

# the Conservationist

A Quarterly Publication of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County

Fall 2023



Life Under the  
Leaves

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The Wildlife of  
Halloween

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Fall Calendar



Forest Preserve District of DuPage County



# from the president



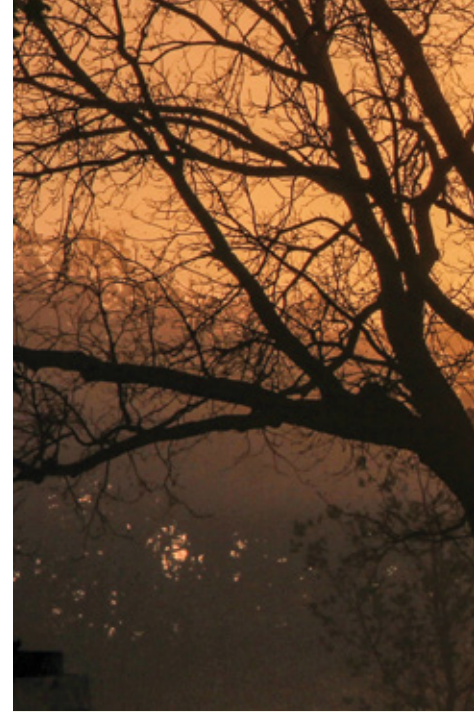
I sometimes think that fall is the most dramatic season in the preserves. What often starts off as a few summery days at the beginning of October can end with flurries before it's through. But for as varied as the weather is, so is our lineup of ways to experience DuPage forest preserves this time of year.

For starters we're celebrating "OAKtober" with several programs that feature these majestic trees. We're also partnering again with Edward-Elmhurst Health for the "Take a Hike Challenge" with lots of ways to make the most of healthy time outdoors, including our fun "Lantern-Lit Halloween Hike" and "Pumpkin Night Hike for Families." When you're not in the preserves but in your backyard, this time of year can mean fall cleanup, but read "Life Under the Leaves" to find out why leaving some of fall's bounty in place can help local wildlife.

Behind the scenes, we're working to keep our operations as green as the preserves. I'm proud to say that recently we joined the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Green Power Partnership, a voluntary program designed to reduce the environmental impact of conventional electricity. The Forest Preserve District uses over 3.7 million kilowatt-hours of green power annually, enough to meet 105% of our electricity use. We do so by buying renewable energy credits, which helps us purchase 100% wind-generated energy to offset our conventional energy use. It's a partnership I hope will show that green power is not only economically viable but also readily accessible. You can also read about our award-winning fleet of alternative-fuel vehicles on Page 4. Once again, our team has gained national recognition, a powerful reminder that when passion meets purpose, remarkable achievements are within reach.

I hope this issue of the *Conservationist* will get you in the mood for fall, and I look forward to meeting you on the 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](http://dupageforest.org).



## THE CONSERVATIONIST

Fall 2023, Vol. 60, No. 4



## FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT OF DUPAGE COUNTY

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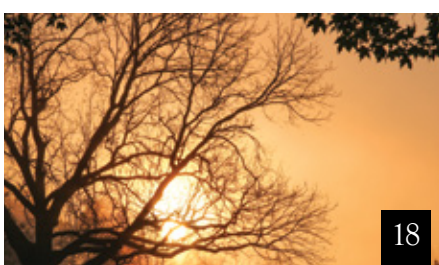
[dupageforest.org](http://dupageforest.org)

The *Conservationist* is a quarterly publication of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County. Subscriptions are free for DuPage County residents and \$5 per year for nonresidents. To subscribe or unsubscribe, call 630-933-7085 or email [forest@dupageforest.org](mailto:forest@dupageforest.org). You can also read this and previous issues 24/7 at [dupageforest.org](http://dupageforest.org). To receive an email when each new issue is available online, email [forest@dupageforest.org](mailto:forest@dupageforest.org).



# contents

Vol. 60, No. 4 | Fall 2023



- 4 **News & Notes**
- 6 **Life Under the Leaves**
- 8 **Fall Calendar**
- 16 **The Wildlife of Halloween**
- 18 **Directory**
- 19 **Map**

On the cover: Frog in fall leaves deborah/stock.adobe.com

## 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



# news & notes



## DISTRICT FLEET *Ranks Among Top in the Nation*

The Forest Preserve District's fleet was recently recognized as the No. 1 small fleet and No. 2 overall fleet in the *Government Fleet* magazine's blind-judged Leading Fleets Award competition, which highlights the nation's top-performing fleets regardless of location or budget.

The fleet also ranked No. 23 in the 100 Best Public Fleets in the Americas competition hosted by the NAFA Fleet Management Association, which recognizes peak-performing public and commercial fleet operations and encourages improvement and innovation within the fleet industry. This marks the 10th year in a row that the Forest Preserve District's fleet made the list.

Currently 95% of the District's fleet of more than 170 vehicles is powered by alternative fuels — liquefied petroleum gas, compressed natural gas, ethanol, biodiesel, hybrid electric, and electric — and the District is committed to achieving a full alternative-fuel fleet.



## 2024 ANNUAL PERMITS ON SALE DEC. 1

Annual permits for 2024 for private boating, archery, off-leash dog areas, and model crafts go on sale Friday, Dec. 1 at [dupageforest.org](http://dupageforest.org) under "Get a Permit."

Permits will also be available Monday – Friday 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. through Visitor Services at 630-933-7248 or at Forest Preserve District headquarters at 3S580 Naperville Road in Wheaton.

Questions? Call Visitor Services, or use our convenient online chat at [dupageforest.org](http://dupageforest.org).

## COLLECTIONS *Corner*

For years, an ornate 100-year-old iron sash lift that once adorned a linen closet window at Mayslake Hall had been in storage, waiting for the opportunity to be put back to use. Now that the exterior of the hall has been restored — including all the windows — this rare sash lift is ready to be reinstalled.

Several windows are missing similar sash lifts, though, and matching replacements no longer exist. This is where talented Forest Preserve District volunteers are stepping in to help.

The volunteer blacksmiths at Kline Creek Farm are using their talents to copy the sash lift and create new ones for the windows of Mayslake Hall. Visit the blacksmiths at the farm to check on their progress, and stop by the newly opened Mayslake Peabody Estate to see the end results in place!





## THANK YOU for *Being a Friend*

The Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County is a 501(c)(3) organization engaging the community in philanthropy to advance the mission and purpose of the Forest Preserve District. We are grateful to recognize those who donated \$500 or more from April through June to the Friends or directly to the District.

### Gifts of \$150,000 or More

Ronald R. Bork Fund of the DuPage Foundation

### Gifts of \$25,000 – \$149,999

Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation Stewardship Challenge Grant

### Gifts of \$10,000 – \$24,999

BNSF Foundation

### Gifts of \$5,000 – \$9,999

Domtar

### Gifts of \$2,500 – \$4,999

Giving DuPage  
Rice Lake Square

### Gifts of \$1,000 – \$2,499

Anthony and Joyce Carey  
Rosemary and Robert Carroll  
Fidelity Charitable  
Paul Herbert

### Gifts of \$1,000 – \$2,499 (con't)

Frances Holbrook and Elizabeth Rigsby  
Mary Ann Mahoney  
Pat and Lara Pappas  
David and Amy Reeter  
Robert R. McCormick Foundation  
Schwab Charitable  
V3 Companies, Ltd.  
Susan Wachowski  
Ellen Alekno Wier

### Gifts of \$500 – \$999

The Conservation Foundation Thanks to  
Now Health Group  
DuPage Area Moms  
Fidelity Charitable  
Diane and John Fiore  
Carrie Kaplan  
Manhard Consulting  
Kay McNab  
Kathleen Murphy  
Lisa Savegnago and Ronald Johnson  
Laura Shimkus  
Georgia Wilson  
Chet and Jeanette Wilszak

Friends of the Forest Preserve District invites contributions to meet the greatest needs in our forest preserves and to support master plan projects. Currently, Friends has a focus on inviting gifts for the new Willowbrook Wildlife Center, an ambitious project that advances wildlife care, public engagement, and sustainability. For details, contact Partnership & Philanthropy at [fundraising@dupageforest.org](mailto:fundraising@dupageforest.org) or 630-871-6400. To donate, visit [dupageforest.org/friends](http://dupageforest.org/friends) or mail a check payable to the Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County to 35580 Naperville Road, Wheaton, IL 60189.

## BECAUSE DEER DON'T LOOK BOTH WAYS

A deer can run in front of your car anytime, but the risk goes up in fall, when these animals have one thing on their minds: finding mates. Because they're not concerned about you, it's up to you to watch for them.

- Slow down and watch for deer on the edge of the road, especially around curves and during dawn and dusk.
- Look for deer-crossing signs, which mark areas where collisions are likely.
- Don't assume a deer will run off as you approach. It may bolt but then change direction without warning.
- If you see one deer, be on the lookout for more. They can move in pairs or larger groups.
- Don't use your horn unless a collision looks inevitable. Distant noise may confuse the deer. Close noise may produce an extra burst of speed from the animal, but there really is no way to predict how a deer will respond.
- Do not swerve to avoid deer; it could result in a more severe crash. Slow to a stop and wait. Flash your headlights to encourage the animal to move.
- If your car has an automatic emergency braking system, don't solely rely on it. It may not be designed to recognize large animals.
- If you are in a deer-vehicle accident, do not attempt to remove dead or injured deer. Contact local law enforcement instead.



Wildspaces/stock.adobe.com





maxbelchenko/stock.adobe.com

# Life Under the Leaves

by **KERIANN DUBINA**, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**M**any people look forward to fall. Temperatures begin to cool, daylight hours become shorter, and leaves stop producing chlorophyll before turning brilliant colors and falling to the earth. So what do leaves do once they stop turning sunlight into food for the trees? They become leaf litter!

Unlike discarded water bottles, cans, or plastic bags, leaf litter teems with life, provides shelter for plants and animals, and is probably the most biodiverse area in any forest preserve or backyard. It also contributes to the creation of new soil.

Soil needs decay, but not all leaves decay equally. Some, such as maples, do so relatively quickly. Oak leaves, on the

other hand, are slow to break down due to their molecular structure. (If you've ever walked through an oak forest in the spring, you may notice a lot more leaves on the ground than in other places.)

Regardless of the leaf, decomposition could not take place without the help of local invertebrates, bacteria, and fungi. Invertebrates — creatures such as worms and insects that don't have backbones and some that are too small to see with the naked eye — are the first to start the process. These critters begin to munch on leaves and other organic material found in the litter and turn it into smaller pieces. Bacteria and fungi then take over, further breaking things down into soil. These

organisms are the primary agents of decay and soil creation, but as a whole, decomposers allow nitrogen in the leaves to be recycled back into the soil for plants to take up through their roots. This doesn't just benefit the tree where the leaves originated but any plant that grows below the canopy.

As all this decomposition is going on, there's another world of arthropods living underneath the leaf litter, critters like centipedes, beetles, worms, moths, and butterflies. Some live there only while larvae or eggs; others, only while adults. The eastern tiger swallowtail, for instance, overwinters as pupae under the leaves. Question mark butterflies, ladybugs, and fireflies overwinter as adults.

Slugs spend most of their life in the leaf litter. Mostly active at night, they not only break down dead and decaying materials but also act as pollinators. Just like pollinating insects, they're attracted to the sweet smell of flowers' nectar and transfer from flower to flower any pollen that sticks to their bodies. They are known especially to pollinate wild ginger and large-flowered trillium.

Snakes, such as eastern garter snakes, spend a lot of time hiding in leaf litter, where they eat earthworms, slugs, snails, and insects found on the forest floor. In winter, they hibernate in natural burrows insulated partly by leaves.

As winter winds down and temperatures begin to creep up, plants begin to wake up for the spring, and leaf litter is the

perfect nursery for young plants and trees. The leaves create a microclimate that protects sprouting seedlings from potentially damaging winds and temperatures. Plants can begin to emerge under the leaf litter before the last frost, getting a jump on the growing season.

Leaf litter is also a critical component to the overall water-holding capability of woodlands and planted areas. Decaying leaves and twigs not only keep the soil moist but also delay water runoff during heavy rains. This latter aspect allows the water to slowly soak in, where soils and rocks can filter out pollutants before releasing the water back into local underground aquifers.

The forest floor isn't the only place leaf litter is beneficial. When leaves fall into streams, they create leaf packs, bunches that accumulate behind submerged rocks or branches. After being in the water for just a few weeks, the leaves turn slimy from colonizing fungi and bacteria. In healthy streams this creates important habitat for macroinvertebrates such as dragonflies, damselflies, sowbugs, caddisflies, and mayflies — aquatic insects that spend the early parts of their lives in the water and make up vital building blocks in the food webs of stream ecosystems.

Next time you are walking in the woods (or looking out your own window) and see the ground blanketed in leaf litter, think about all the benefits those leaves give us. •



Stephan Morris/stock.adobe.com

▲ Decomposing leaves return nutrients to the soil that fertilize spring flowers.



Mark/stock.adobe.com

▲ Leaf litter provides insulation for snakes that hibernate among rocks and soil on the forest floor.



Hanjo Hellmann/stock.adobe.com

▲ Leaf litter not only shelters insects that feed American robins through winter but also provides the birds with nesting material in spring.



© nstefinson

▲ Letting leaves lie creates places for overwintering insects such as ladybugs, fireflies, and butterflies, including this question mark.



# fall calendar



Plants & Wildlife Page 10  
 Ways to Play Page 10  
 Health & Well-Being Page 11

Living Green Page 12  
 Heritage Page 12  
 Nature Art & Culture Page 13  
 Volunteer Page 15

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
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29	30	31	<b>oct</b>			

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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

## October

- 1** Hoofprints Through History  
Tractor-Drawn Wagon Rides  
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 2** Forest Hike  
Volunteer Workday at the Nursery
- 3** Pre-K Outdoor Play  
Tea Bag Art Journaling Eight-Part Program Begins
- 4** Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 6** Bird Walk  
Fresh Air Friday  
Peabody's Pages Book Club Three-Part Program Begins
- 7** Fall Festival at Danada  
Natural History Illustration  
Workshop: Plants & Flowers  
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 8** Fall Festival at Danada  
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 9** Forest Hike  
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 10** Pre-K Outdoor Play  
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 11** Volunteer Workday at the Nursery  
Wednesday Wilderness Walk
- 12** The Challenge: Trivia Quiz Game
- 13** Bird Walk
- 14** Family Tree of Life  
Tractor-Drawn Wagon Rides  
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 15** OAKtober Walk  
Tractor-Drawn Wagon Rides
- 16** Forest Hike  
Volunteer Workday at the Nursery
- 17** Pre-K Outdoor Play
- 18** Volunteer Restoration Workday  
Wednesday Wilderness Walk
- 19** Mayslake by Moonlight House  
Tour
- 20** Bird Walk  
Pumpkin Night Hike for Families
- 21** Fishing: Fall Trout Season Opener  
Mayslake by Moonlight House  
Tour  
Natural History Illustration  
Workshop: Birds  
Pumpkin Night Hike for Families  
Tractor-Drawn Wagon Rides  
Volunteer Restoration Workday  
Volunteer Workday at the Nursery
- 22** Tractor-Drawn Wagon Rides  
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 23** Forest Hike
- 24** Pre-K Outdoor Play
- 25** Gothic Ghost Stories  
Wednesday Wilderness Walk
- 26** Point of View: Exploring  
The Art of *West Branch Diary*  
and Archaeology
- 27** Lantern-Lit Halloween Hike  
Mayslake by Moonlight House  
Tour  
Volunteer Workday at the Nursery
- 28** Horsin' Around Day: Trick or Treat  
at Danada  
Lantern-Lit Halloween Hike  
Mayslake by Moonlight House  
Tour  
Tractor-Drawn Wagon Rides  
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 29** Fall Haiku Walk  
Tractor-Drawn Wagon Rides  
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 30** Forest Hike  
Mayslake by Moonlight House  
Tour





## Registering on [dupageforest.org](http://dupageforest.org)?

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

1. Visit [dupageforest.org](http://dupageforest.org) and click "Find a Program."
2. Click the link to search by activity number.
3. In the search box, enter the five-digit number next to the program name in this calendar.
4. If a program has more than one date, time, or location, click "More" to find the one you want.

## November

- 1** Volunteer Restoration Workday  
Volunteer Workday at the Nursery
- 3** Fresh Air Friday  
Point of View: Exploring The Art of *West Branch Diary* and the Artistic Journey
- 4** Natural History Illustration Workshop: Mammals  
Tractor-Drawn Wagon Rides  
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 5** Tractor-Drawn Wagon Rides  
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 6** Forest Hike  
Volunteer Workday at the Nursery
- 9** The Challenge: Trivia Quiz Game  
History of St. James Farm
- 11** Backyard Chickens  
Tractor-Drawn Wagon Rides  
Volunteer Restoration Workday  
Volunteer Workday at the Nursery
- 12** Tractor-Drawn Wagon Rides  
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 13** Forest Hike
- 14** Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 15** Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 16** Point of View: Exploring The Art of *West Branch Diary* and Photographing the Landscape
- 17** Volunteer Workday at the Nursery
- 18** Kokedama: The Art of Japanese String Gardening  
Salting and Smoking  
Tractor-Drawn Wagon Rides  
Urban Stream Research Center  
Open House  
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 19** Cast-Iron Cooking: Thanksgiving  
Salting and Smoking  
Tractor-Drawn Wagon Rides  
Urban Stream Research Center  
Open House  
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 20** Forest Hike
- 25** Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 26** Volunteer Restoration Workday  
Waterfowl Walk
- 27** Forest Hike
- 30** Volunteer Restoration Workday

## December

- 1** Fresh Air Friday
- 2** Among the Leaves So Green  
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 3** Among the Leaves So Green  
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 6** Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 9** Holiday Art and Craft Market  
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 10** Holiday Art and Craft Market  
Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 12** Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 14** The Challenge: Trivia Quiz Game
- 16** Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 17** Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 20** Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 21** Volunteer Restoration Workday  
Winter Solstice Sunrise Hike
- 30** Volunteer Restoration Workday
- 31** Volunteer Restoration Workday

**CELEBRATE**  
 **AKtober**  
**WITH US!**

What's so great about oaks? Find out throughout the month of OAKtober!

Look for acorns throughout the calendar for featured programs.



## Plants & Wildlife

### Bird Walk 24062 🍎

Enjoy birding camaraderie and learn ID tips and tricks while looking for migrating birds on a casual 2-mile guided walk. Ages 18 and up. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-933-7248.

Oct. 6	7:30 – 9:30 a.m.	McDowell Grove
Oct. 13	7:30 – 9:30 a.m.	St. James Farm
Oct. 20	7:30 – 9:30 a.m.	Greene Valley

### OAKtober Walk 23960 🍎

Enjoy the fall colors as you learn about oaks on a guided walk. If you wish, bring crayons and paper to make your own leaf and bark rubbings. Ages 5 and up; under 18 with an adult. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-933-7248.

Oct. 15	2 – 3 p.m.	St. James Farm
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### Urban Stream Research Center Open House 24074

Get a behind-the-scenes look at the Forest Preserve District's efforts to raise freshwater mussels and federally endangered Hine's emerald dragonflies. Then, meet some crayfish, insects, and fish that call the county's waterways home. Tours begin every 30 minutes. All ages; 12 and under with an adult. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-933-7248.

Nov. 18	10 a.m. – 2 p.m.	Blackwell
Nov. 19	10 a.m. – 1 p.m.	Blackwell

### Waterfowl Walk 24049

Take a guided autumn bird walk where you'll search for the bright, colorful feathers of migrating waterfowl. Ages 12 and up; under 18 with an adult. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-942-6200.

Nov. 26	8:30 – 10:30 a.m.	West Branch
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### Wednesday Wilderness Walk 24044

Take a guided nature hike, observing the seasons, flora, and fauna in the lesser-known but greatly diverse Lincoln Marsh. Join us for a cup of coffee or tea as we discuss some of nature's wonders before we start the walk. Ages 18 and up. \$5 per person. Register online, at 630-942-6200, or at the walk.

Oct. 11, 18 & 25	8 – 10 a.m.	Lincoln Marsh
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## Ways to Play

### The Challenge: Trivia Quiz Game

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! Come with a team of up to six, or have us help you find one. Ages 18 and up. Free. No registration. Questions? Call 630-206-9566.

Oct. 12	7 – 8:30 p.m.	Oak Meadows
Nov. 9	7 – 8:30 p.m.	Oak Meadows
Dec. 14	7 – 8:30 p.m.	Oak Meadows



### CHALLENGE YOURSELF THIS FALL!

Join us for the **Healthy Driven Take a Hike! Challenge.**

For eight weeks, from **Sept. 1 to Oct. 27**, rediscover the healthy benefits of being active and spending time outdoors.

Participation is free and easy with 3 simple steps. Visit [EEHealth.org/TakeaHike](http://EEHealth.org/TakeaHike) to learn more and sign up.





## Registering on dupageforest.org?

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

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



### Fall Festival at Danada 🍎

The Forest Preserve District's largest event returns for two days! Festivities will include equestrian performances and demonstrations in the outdoor arena, wagon rides, children's activities, barn tours, and more. All ages. Admission and parking are free, but there are small fees for some activities. No registration. Questions? Call 630-668-6012.

Oct. 7 & 8      11 a.m. – 5 p.m.      Danada



### Fishing: Fall Trout Season Opener

Drop a line for this popular sport fish at Silver, Grove, and Pickerel lakes. Anglers 16 and older must carry valid Illinois fishing licenses with inland trout stamps. All ages. Free. No registration. Questions? Call 630-933-7248.

Oct. 21      6 a.m.      Blackwell, Wood Dale Grove, Pratt's Wayne

### Horsin' Around Day: Trick or Treat at Danada

Trick or treat at the barn! Horses will be handing out candy and will be dressed to impress (so you can vote for the one with the best costume). We'll also have tractor-drawn wagon rides. All ages. Free admission; wagon rides \$5 per person ages 5 and up and under 5 free. No registration. Questions? Call 630-668-6012.

Oct. 28      Noon – 4 p.m.      Danada

### Lantern-Lit Halloween Hike 23908

Experience a 2-mile self-guided lantern-lit hike along spooky trails at St. James Farm starting with a ghost story and ending with haunted conversation around the fire. Walks begin every 15 minutes. All ages; under 18 with an adult. \$10 per person. Register online or at 630-933-7248.

Oct. 27 & 28      6 – 9:30 p.m.      St. James Farm

### Pre-K Outdoor Play 23813 🍎

Engage your little ones in outdoor adventure as you participate together in stories, songs, movement, and games followed by a guided outdoor-exploration activity. The morning and afternoon classes have the same themes and activities. Ages 2 – 4 with an adult. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-933-7248.

Oct. 3, 10, 17 & 24      9 – 10 a.m.      Fullersburg Woods  
Oct. 3, 10, 17 & 24      1 – 2 p.m.      St. James Farm

### Pumpkin Night Hike for Families 23930

Use pumpkins and lanterns to light your way on a self-guided night hike. There will be a Halloween-themed scavenger hunt for kids to complete and a treat at the end. Hikes leave every 15 minutes. All ages; under 18 with an adult. \$10 per person ages 3 and up; under 3 free. Register online or at 630-933-7248.

Oct. 20 & 21      5:30 – 8 p.m.      Fullersburg Woods

## Health & Well-Being

### Cast-Iron Cooking: Thanksgiving 23965

Celebrate Thanksgiving by helping to prepare a hearty meal over an open campfire as you learn tips for cooking with cast iron. Ages 8 and up; under 18 with an adult. \$20 per person. Register online or at 630-933-7248.

Nov. 19      10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.      Churchill Woods

### Forest Hike 23898

Gear up and enjoy some healthy exercise on a quick-paced 3-to-5-mile guided hike through the wonders of the preserves. Ages 18 and up. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-933-7248.

Oct. 2 🍎	8:30 – 10 a.m.	Fullersburg Woods
Oct. 9 🍎	8:30 – 10 a.m.	McDowell Grove
Oct. 16 🍎	8:30 – 10 a.m.	St. James Farm
Oct. 23 🍎	8:30 – 10 a.m.	Pratt's Wayne
Oct. 30 🍎	8:30 – 10 a.m.	W. DuPage Woods
Nov. 6	8:30 – 10 a.m.	Mallard Lake
Nov. 13	8:30 – 10 a.m.	Waterfall Glen
Nov. 20	8:30 – 10 a.m.	Greene Valley
Nov. 27	8:30 – 10 a.m.	Blackwell

# fall calendar



## Fresh Air Friday 23954

Enjoy a relaxing hour of mindful walking and immersive nature-based ways to tune into the present on a 1-mile walk on crushed limestone and grass trails. Ages 18 and up. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-933-7248.

Oct. 6	Noon – 1 p.m.	St. James Farm
Nov. 3	Noon – 1 p.m.	St. James Farm
Dec. 1	Noon – 1 p.m.	St. James Farm

## Winter Solstice Sunrise Hike 24048

Hike atop Mount Hoy for a well-deserved look at the solstice sunrise. Learn about early morning wildlife and the secrets of the solstice, and relax as we welcome the first day of winter. Ages 12 and up; under 18 with an adult. \$10 per person. Register online or at 630-942-6200.

Dec. 21	6:45 – 7:45 a.m.	Blackwell
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## House Tour: Winter Holidays in the 1890s

*Kline Creek Farm*

Join us for a guided tour of the 1890s farmhouse focusing on winter holiday traditions. Learn how farm families decorated the tree, exchanged gifts, and prepared food for the holidays. Suggested admission donation of \$5 per person ages 3 and up to enter the farm. All ages. Free. No registration. Questions? Call 630-876-5900.

**Dec. 1 – 31 (except Dec. 25)**

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

## Living Green

### Backyard Chickens 23825

Learn how to buy and raise chicks for eggs and meat. We'll cover shelter, care, nutrition, breed characteristics, and processing for the dinner table. Ages 18 and up. \$10 per person. Register online or at 630-206-9576.

Nov. 11	10 a.m. – 3 p.m.	Kline Creek Farm
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## Heritage

### Among the Leaves So Green

Step back into winter holiday traditions of the 1890s as you tour the farmhouse decked out in all its splendor with antique ornaments, piney boughs, holly, and more. Learn about the importance of “planting” the tree and sprucing up in winter. Help decorate the farm by stringing popcorn and twisting greenery, and join staff around the fire to mull cider and enjoy some sweet treats. All ages. Free. No registration. Questions? Call 630-876-5900.

Dec. 2 & 3	1:30 – 3:30 p.m.	Kline Creek Farm
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### Gothic Ghost Stories

Was that a cool October breeze or a chill running down your spine? Keep the spooks at bay with an evening of ghoulish grown-up tales told in the old manor house Mayslake Hall. Ages 18 and up. Free. No registration. Questions? Call 630-206-9566.

Oct. 25	7 – 8 p.m.	Mayslake
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### History of St. James Farm 23961

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.

Nov. 9	1:30 – 2:30 p.m.	St. James Farm
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## Registering on dupageforest.org?

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

### Hoofprints Through History 23958

Join us on a 1-mile walk in the hoofprints of history on a tour of the farm's historic equestrian areas. Ages 18 and up. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-933-7248.

Oct. 1                      2 – 3:15 p.m.                      St. James Farm

### Mayslake by Moonlight House Tour 23842

See Mayslake Hall in a new light. After the sun sets, enjoy a guided tour of this historic mansion by flashlight. Take in the architecture and history, and thrill to urban legends, tales of hauntings, and stories of mischief. Ages 12 and up; under 18 with an adult. \$15 per person. Register online or at 630-206-9566.

Oct. 19, 21, 27,      7:30 – 9 p.m.                      Mayslake  
28 & 30

### Salting and Smoking

Autumn is the time that 1890s farmers would preserve food to get ready for winter. Learn about the process of salting and smoking pork and grinding and stuffing for sausage. All ages. Free. No registration. Questions? Call 630-876-5900.

Nov. 18 & 19              1:30 – 3:30 p.m.                      Kline Creek Farm

### Tractor-Drawn Wagon Ride

Enjoy a 30-minute ride while learning about a forest preserve's heritage and natural areas. Rides begin at 1, 1:45, and 2:30 p.m., and tickets are sold on a first-come, first-served basis starting at noon the day of the ride. All ages; under 13 with an adult. \$5 per person ages 5 and up; under 5 free. No registration. Questions? Call 630-668-6012 for Danada (including calls for private group rides) and 630-580-7025 for St. James Farm.

Oct. 1, 14, 15, 21,      1 – 3 p.m.                      Danada  
22, 28 & 29

Oct. 21 & 22              1 – 3 p.m.                      St. James Farm

Nov. 4, 5, 11, 12,      1 – 3 p.m.                      Danada  
18 & 19

## Nature Art & Culture

### Fall Haiku Walk 23959

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.

Oct. 29                      2 – 3:15 p.m.                      St. James Farm

### Family Tree of Life 23929

Create an artistic representation of your family while learning how to connect and coexist with the natural world around you. Children and their accompanying adults will be guided in creating their family trees of life using simple recycled and natural materials. These 40-minute programs start at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., and noon. Ages 5 and up; under 18 with an adult. \$15 per person. Register online or at 630-206-9566.

Oct. 14                      10 a.m. – 12:40 p.m.                      Mayslake



### Holiday Art and Craft Market

Shop for quality artisan holiday gifts for family and friends. All ages; under 18 with an adult. Free admission. No registration. Questions? Call 630-206-9566.

Dec. 9                      11 a.m. – 5 p.m.                      Mayslake

Dec. 10                      10 a.m. – 5 p.m.                      Mayslake



## Art and More at Mayslake

Mayslake Peabody Estate

### WEST BRANCH DIARY: A PAINTERLY PERSPECTIVE

For two years, artist Joel Sheesley crisscrossed DuPage with his easel and paints, breathing in the scope and details of the DuPage River watershed as it rolls through numerous forest preserves and putting that life to canvas. This exhibit of 55 paintings invites viewers to join Sheesley and the Forest Preserve District in experiencing nature in their own ways. All ages. Free. No registration. Questions? Call 630-206-9566.

**Through Dec. 2 (except Nov. 23)  
Monday – Friday Noon – 3 p.m.  
Saturdays 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.**

### AT HOME WITH NATURE TOUR

Learn some of the surprising history of Mayslake Hall, a landmark and architectural gem and the former home of F.S. Peabody, which has been surrounded by an oasis of nature for over 100 years. Ages 12 and up; under 18 with an adult. \$8 per person. No registration. Questions? Call 630-206-9566.

**Through Dec. 30 (except Nov. 23 and Dec. 25)  
Monday – Friday 12:30 – 1:30 p.m.  
Saturdays 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

## Kokedama: The Art of Japanese String Gardening <sup>23852</sup>

Spend a relaxing afternoon learning from a local organic flower farmer the history and techniques of Kokedama, the Japanese art of string gardening. Ages 18 and up. \$60 per person. Register online or at 630-206-9566.

Nov. 18                      1 – 3 p.m.                      Mayslake



## Natural History Illustration Workshop <sup>24061</sup>

Don't miss this chance to sharpen your art and your eye. Working from specimens and photos, you will learn a variety of techniques to achieve the fine details, textures, and surface structures of plants and flowers, birds, or mammals. Basic drawing and painting experience is recommended. Ages 18 and up. \$65 per person. Register online or at 630-206-9566.

### Plants & Flowers

Oct. 7                      10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.                      Mayslake

### Birds

Oct. 21                      10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.                      Mayslake

### Mammals

Nov. 4                      10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.                      Mayslake

## Peabody's Pages Book Club

Three-Part Program <sup>23841</sup>

Sign up for these enriching meetings where you'll discuss great reads with fellow book fans. In October we'll discuss *Dracula* by Bram Stoker; in November, *The Russians Are Coming* by Nathaniel Benchley; and in December, *The Flying Stars* by G.K. Chesterton. Titles are subject to change. Ages 18 and up. \$10 per person for all three discussions. Register online or at 630-206-9566.

Oct. 6, Nov. 3 & Dec. 1                      10 – 11:15 a.m.                      Mayslake





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3. In the search box, enter the five-digit number next to the program name in this calendar.
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### Point of View: Exploring the Art of West Branch Diary 23854

*West Branch Diary: A Painterly Perspective* is artist Joel Sheesley's invitation to experience the connections we all share in nature. Hear stories of people from a variety of backgrounds as they share what they see when they look at these landscapes. Ages 18 and up. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-206-9566.

#### Archaeology

Dale Simpson, Ph.D, will share his experiences growing up around the preserves and what these landscapes can tell us about the past.

Oct. 26	6 – 7 p.m.	Mayslake
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#### The Artistic Journey

Joel Sheesley will share insights into how his two-year project and partnerships with other local conservation agencies have enhanced his vision.

Nov. 3	6 – 7 p.m.	Mayslake
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#### Photographing the Landscape

Hank Erdmann of the Mayslake Nature Study and Photography Club will discuss tips and tricks for capturing nature, especially water, using photography.

Nov. 16	6 – 7 p.m.	Mayslake
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### Tea Bag Art Journaling Eight-Part Program 23873

Explore how the connection to nature can inspire you to create an art journal using collage and other techniques. This will be an indoor class with outdoor exploration. Class does not meet on Nov. 21. Ages 18 and up. \$175 per person. Register online or at 630-206-9566.

Oct. 3 – Nov. 28	9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Mayslake Tuesdays
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## Volunteer

### Volunteer Restoration Workday 23977

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).

#### Churchill Glacial Ridge

Oct. 7 & 21	9 a.m. – Noon	Churchill/Glacial
Nov. 4 & 19	9 a.m. – Noon	Churchill/Glacial

#### Churchill Woods

Oct. 1, 7, 8, 21, 22, 28 & 29	8:30 – 11 a.m.	Churchill Woods
Nov. 4, 5, 11, 12, 18, 19, 25 & 26	8:30 – 11 a.m.	Churchill Woods
Dec. 2, 3, 9, 10, 16, 17, 30 & 31	8:30 – 11 a.m.	Churchill Woods

#### Maple Grove

Oct. 28	9 a.m. – Noon	Maple Grove
Nov. 11 & 25	9 a.m. – Noon	Maple Grove
Dec. 2 & 16	9 a.m. – Noon	Maple Grove

#### Oldfield Oaks

Oct. 4 & 18	9 a.m. – Noon	Oldfield Oaks
Nov. 1 & 15	9 a.m. – Noon	Oldfield Oaks
Dec. 6 & 20	9 a.m. – Noon	Oldfield Oaks

#### Springbrook Prairie

Oct. 1, 10 & 14	9 a.m. – Noon	Springbrook
Nov. 11, 14, 25 & 30	9 a.m. – Noon	Springbrook
Dec 2, 12 & 21	9 a.m. – Noon	Springbrook

#### West Chicago Prairie

Oct. 7 & 28	9 a.m. – Noon	W. Chicago Prairie
Nov. 11	9 a.m. – Noon	W. Chicago Prairie
Dec. 9	9 a.m. – Noon	W. Chicago Prairie

#### Willowbrook

Oct. 9 & 21	9 a.m. – Noon	Willowbrook
Nov. 4 & 19	9 a.m. – Noon	Willowbrook
Dec. 2 & 16	9 a.m. – Noon	Willowbrook

### Volunteer Workday at the Nursery 23967

Lend a hand weeding, watering, or collecting and cleaning seeds from native grasses and flowers. Ages 12 and up; under 18 with an adult. Free. Register online or at 630-206-9630 at least five days in advance (10 days ahead for groups of five or more).

Oct. 2, 11, 16, 21 & 27	9 a.m. – Noon	Blackwell
Nov. 1, 6, 11 & 17	9 a.m. – Noon	Blackwell



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by **TOM VELAT**, NATURAL RESOURCES

**A**s we approach that fun and spooky time of Halloween, certain types of wildlife come to mind, mostly as a result of legend or myth. Most have been connected to stories of witches, goblins, vampires, and other monstrous and feared creatures, but that doesn't mean we need to be wary of these species today. We just need to get past the "creepy" factor to appreciate them.

## Spiders

Spiders are abundant and seem to be one of the most-feared invertebrates in the world, which makes them creepy candidates for the Halloween scene. Some folks have theorized that you're always about 7 feet from a spider wherever you go in the world (a notion that can be a bit unnerving if you're not a fan). The distance may vary depending on the habitat you're in (parking lots offer little usable spider space unless there are cracks in the pavement), but you are certainly never too far from one.

Even though the presence of spiders can make people shudder, spiders offer many services. One study revealed that the world's spiders eat 400 to 800 million tons of insects each year. That's a lot of extra bugs that would be flying and crawling around if we didn't have spiders. (Now *that's* a scary thought!)

Spiders might also be associated with Halloween because their webs are more visible this time of year. Some web-building spiders spend summer growing and hiding from other predators, but by late summer and early fall, they're large enough to protect themselves and are able to build large webs to catch prey.

One common spider typically seen more frequently this time of year is the spined micrathena. People occasionally encounter these spiders by walking into webs when venturing off trail. Sometimes people think they've been bitten, but realistically they probably saw or felt the spider crawling on them and swiped it away only to be harmlessly jabbed by one of the spines on the arachnid's abdomen.

## Owls

Since we tend to see and hear owls more regularly this time of year, it's no surprise they're included in the Halloween canon.

Like other owls in the Midwest, male great horned owls usually start setting up their territories in October. Most mate for life, yet in fall great horneds still loudly call to each other as part of their regular courtship routine.

This early attempt at nesting is indicative of great horned owls because they're large birds that invest more time in the



parental care of young, specifically in teaching hunting skills. In this area they often incubate nests through the harshest parts of winter, which makes fall and winter a great time to look for interesting owl interactions in the forest preserves. Make sure to keep your distance, though. It is rare, but occasionally great horned owls have been known to attack humans, although this usually happens when people approach a nest or a territory too closely.

## Snakes

Some of the most misunderstood members of the Halloween story are snakes. Historically they were seen as a symbol of power in witchcraft (think Voldemort’s companion in the Harry Potter series). They were also seen as animals to be eradicated from the landscape. (St. Patrick was mythically known for driving the serpents from Ireland, but there’s no fossil evidence to show that snakes ever existed on the island in the first place.)

It may be difficult for some to believe, but there are people who adore snakes. In some instances this can create conservation issues because native snakes continue to be illegally collected for the pet trade. Since snakes can also be victims of predation by high populations of raccoons and skunks, any wild collection of these species can lead to further population losses.

A common snake that people can see basking along trails at this time of year is the Dekay’s brown snake. During warm temperatures in the fall, this species can be observed well into September and October and occasionally into November. (Don’t worry, though. Like other DuPage snakes, the Dekay’s is not venomous.)

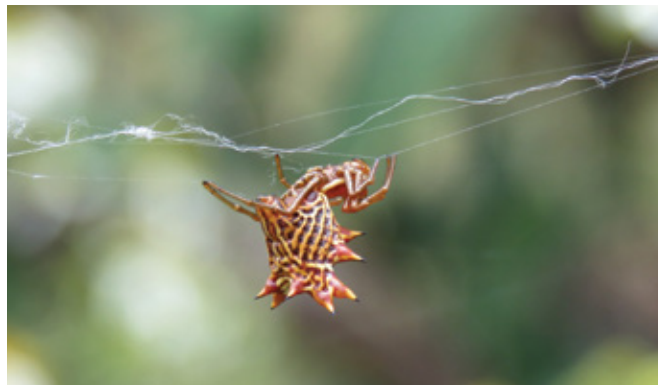
## Bats

Bats may be the quintessential Halloween wildlife species since they’re so closely associated with vampires. The influential novel by Bram Stoker contributed a great deal to the myth, but although there are real species of blood-feeding bats in Central and South America, their hosts are largely livestock and rainforest mammals.

In DuPage County and Illinois, bats are strictly insect eaters that play a huge role in the ecosystem by digesting roughly 1,000 insects per hour per bat. Their main foods consist of moths, beetles, crickets, mosquitoes, and chinch bugs to name a few, but contrary to popular belief, they eat more moths than mosquitoes. Since many of these insects can be agricultural or public health pests, bats help to save billions of dollars each year.

The big brown bat is one native species that is observable in our area at dusk in summer through early fall in open areas near woods or over ponds and streams. Be cautious, though; for all of their benefits, bats can carry rabies.

So enjoy the spooky stories of Halloween this fall, but remember that the real animals behind these tales play valuable roles in DuPage County forest preserve habitats. •



© Emmanuel Guenera Lazzano

▲ Spined micrathena (*Micrathena gracilis*)



© donjaredomani/stock.adobe.com

▲ Great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*)



© Emma McHone

▲ Dekay's brown snake (*Storeria dekayi*)



© Ivan Kuzmin/stock.adobe.com

▲ Big brown bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*)

# 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.

Saturdays June – August (except July 1)  
(phone, email, and online chat only)  
9 a.m. – 2 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

## FOREST PRESERVE *Hours*

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

## PARTNER *Sites*

### DANADA HOUSE

Wheaton • 630-668-5392

### FISCHER FARM

Bensenville • 630-766-7015

### BARTLETT NATURE CENTER

Bartlett • 847-608-3120

### LYMAN WOODS NATURE CENTER

Downers Grove • 630-963-9388

## 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

### GRAUE MILL AND MUSEUM

3800 York Road • Oak Brook  
630-850-8112

Open mid-April – mid-November  
Thursdays & Fridays 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.  
Saturday & Sunday Noon – 4 p.m.  
Closed Monday – Wednesday

### 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.

### MAYSLAKE PEABODY ESTATE

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

Monday – Friday Noon – 3 p.m.  
Saturdays 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.  
Closed Sundays

### WILLOWBROOK WILDLIFE CENTER

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

#### Animal Admittance

Daily 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

#### Visitor Center and Outdoor Exhibit Trail

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

## 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

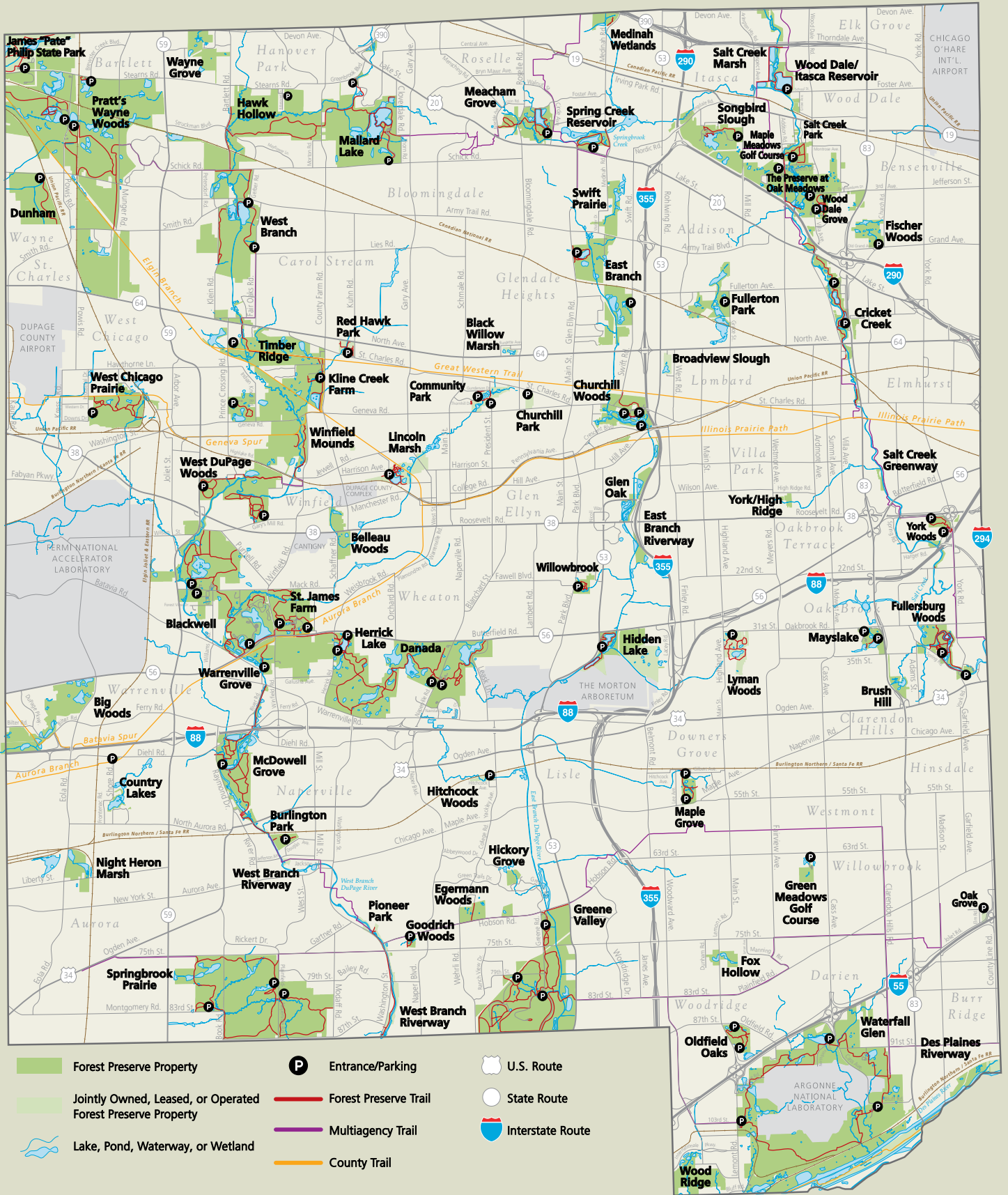
### GREEN MEADOWS GOLF COURSE

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

## ACCESSIBILITY

If you have accessibility needs or concerns, please contact our ADA programs and activities coordinator at 630-871-7537 or TTY 800-526-0857 at least 48 hours before your visit or at least two weeks prior to attending a registration-based program.





James "Pate" Philip State Park

Wayne Grove

Hawk Hollow

Pratt's Wayne Woods

Mallard Lake

Meacham Grove

Spring Creek Reservoir

Medinah Wetlands

Salt Creek Marsh

Wood Dale/Itasca Reservoir

Songbird Slough

Maple Meadows Golf Course

Swift Prairie

East Branch

Fullerton Park

West Branch

Red Hawk Park

Black Willow Marsh

Churchill Woods

Lincoln Marsh

Churchill Park

Timber Ridge

West Chicago Prairie

West DuPage Woods

West Branch Riverway

Blackwell

Warrenville Grove

St. James Farm

Herrick Lake

Danada

Hidden Lake

Willowbrook

East Branch Riverway

York/High Ridge

Lyman Woods

Brush Hill

Country Lakes

Night Heron Marsh

Springbrook Prairie

McDowell Grove

Burlington Park

Hitchcock Woods

Hickory Grove

Egermann Woods

Wayne Grove

Hawk Hollow

Pratt's Wayne Woods

Mallard Lake

Meacham Grove

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Brush Hill

Country Lakes

Night Heron Marsh

Springbrook Prairie

McDowell Grove

Burlington Park

Hitchcock Woods

Hickory Grove

Egermann Woods

Hanover Park

Roselle

Meacham Grove

Spring Creek Reservoir

Medinah Wetlands

Salt Creek Marsh

Wood Dale/Itasca Reservoir

Songbird Slough

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West Chicago Prairie

West DuPage Woods

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Blackwell

Warrenville Grove

St. James Farm

Herrick Lake

Danada

Hidden Lake

Willowbrook

East Branch Riverway

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Blackwell

Warrenville Grove

St. James Farm

Herrick Lake

Danada

Hidden Lake

Willowbrook

East Branch Riverway

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Lyman Woods

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West DuPage Woods

West Branch Riverway

Blackwell

Warrenville Grove

St. James Farm

Herrick Lake

Danada

Hidden Lake

Willowbrook

East Branch Riverway

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Hickory Grove

Egermann Woods

Green Meadows Golf Course

Oldfield Oaks

Waterfall Glen

Des Plaines Riverway

Wood Ridge

Wood Dale

Songbird Slough

Maple Meadows Golf Course

Wood Dale

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Fullerton Park

West Branch

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York/High Ridge



**Forest Preserve District  
of DuPage County**

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Wheaton, IL 60189

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Carol Stream, IL  
Permit No. 96

# the Conservationist

A Quarterly Publication of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County

**Fall 2023**

## FALL FESTIVAL AT DANADA

**OCT. 7 & 8**  
**11 A.M. – 5 P.M.**

**Free Admission (Fees for Some Activities)**  
**Horse Show Performances in Our Outdoor Arena**  
**Wagon Rides • Horse-Care Demos • Stable Tours**  
**Hobby Horse Craft and Other Children's Activities**  
**Food and Entertainment • Nature Art and Photo Show • More!**

For more information, call the Danada Equestrian Center in  
Wheaton at 630-668-6012, or visit [dupageforest.org](http://dupageforest.org).

