace anything that helps people reconnect with the Earth, but sometimes going barefoot isn't practical. The good news is that simple leather moccasins allow us to have the same benefits - no insulating rubberized soles stand between you and the Earth. Come spend a day with us making your own Ojibwe-style pucker-toed moccasins that can aid you on your Grounding journey.

Ages 16 and up. Registration deadline: Feb. 8.

Cancellations before Feb. 8 will be fully refunded. After Feb. 8 no refunds are possible because we will be ordering the supplies for your moccasins. Space is limited to 12 participants. Program starts at 9:00 AM and ends when each maker is finished. Plan to spend most of the day with us. Bring lunch and a beverage. **Fee: \$50/members; \$65/non-members. Register by 02/08.**

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Register for programs at [seversondells.org/events](http://seversondells.org/events) or call 1-815-335-2915



We will read children's books that introduce ecological concepts, make nature-themed crafts that utilize fine-motor and creative thinking skills, observe and interact with our natural environment, and of course, have a lot of fun! We will explore the great outdoors, so come dressed for the weather. This program is intended for children aged 3-6 years and a guardian to accompany them.

**Now on Saturdays! All programs run from 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM**

*Fee: \$10/child w/ adult member, \$2 for each additional child. \$15/child w/ non-member adult, \$3 for each additional child.*

## Splendid Snow | Saturday, January 4

Snowflakes surround us this time of year! We will learn how the cold weather transforms forests by reading *Best in Snow*, use our creativity and gross motor skills to paint and shape snow, inspect snow on a smaller scale with magnifying tools, and practice fine motor skills by making paper snowflakes.



## Remarkable Rocks | Saturday, February 1

Every rock tells a story, and we are going to learn about the stories the rocks at Severson Dells can tell! We will read about rocks and rock collecting in *If you Find a Rock*, make our very own rock collecting boxes, and go on a special journey down to the dells to meet rocks with 450 million years of stories.

## Marvelous Mud | Saturday, March 7

Mud is truly a treasure to behold! We will read about this squishy substance in *Squish! A Wetland Walk*, meet some of the creatures that live in our pond muck, and use our creativity and fine motor skills to make mudpies.

## Compassionate Conservation | Saturday, April 4

For Earth Month, we will engage with a timeless tale of conservation: *The Lorax*. We will use fine motor skills to craft our very own truffula trees to serve as reminders for this important lesson, then make a positive difference of our own by making native seed bombs to plant at Severson Dells and to take home.

## Adult Easter Egg Hunt

**Saturday, April 4, 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM**

Easter Egg Hunts aren't only for kids! Join us for our first ever Adult Easter Egg Hunt at Severson Dells. Enjoy drinks and hors d'oeuvres while learning a little about the science of eggs and egg-laying animals, paint your own wooden eggs to take home and, of course, the egg hunt. **Fee: \$35/members, \$45/non-members. Register by 04/01.**

## Full Moon Hike

**Monday, April 7 | 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM**

Taking a stroll outdoors with nothing to light your way except moonbeams is a beautiful experience, with no two walks the same. Sometimes we listen to the owls, sometimes we share the mysteries of the dark, and sometimes we gaze at the stars and wax philosophical. If getting out into the grasslands and woods at night is on your bucket list, then come join us for a magical evening. **Fee: \$3/Members; \$5/non-members. Register by 04/05.**



## Second Century Stewardship Film and Discussion

**Thursday, April 16 | 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM**

It is the dawn of the second century for Acadia National Park and the US National Park Service. At this historic centennial moment, we explore the science beyond the stunning scenery of Acadia National Park to better understand opportunities for wise stewardship of these national treasures to benefit future generations. We will view the film, video conference with one of the scientists involved in the project, and discuss how the everyday citizen can help collect information for better-informed habitat management decisions locally. Join us at this kickoff event and get inspired for the City Nature Challenge! **Fee: Free for members, \$5/non-members.**

**Register by 04/14.**

## Spring Renewal: Deep Ecology Retreat

**Sunday, April 19 | 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM**

With daily news of environmental protections stripped, biodiversity loss and climate crisis, it's natural that we feel grief over what is happening to the world. We rarely take time in our culture to honor our connection to the earth and to give voice to our grief in order to make way for healing and renewal. Through storytelling, heart-sharing, ritual, and time in nature, we will explore grief, fears, and despair we may hold and explore the paths to healing, forgiveness, compassion and renewal. Regenerate hope this spring through this restorative workshop inspired by Joanna Macy's Work That Reconnects with facilitator Jessie Crow Mermel. **Fee: \$25/members, \$35/non-members. Register by 04/17.**



## HOMESCHOOL PROGRAMS

*Our homeschool programs are a wonderful way for inquisitive students to learn more about the natural world while making friends with other homeschoolers with similar interests. For youth ages 8 and up. All programs are from 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM, unless otherwise noted. Cost: \$10/student/lesson*

### Outdoor Skills II: Mastery of Fire | Thursday, January 16

When we consider the course of humanity's development, mastery of fire was one of the big leaps. Besides providing warmth, light, a means to cook food, and even a way to protect oneself, it was also a tool that helped us get food, modify the landscape, and create art. As we learn the history of fire and its many uses, we will be putting ancient skills to the test as each participant makes a basic tool that our ancestors would've mastered: a coal-burned spoon.



### Tracking 101 | Thursday, February 20

Whether we have snow or not, we can learn to read the signs animals leave behind. We'll start with gaits and footprints, add in scats, trails and browse, and wrap up with a tracking adventure in the woods.

### The Science of Spring and an Introduction to Phenology | Thursday, March 19

This class builds on what we learned in December about solstices and equinoxes. We will explore the trails looking for signs of spring and compare what we find to older records of these spring events (phenology).

### Pond Life | Thursday, April 16

Early spring is a great time to explore a pond. We might see/hear frogs, birds may be migrating northwards, and if the ice is out, we'll look for great things happening below the water!

### Botany 101 | Thursday, May 21

Learning plants may seem like a challenge, but there are some quick and easy methods you can use to get yourself started. We'll master 6-8 family groups today, and see how many we can find out along the trails.

## Adult Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday, April 4, 2020  
6 PM - 9 PM

- Adults-only Easter Egg Hunt
- Cocktails & Appetizers
- Egg Science
- Paint Your Own Wooden Egg

*Release your  
inner child at  
Severson Dells!*

Fee: \$35/members, \$45/non-members





# LIVE KEVIN GORDON

*Help us celebrate the birthdays of two of our favorite naturalists - Don Miller, Director Emeritus of Severson Dells, and that other guy, Aldo Leopold - at this wonderful return of Music at the Dells with the amazing Americana/Indie Swamp musician Kevin Gordon!*

**Saturday, January 11, 2020 | 1 PM**

**@Severson Dells Nature Center**

Early Bird Ticket Sale: \$18/General Admission (until Jan 3)

Members Admission: \$18

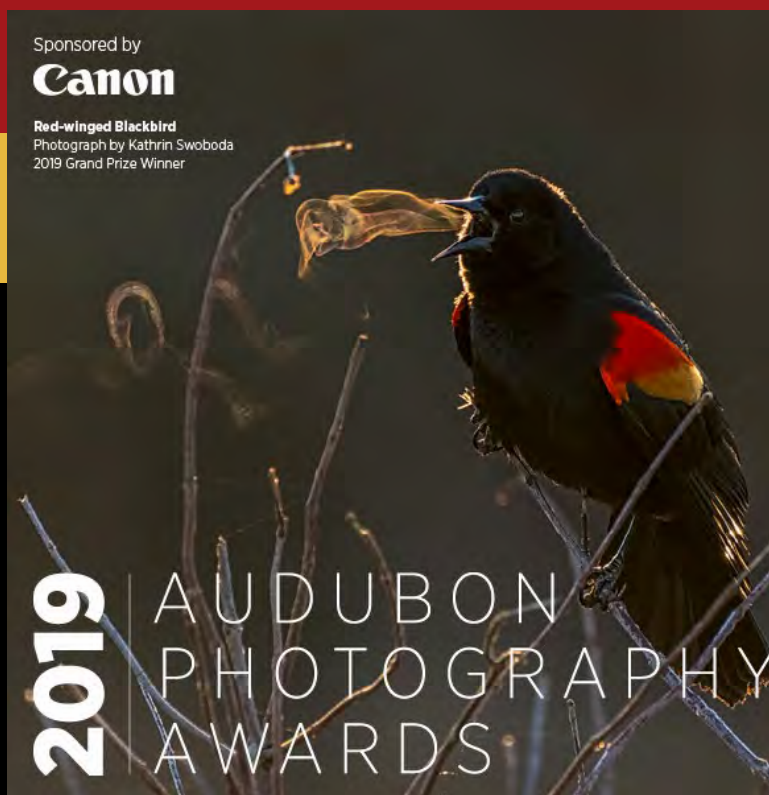
General Admission: \$22 (after Jan 3)

**[www.seversondells.org/events/kevin-gordon](http://www.seversondells.org/events/kevin-gordon)**



# 2019 Audubon Photography Awards Exhibit

## March 7-25



The iconic bird portraits illustrated by John James Audubon are much more than an accurate representation of the species he saw during his travels: they are a portal into the natural world. Today's best bird photography has the same effect.

In celebration of the natural connection between birding and photography, Severson Dells is thrilled to host the 2019 Audubon Photography Awards Traveling Exhibition this spring. Visitors of all ages will enjoy a display of the winning photos and learn more about local birdlife in our region. Thank you to Sinnissippi Audubon Society for sponsoring the 2019 Audubon Photography Awards exhibit.

### Exhibit Opening and Lecture

Saturday, March 7 | 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Presentation to start at 6:30 PM

Join us for an evening for the birds. Get a sneak peak at the 2019 Audubon Photography Awards Traveling Exhibition and enjoy a presentation by local photographer, David Olson. Enjoy hors d'oeuvres and drinks while enjoying the beautiful Audubon photography award winners.

**Fee: \$12/members, \$18/non-members.**



Sinnissippi Audubon

### A Focus on the Birds-Photography Workshop

with Camera Craft

Sunday, March 8 | 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Come prepared to challenge yourself, try something new, and grow in your photography capabilities. Join us to welcome Camera Craft for a wonderful presentation on bird and wildlife photography. Get the most out of your photographs with assistance from the local camera experts. There will also be an opportunity to test out new gear. Whether it's a lens or a set of binoculars; you'll walk away seeing birds as you've never seen them before! Minimum of 10, maximum of 25 participants. **Fee: \$40/members; \$50/non-members. Scholarships for this class available through support from Sinnissippi Audubon Society, please call Ann for details at 815-335-2915. Please register by 03/06.**





# SUMMER

Is there anything more quintessentially “summer” than the Summer Camp experience? Severson Dells’ long history of exciting summer camps continues, with the return of some classics and the addition of new sessions - including a three-day camp for adults! We claim to have something for everyone - check out our offerings:

## June 8-12 Wild Things: Little Mysteries (ages 4-6 years)

Join us for a week packed with traditional camp activities and some new adventures, too! We will put on our detective hats and explore the wonderful mysteries of nature by getting our hands dirty and having fun. 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM. **Fee: \$80/member; \$95/non-member.**

## June 13-19 Forest Fantasy III (ages 8-12 years)

Year three at Delwarts promises to be packed with fantastic adventures. This year we are hosting a Tri-wizard Tournament, have a whole day dedicated to Humphrey the Camouflaged Dragon, and more! There will be plenty of lessons to satisfy both new and returning campers at this magical week of camp. 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM. **Fee: \$110/member; \$140/non-member.**

## June 22-26 Wild Things: Little Creators (ages 4-6 years)

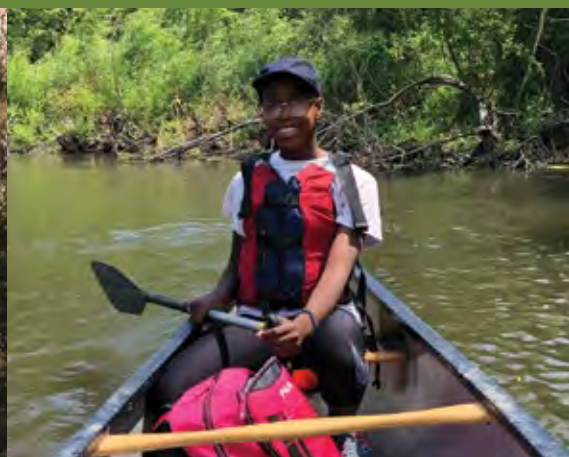
We are adding a bit of creative flair to our traditional Wild Things camp! Join us for a week packed with music, dance, and crafts as we use the arts to explore and connect with the great outdoors. 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM. **Fee: \$80/member; \$95/non-member.**

## June 29-July 3 Call of the Wild (ages 7-11 years) NEW!

Are you looking for a camp that will help build your child’s confidence in the outdoors, develop her fine motor skills, enhance his creative endeavors? Then consider Call of the Wild, our new summer camp that focuses on learning a wide assortment of hands-on outdoor skills, including woodworking, shelter-building, and making fire. Each day campers create their own hand-made wooden toys and engage with the environment on a more visceral level. On Friday we celebrate with a cook-out lunch. Expect your camper to come home dirty and tired! 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM. **Fee: \$110/member; \$140/non-member.**

## July 1 and 2 Grandparents Camp

We are offering two sessions of Grandparents Camp this year, with July 1 featuring our aquatic habitats and July 2 featuring our terrestrial habitats! Sign up for both or just one. Grandparents of any age and their grandkids ages 4-10 will spend the morning enjoying some classic summer camp fun. 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM. **Fee: \$25 - 1 grandparent, 1 grandchild/member; \$35 - 1 grandparent, 1 grandchild/non-member; \$40 - 1 grandparent, 2 grandchildren/member; \$50 - 1 grandparent, 2 grandchildren/non-member.**





# CAMP

**July 6-10**

## **Wild Things: Little Heroes (ages 4-6 years)**

Calling all heroes! For this take on our classic camp, we will learn about the amazing adaptations (superpowers) of the wild around us and train to be Nature Heroes. Campers will leave thinking nature is super! 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM. **Fee: \$80/member; \$95/non-member.**

**July 13-17**

## **Peek-in-the-Creek (ages 7-11 years)**

A Severson Dells' classic! Every day campers are in the creek, catching critters, exploring, and learning about this amazing ecosystem. New this year: one day this week you will drop off and pick up your camper at Seward Bluffs Forest Preserve, where we will explore Grove Creek. 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM.

**Fee: \$110/member; \$140/non-member.**

**July 20-24**

## **Blazing Paddles (ages 12-16 years)**

This will be the best week of your teen's summer! They will learn how to canoe, explore the rivers of Winnebago County, take part in spectacular adventures, and have the most fun while doing so.

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM. **Fee: \$170/member; \$200/non-member.**

**July 27-31**

## **Amazing Adventures (ages 7-11 years) NEW!**

Is your camper looking for something new and different to do at Severson Dells? This might be just the camp you need! One day they might be detectives trying to solve a mystery, and the next day they might be competing in an Amazing Nature Race! Did someone say Survivor? Is there a monster hiding in the woods? Each day is guaranteed to be packed with adventures and good times. 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM. **Fee: \$110/member; \$140/non-member.**

**Discover wild nature . . .**

**outside and within!**

**You asked for it . . . a summer camp for grown-up kids!**

**August 6-8**

## **Kindred Spirits (Adults, ages 18 years +) NEW!**

Every year adults ask if we could do a summer camp just for them. We have heard the call and responded: three days of hands-on summer camp fun just for adults. One day we will be "playing in the creek" - catching critters, exploring the shorelines, and walking downstream to see the Dells up close and in person. Other days our time will focus on activities that bring campers into a closer relationship with the environment around them. We will learn some outdoor skills, and each camper will complete a pair of soft-soled moccasins to help them move quietly through the woods and connect with the Earth beneath their feet. Come prepared to get dirty and wet. 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM. **Fee: \$85/member; \$100/non-member**





<p><b>1</b></p>  <p><b>Find Wildlife</b> It can be any plant, animal, or any other evidence of life found in your city</p>	 <p><b>City Nature Challenge 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Severson Dells is excited to coordinate the Rockford-Area team for the City Nature Challenge 2020!</b></p> <p>City Nature Challenge is an international competition between cities to document wildlife on iNaturalist.</p> <p>iNaturalist is a free, fun, and easy app and website that connects researchers to wildlife observations made by people like you!</p> <p>We want you to join our team, spend time in nature, and help us beat Chicago, IL!</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td><b>Observation Period</b></td> <td><b>Identification Period</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>April 24-27 2020</td> <td>April 28-May 3 2020</td> </tr> </table> <p>Contact Andrea at <a href="mailto:andrea@seversondells.org">andrea@seversondells.org</a> for more information!</p>	<b>Observation Period</b>	<b>Identification Period</b>	April 24-27 2020	April 28-May 3 2020
<b>Observation Period</b>	<b>Identification Period</b>					
April 24-27 2020	April 28-May 3 2020					
<p><b>2</b></p>  <p><b>Take a Picture</b> Take a picture of what you find. Be sure to note the location of the critter or plant.</p>	<p><b>3</b></p>  <p><b>Share!</b> Share your observations through iNaturalist...</p>					

**Are you passionate about wildlife? Do you love science?  
Do you want to help put the Rockford area on the map?**

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you should consider joining the Rockford team for the City Nature Challenge! This is an international competition between cities, with big players like Tokyo, New York, and London, in which cities vie to post the most wildlife observations to a free, fun, and user-friendly app and website interface called iNaturalist. These wildlife observations can be used by researchers and land managers to help with conservation efforts. Severson Dells is partnering with organizations from Winnebago, Boone, DeKalb, Stephenson, and Ogle counties to engage as many

community members in this project as possible. Keep your eye out for family-friendly community science events from Severson Dells and our partners during the Observation Period to document species for this project!

If you'd like to go out with a group, we will have a series of guided walks on properties across the five county survey area. Check out the Severson Dells website for details closer to the event weekend.

Join our team. Make a Difference. Discover and learn about local wildlife. Have fun!

*City Nature Challenge is organized on a global scale by the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County and the California Academy of Sciences.*



**iNaturalist Website Training (for digital camera users):  
April 14, 2020 | 6:00-7:00 PM**

**iNaturalist App Training (for smartphone users):  
April 21, 2020, 6:00-7:00PM at Severson Dells Nature Center**

**Observation Period: April 24-27**

**Uploading Period: April 28-May 3rd**



This **FREE** event is sponsored by the Four Rivers Environmental Coalition.

# EARTH DAY 50TH ANNIVERSARY

**SATURDAY, APRIL 25, 2020 | 6 P.M.**

**Rock Valley College**  
**MAIN CAMPUS | PHYSICAL EDUCATION CENTER (PEC)**  
**3301 N. MULFORD ROAD, ROCKFORD, IL 61114**



## Guest Speaker:

**Joel F. Salatin** is an American farmer, lecturer and author who has authored 12 books and countless articles. He co-owns, with his family, Polyface Farm in Swoope, Virginia. It is featured in the New York Times bestseller *Omnivore's Dilemma* and award-winning documentary "Food Inc."



Books will be for sale at the event.  
Book signing to occur after the presentation.

Sponsored by:



**Rock Valley College**

LIFE SCIENCES

FOR MORE INFORMATION, please contact  
Joe Haverly at [JHaverly@RockValleyCollege.edu](mailto:JHaverly@RockValleyCollege.edu).

## Spring Renewal

Deep Ecology Retreat

Sunday, April 19, 2020

1:00 PM - 4:00 PM



## SPRING BREAK CAMP

**March 16-20 | 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM | For ages 7-11**

Tromp through the woods, frolic across the prairie, and work out your winter wiggles with a week at Severson Dells during spring break. Join our educators for hands-on nature activities and more! Come dressed for the weather and bring your sense of adventure!





# GRANDPARENT GIG

## BY DON MILLER

As an intern for Severson Dells Nature Center in 1982, I wrote a few words in the "Notes from the Dells" (Vol. 4, No 2) about being a father for the first time. It reflected my thoughts on the responsibility of being a "dad" as to what kind of person my daughter would grow to be. Being in the "nature business" I wondered out loud what type of respect would she have for the natural world as she aged? I had two children following my daughter and I am not here saying that all three of my kids turned out perfect, but I will say they are at least near perfect. (There are a whole bunch of people laughing out loud after they read that line.)

Let's fast forward... in December 2019; it will be three years since I retired as the Director of Severson Dells. Remember me? I was the one with all the stuff piled on my desk upstairs. Some thought it was a mess, but I am here to tell you it was just the result of a creative mind. During my time at the Dells, all my kids grew up. Those three kids have given us four grandchildren. One family has twin 5-year-old girls, another family has two boys, ages 2 ½ years old and 9 months old. Our youngest son, at this point in time, has a mastiff and a boxer and no kids. The dogs take up more room in our car then all the grandkids put together - including their car seats, stuffed animals, back packs and potential refrigerator artwork. However, here is the point as to why I am writing this piece (250 words into the writing it is about time to get to the point, don't ya think?): the point is...that without a doubt the GRANDPARENT GIG is the greatest thing ever. A grandpa who is retired, I might add here!

The responsibility does not fall on the grandparents to develop a well-rounded kid (not the kind of "rounded" that grandpa is). Some may argue that it does, but I think one should know himself and go with what his strengths are. In my case I have decided that there would be three things that I could help out in the grandkids' development.

My three strengths being: exposing them to the natural world, making sure they have a love for music, and understanding the quality that good ice cream brings to one's life. Okay, I guess there are four if you count how to make armpit noises. That is all I have to focus on and, by doing so, I will have done my grandparent part in assisting in bringing these kids into a quality adult life.



Don and Susan Miller snowshoeing with their granddaughters.

One of the many joys of working at a place like Severson was being with kids and experiencing nature with them, being witness to a kid seeing a "real live" deer in the woods or seeing the sun light up a bright red cardinal for the first time in their lives. As grandpa, I have the privilege of being with my grandkids to see the world through their eyes at least on a weekly basis; to witness with them these many "first" nature things of many kinds. I get to take them on walks, canoeing, camping, even exploring in our own backyards is an adventure. Every time we find exciting things happening all around us. We have planted a butterfly garden and have captured and released lighting bugs. We have watched a chrysalis erupt into a butterfly. We have seen ants that we don't want to "smash" climb up and down a tree in the back yard. Thank you M.K. for allowing us to care for one of your praying mantids and watching the kids having no fear of it, even allowing it to crawl on their arms (one of the girls anyway). We experienced death of that same creature (it didn't get squished), had a burial service, and discussed what was happening. What an honor, what a privilege, what a joy it is to be in the lives of these young kids. I often wonder who really is getting the best of this deal. I know it is me and I think how lucky I am now, but also, how lucky I was to work at Severson Dells for almost thirty years and to be with thousands of kids; what an impact WE had on each other's lives. We live in a beautiful, full-of-wonder, and an awe-inspiring world. Share it!



Don teaching his grandson how to paddle.



# Book Nook

## NATURAL HISTORY BOOKS WORTH A READ

### FIRELINES

BY JILL METCOFF

I was at a friend's house, and he had a copy of *Firelines* by Jill Metcoff, University of New Mexico Press, on his coffee table. While he was getting some wine, I began to flip through the pages of her book. I was hooked. I had to have this book. When he came back, we sat and talked about prairie burns. He has a forty-acre prairie divided into two sections, and he burns one section every year. I used to help him quite often. Those days are over, but I still love the excitement of a burn and I learned to appreciate the science and knowledge that goes into doing it just right. I also value the skill, training, equipment and even the clothes that are all necessary for a safe and successful burn.

I also learned a bit about the history of our corner of the world, northwest Illinois and southwest Wisconsin. Native Americans burned prairies long before the Europeans came. The book is, yes, an oversized beautiful coffee table book. It is a work of art. It's just not a collection of random pictures of burns, but a carefully laid-out series of photographs which reinforce each other to tell a compelling story. I tried to count the photos I especially liked and lost track.

Metcoff must have spent hours in the field to get these great shots, but she must have also spent hours interviewing friends in the field. She also pulled from her memory great quotes by John Muir, Aldo Leopold and eighteen others. Some of the quotes are memorable in their own right, and others add another layer of understanding to the whole process of prairie restoration.

It's a bit disconcerting to spend more than one afternoon this past month enjoying these pictures and then watching the horrific pictures from California. Perhaps if more people had known and learned about the relatively new phenomenon of prairie restoration these fires would not have been so destructive.

Then there is the completely unexpected: a series of four pictures of Mound Man, discovered by Europeans in 1859. John Muir's explanation for the absolute need for fire paints a complete picture of what happens to a prairie without fire to protect it: "Had there been no fires, these fine prairies, so marked a feature of the country, would have been covered by the heaviest forest."

Metcoff has a keen eye. In the midst of one fire she photographs an old piece of abandoned farm equipment. The title "Obsolete" says it all.

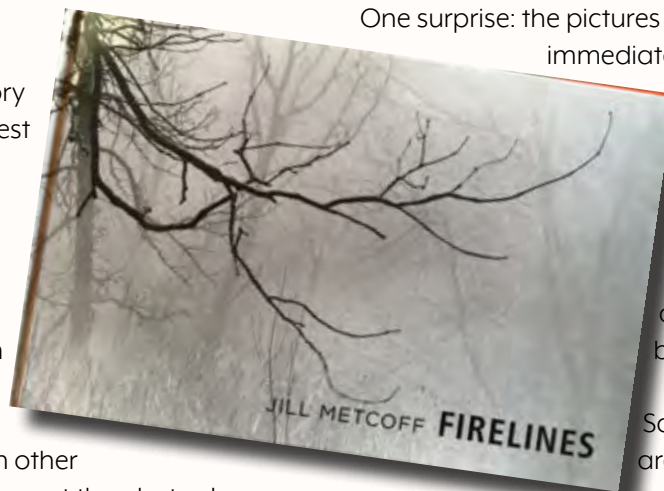
One surprise: the pictures are all black and white. My immediate reaction was "Say what?"

Fire is all bright red, flaming orange, bright scarlet, dark black smoke and then pure white smoke. Black and white will never work." But after two pictures you'll never notice, and after three or four pictures you'll be hooked.

Scattered throughout the book are pictures of trees. The photos would be beautiful anyplace; the trees themselves are wonderful. The book concludes with a chapter on burns; be sure to read it- it's richly informative. And be sure to share the book and this short essay with your burn team's newbies. Oh, and I love that a picture of a burn team shows four women and one man.

My favorite picture? I simply can't choose. But play the game. After you've read the book and closely looked at all the pictures, go back and try to choose your favorite. You'll end up looking at all of them again and then seeing all the pictures in a whole new light. And you'll never choose.

Review by Chuck Wemstrom





# SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT:

## MARY KISAMORE

BY JESSIE CROW MERMEL



*"In order to see birds  
it is necessary to  
become a part of the  
silence."*

- Robert Lynd

One of my favorite aspects of working at Severson Dells is meeting all the interesting, nature-loving people this place attracts. I enjoy the wonderful conversations, learn so much from all our volunteers, and am deeply inspired by their service. Recently, I had the chance to sit down and learn more about Mary Kisamore, who has been volunteering at Severson Dells for over 20 years. It was such a delight to learn more about her and it is a privilege to share her story.

As with most people who love the natural world, Mary has a great story about when her heart fully opened to nature. Although Mary grew up on a beautiful farm in Phelps, Wisconsin, she became passionate about nature as an adult. Mary was attracted to Severson Dells because of its peace and tranquility, and would walk the trails to destress from work. One day when she was hiking at the Dells, she heard a songbird. She followed the song to see a male bluebird singing on a branch, bathed in golden sunlight. That simple moment with her "spark bird" was transformative for Mary and she has been devoted to birds ever since.

Mary is a dedicated volunteer here at Severson Dells Nature Center. She has been a weekend hostess for over 22 years, a bluebird monitor for 7 years, and has been keeping up our bird board for more than 4 years. Mary comes out every week, rain or shine, from April to mid-August to monitor the bluebird boxes. Her dedication has also inspired others to join our team of volunteers at Severson with her dedication. Although Mary was at first reluctant to hostess because she doesn't feel outgoing, she has really taken to the work and loves sharing her love and knowledge of nature with our visitors - especially about the animals and birds.

Mary loves to read and learn new things, which is why she also volunteers at the North Suburban Library. She enjoys traveling and her vacations always revolve around birding. She has gone on birding tours in Mexico, Costa Rica, Puerto Rico, Canada and throughout all 50 states. In the early sixties, Mary was on a professional women's basketball team for three years and toured all over the United States and abroad - visiting Morocco and Spain with her team, the "Texas Cowgirls". The Texas Cowgirls





were actually based in South Beloit, IL, but apparently the “South Beloit Cowgirls” didn’t have the same ring to it! Mary said the team was similar to the Harlem Globetrotters because the women would perform tricks and stunts in addition to playing the game on a full court.

After her time as a professional basketball player, Mary took a job as a machinist at Textron and worked there in quality control until retirement. Her supervisor, Paulette, shared her love of birds, and Mary got her volunteering with Severson Dells Nature Center as a bluebird monitor as well. Paulette would laugh at Mary’s requests for personal days off because she knew they always coincided with bird migration!

Mary told us, “I really enjoy coming out here [Severson Dells]. I’ll walk out to the pond and see what birds are there. If I didn’t have nature, I don’t know what I would do.” Well, we don’t know what we would do without Mary as a dedicated volunteer either. Nancy Bleile, our office manager said of her, “Mary is so dependable and dedicated to Severson Dells, and I can count on her support when I need her help. She is a very caring and lovely person and I think the world of her.” We are so grateful to Mary for all her work in helping the bluebirds to return and for being a welcoming and informative host for our guests and visitors.



*Mary Kisamore and Nancy Bleile chat at the front desk.*

## CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS!



*Patty Oliveri tending the bird feeders.*

The Earth pours forth generosity to us every day. If you have been looking for a way to give back and make a difference, look no further! Severson Dells has many ways for volunteers to engage with nature.

Volunteers are involved in many different activities, limited only by enthusiasm, interest and available time. We realize that each volunteer is unique and we therefore provide many opportunities where their talents and contributions can be recognized.

Severson Dells has many valuable volunteers, ranging in age from youths to senior citizens, who help with school and family programs, assist in our canoe programs, tend to our pollinator garden, host visitors on weekends, monitor species as citizen scientists, remove invasive plants with the Conservation Crew, maintain our library, keep our fish happy, and so much more! Won’t you consider joining us?

**Visit [www.seversondells.org/volunteer](http://www.seversondells.org/volunteer)  
to learn more!**

**TO ALL THE VOLUNTEERS:  
THANK YOU!  
WE COULDN’T DO IT WITHOUT YOU!**



## MEMORIALS & HONORARIUMS

### MEMORIALS

Susan Damby  
Joanne Davis Hemlock  
Brian Leaf  
Stephen Menze  
Jolene Swanson  
Jude C. Torre  
Henry Utsch  
Ken Wray

### HONORARIUMS

Joseph P. Hemlock's birthday  
Ray and Kathryn Householter  
Mark B. Koerber  
Dan Lake  
Dave Lambert  
Emanuel Larson  
Don Miller's service to Severson Dells  
A.J., Aaron and Alex Rundblade  
Garland Smith  
Ann Wasser's birthday  
Jack Weir

## WHAT WILL YOUR LEGACY BE?

A planned gift is a wonderful legacy that lives on in the community. Severson Dells honors those extraordinary people who have included the Nature Center in their estate plans through our exclusive Heron Heritage Society. Legacy gifts ensure that we are able to serve the community for generations to come. Your gift will help us raise the next generation of earth stewards.

We highly recommend that you contact your attorney or financial adviser to discuss the best way to achieve your goals and for all legal advice. Severson Dells is a non-profit organization and all donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law.

If a legacy gift to Severson Dells is part of your estate plan, then we would love to discuss this with you to ensure that your wishes are fulfilled. Please visit [www.seversondells.org/legacy-giving](http://www.seversondells.org/legacy-giving) for more information or contact Ann Wasser at [ann@seversondells.org](mailto:ann@seversondells.org) | (815) 335-2915.

## BECOME A MEMBER OF "FRIENDS OF SEVERSON DELLS"

OR GIVE AN ADDITIONAL GIFT

### MEMBERS RECEIVE:

- Discount at Severson Dells' Gift Shop
- Reduced admissions to Severson Dells' programs
- Members-only programs at Severson Dells
- Early Summer Camp registration
- Check-out privileges at Severson Dells' Library
- "Notes From the Dells" newsletter with calendar of programs and special events mailed directly to home
- Free admission to participating Association of Nature Center Administrators member nature centers around the country

### ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP:

- Individual \$40
- Family \$65
- Sponsor \$125
- Benefactor \$300
- Sustaining \$600
- Patron \$1000

**Become a member online at**  
**[www.seversondells.org/become-a-member/](http://www.seversondells.org/become-a-member/)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**I would like to support the mission of SDNC  
with a gift of \_\_\_\_\_ at this time.**

*Contributions are tax deductible as allowed by law.  
Please consult your tax professional.*

**Thank You For Your Support!**

# SEVERSON DELLS ACTIVITIES

CUT OUT AND POST WHERE YOU KEEP TRACK OF YOUR FAMILY'S ACTIVITIES!

## JANUARY

- 04 | New Year Hike | 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM
- 04 | Nature Sprouts: Splendid Snow | 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM
- 07 | Yoga at the Dells | 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM
- 11 | Conservation Crew Restoration Workday | 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
- 11 | Music at the Dells- Kevin Gordon | 1:00 PM
- 16 | Homeschool: Mastery of Fire | 9:30 - 11:30 AM
- 18 | Tracking 101- Teens & Tweens | 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
- 20 | Conservation Crew Restoration Workday | 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
- 25 | Family Snowfarim | 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM
- 31 | Paint Night | 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM

## FEBRUARY

- 01 | Nature Sprouts: Remarkable Rocks | 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM
- 04 | Yoga at the Dells | 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM
- 08 | Conservation Crew Restoration Workday | 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
- 09 | Costa Rica Travelogue | 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM
- 20 | Homeschool: Tracking 101 | 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM
- 22 | Honeysuckle Hiking Sticks Workshop | 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM
- 23 | Exploring Cascadia Travelogue | 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM
- 24 | Conservation Crew Restoration Workday | 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
- 29 | Family Toy Workshop | 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM



## MARCH

- 01 | A Journey Through Scandinavia | 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM
- 03 | Yoga at the Dells | 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM
- 07 | Nature Sprouts: Marvelous Mud | 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM
- 07 | Mocassin Workshop | 9:00 AM
- 07 | Audubon Photography Exhibit Opening & Lecture | 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM
- 08 | A Focus on Birds Photography Workshop | 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM
- 09 | Full Moon Hike | 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM
- 14 | Conservation Crew Restoration Workday | 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
- 14 | A Focus on the Birds- Birds of Prey | 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM
- 19 | Homeschool: Introduction to Phenology | 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM
- 16-20 | Spring Break Camp | 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
- 21 | Writing into the Wild with Gavin Van Horn | 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
- 23 | Conservation Crew Restoration Workday | 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
- 28 | New Member Hike | 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM

## APRIL

- 04 | Nature Sprouts: Compassionate Conservation | 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM
- 04 | Adult Easter Egg Hunt | 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM
- 07 | Yoga at the Dells | 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM
- 11 | Conservation Crew Restoration Workday | 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
- 16 | Homeschool: Pond Life | 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM
- 16 | Second Century Stewardship Film & Discussion | 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM
- 19 | Spring Renewal: Deep Ecology Retreat | 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM
- 14 | iNaturalist Website Training | 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM
- 21 | iNaturalist App Training | 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM
- 24-27 | City Nature Challenge Observation Period All Day
- 27 | Conservation Crew Restoration Workday | 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
- 28-03 | City Nature Challenge Identification Period All Day

To register for these events,  
please visit:  
[www.seversondells.org/events](http://www.seversondells.org/events)  
or call 815-335-2915

Follow us on social media to stay connected





# NOTES FROM THE DELLS

Severson Dells Nature Center  
8786 Montague Road  
Rockford, IL 61102-9713

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

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Rockford, IL 61125  
Permit No. 513**

## CONTACT INFO

**Telephone:** 1-815-335-2915

**FAX:** 1-815-335-2471

[www.seversondells.org](http://www.seversondells.org)

**e-mail:** [info@seversondells.org](mailto:info@seversondells.org)

### Hours:

Monday - Saturday: 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Sunday: 1:00 PM - 4:30 PM

Severson Dells Nature Center is a cooperative effort with the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County.



Severson Dells Nature Center and the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, will assist in providing for those individuals with special needs. (Please notify us in advance of your needs that may require special staffing.)



### SEVERSON DELLS NATURE CENTER STAFF:

Ann Wasser -  
Director

Nancy Bleile -  
Administrative Assistant

Ellen Rathbone -  
Nature Educator

Andrea Wallace -  
Naturalist/Educator

Jessie Crow-Mermel -  
Marketing & Development  
Assistant

Holly Hansen - AmeriCorps  
Education Member

Ben Ubert - AmeriCorps  
Education Member

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