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## Nature Explorations

### Fabulous Frogs *Adults and Families*

**Wednesday, June 24, 7:30-8:30 p.m.**

Exner Marsh, Lakewood Shelter, Woodstock  
**Fee: R Free/NR \$5.00 Code: 5979**

We will start at the shelter with a short presentation about some of the native frogs and toads we will hear and hopefully see. Then we are off to explore the marsh as the amphibian chorus starts to sing. Wear appropriate footwear to walk through wet areas. Meet at the Lakewood Road entrance to Exner Marsh.

### Family Adventure Hikes —

*Adults and Families*

Get out of the house and create your own adventure exploring the natural marvels of McHenry County. We provide nets, collection equipment, and magnifiers, and a brief lesson on the use of the equipment. Each family may borrow a collection kit to use during their visit to help create their own exploration experience.

### Pond Dipping

**Tuesday, June 30, 10-11 a.m.**

Hickory Grove Riverfront, Shelter, Cary  
**Fee: Free Code: 6579**

### Bug Netting

**Monday, August 10, 10-11 a.m.**

Kishwaukee Headwaters, Shelter, Woodstock  
**Fee: Free Code: 6580**

What does this symbol mean?

Conservation District programs that are designed as free exploration will be marked with the Leave No Child Inside logo. For more information on Leave No Child Inside, visit [www.kidsoutside.info](http://www.kidsoutside.info).



### Outdoor Discovery Lab!

*Adults and Families*

Join us at the Outdoor Discovery Lab this summer!

Each stop features themed outdoor experiments that are hands-on and family friendly. In this adventure you will explore how adaptations help animals survive and thrive. Lab experiences are self-guided with staff and volunteers on hand to assist. Participants should dress to get messy, with long pants and socks recommended.

**Pond Explorations: Tuesday, July 21, 10:30 a.m.–12 p.m.**

Pleasant Valley, Shelter #1, Woodstock, **Fee: Free Code: 6615**

**Geology Rocks: Wednesday, August 5, 10:30 a.m.–12 p.m.**

Marengo Ridge, Shelter #1, Marengo, **Fee: Free Code: 6616**

### Beautiful Blooms *Adults and Families*

**Sunday, July 19, 9–10:30 a.m.**

Prairieview Education Center, Crystal Lake  
**Fee: Free Code: 6584**

The midsummer prairie is bursting with color. Don't miss the spectacular showcase of reds, purples and yellows as we hike through the dazzling display.

### Family Scavenger Hunt *Adults and Families*

**Saturday, August 15, 1:30–3 p.m.**

Prairieview Education Center, Crystal Lake  
**Fee: Free Code: 6456**

Bring your family out for an end-of-summer scavenger hunt and adventure! Start at the Center for an introduction and to receive your maps and scavenger hunt sheets. Bring your completed worksheet back to the Center for a prize!

### Summer Symphony *Adults and Families*

**Sunday, August 23, 1:30–3 p.m.**

Rush Creek, Shelter, Harvard  
**Fee: R Free/NR \$2.00 Code: 6585**

Don't miss your chance to listen to the chorus of crickets, cicadas and katydids before it's too late and the summer turns to fall. The insects are active and putting on an amazing show. Catching and collection techniques are demonstrated and taught as we enjoy the amazing show of the late summer prairie.

### Crafty Crayfish *Adults and Families, Ages 5+*

**Saturday, July 11, 6:30–8 p.m., Fel-Pro RRR, Lake Shelter, Cary**  
**Fee: R Free/NR \$2.00 Code: 6619**

Did you know that crayfish, also known as crawfish or crawdads, are related to lobsters? Learn about this funny little freshwater crustacean as you help us catch, count, and release crayfish in the ponds. We will compare our data with previous years and identify the species we catch. All equipment provided. Dress for the weather in clothes that can get wet and muddy.



### Tagging and Tracking the Monarch's

**Great Migration *Adults and Families, Ages 6+***

**Saturday, August 29, 1:30–3:30 p.m.**

Prairieview Education Center, Crystal Lake  
**Fee: R Free/NR \$5.00 Code: 6570**

It is almost time for the majestic monarch butterflies to begin their mass migrations south. A brief overview of monarchs, their life-cycle, migration patterns, and programs that track their migrations will be presented. Afterward we will hike the trails through the summer prairie in search of monarchs and their larvae. If available, we will tag a live monarch butterfly and instruction will be provided on how to do this at home. Monarch tag ordering information will be available.

### Discovery Days *Ages 2–6 w/Adult*

Enjoy an hour and a half of fun educational activities focused on our special theme of the day. A game, craft, snack, and other hands-on experiences help participants explore how animals make and use their homes.

### Fascinating Frogs

**Thursday, July 16, 10–11:30 a.m.**

Exner Marsh, Lakewood Shelter, Woodstock  
**Fee: R Free/NR \$2.00 Code: 6612**

### Animal Homes

**Tuesday, August 18, 10–11:30 a.m.**

The Hollows, Shelter #1, Cary  
**Fee: R Free/NR \$2.00 Code: 6613**

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## Storytime on the Trail

*Ages Infant–5 w/Adult*

**Wednesday, June 17, 9:30 - 11 a.m.**  
Marengo Ridge, Shelter #1, Marengo  
Fee: R Free/NR \$2.00 Code: [6582](#)

Join us for an adventure on the trail as we travel and explore with characters from "In the Woods: Who's Been Here?" The young girl and boy guide us on a journey that includes detective work and discovering who lives in the summer woodland. The hike includes exploration activities and observing the wildlife around us.

## Flutter & Fly Storytime

*Ages infant–5 w/Adult*

**Monday, June 22, 9:30–10:30 a.m.**  
Kishwaukee Headwaters, Woodstock  
Fee: R Free/NR \$2.00 Code: [6628](#)

Butterflies, birds, bats and more! Join us for a story about creatures that fly. Then, head out on a short hike to search for some of these critters!



## Nature's Trail Time

*Ages 6–13/w Adult*

Children ages 6 through 13 are invited to join us on a guided hike along the trails, exploring and finding nature's treasures.

**Monday, June 15, 10–11:30 a.m.**  
Brookdale, Paulson Road Entrance Shelter, Woodstock  
Fee: R Free/NR \$2.00 Code: [6587](#)

**Tuesday, July 14, 10–11:30 a.m.**  
Pleasant Valley, Amphitheater, Woodstock  
Fee: R Free/NR \$2.00 Code: [6596](#)

## Creature Feature: Birds of Prey

*Ages 5–7/w Adult*

**Wednesday, July 1, 9 a.m.–12 p.m.**  
Prairieview, Classroom 107, Crystal Lake  
Fee: R \$2.00/NR \$5.00 Code: [6581](#)

A live animal is our featured creature during three hours filled with games, activities, and crafts all based around the creature of the day. A snack is provided. Dress appropriately for the weather and wear good walking shoes, as most of the time is spent outdoors.

## Nature's Colors *Ages Infant–5/w Adult*

**Monday, July 13, 9:30–10:30 a.m.**  
Shelter at Rush Creek  
Fee: R Free /NR \$2.00 Code: [6629](#)

Join us for a story about the colors used in nature's palette. Then, head out on a short hike to find these colors out in nature!

## Explore!

*Adults and Families*

Join us for a monthly short hike to discover some of our native wildlife. We'll start with a quick introduction of the site and the species we may find on our exploration. A perfect way to spend a summer morning.

## Birds

**Friday, June 19, 10–11 a.m.**  
Rush Creek, Shelter, Harvard  
Fee: R Free/NR \$2.00 Code: [6588](#)

## Butterflies

**Tuesday, July 7, 10–11 a.m.**  
Marengo Ridge, Shelter #2, Marengo  
Fee: R Free/NR \$2.00 Code: [6594](#)

## Praying Mantids

**Thursday, August 6, 10–11 a.m.**  
Prairieview Education Center, Crystal Lake  
Fee: R Free/NR \$2.00 Code: [6602](#)

## Hike & Learn: Prairie Plants *Ages 14+*

**Sunday, July 26, 2–3:30 p.m.**  
Lake in the Hills Fen, Shelter, Lake in the Hills  
Fee: R Free/NR \$5.00 Code: [6576](#)

Join a naturalist for a guided hike through the summer time prairie. Learn tips and tricks for identifying plants as you make your own guide to take home!



## Special Interest

### Inspired by Nature: DIY Glass Bead Crafts *Ages 14+*

**Saturday, July 18, 10:30 a.m.– 12:30 p.m.**  
Lost Valley Visitor Center, Overlook Room, Glacial Park, Ringwood  
Fee: R \$15.00/NR \$20.00. Code: [6620](#)

Create your own glass bead necklace, bracelet, or key chain inspired by nature's bright summer colors! Take a short hike through a prairie and woodland to find artistic inspiration in the hues of seasonal flowers and leaves. We'll head back to the visitor center and learn how to string a simple glass bead creation that captures this colorful season. Materials are provided.

### Native and Natural Landscaping *Ages 14+*

**Thursday, August 6, 7–8:30 p.m.**  
Prairieview Education Center, Crystal Lake  
Fee: R Free/NR \$5.00 Code: [6624](#)

Learn how to use native plants around your home to beautify your property, provide habitat for butterflies, birds and bees, and gain benefits such as improved storm water drainage and healthy soil. This presentation by members of the Wildflower

Preservation and Propagation Committee will show examples from their "Native Garden in Your Yard" program, which provides inspiration, encouragement, and help to homeowners who wish to transform their traditional lawn and garden spaces into havens for native wildflowers and other plants. We will also touch on using native plants on a larger scale, such as restoration projects on McHenry County Conservation District sites. Applications will be available for mentor match-ups.

### Sites Seldom Seen: Alden Sedge Meadow *Ages 14+*

**Saturday, August 22, 1–4 p.m.**  
Alden Sedge Meadow, Alden  
Fee : R Free/NR \$5.00 Code: [6609](#)

Take this opportunity to explore a site not normally open to the public, where the headwaters of the Nippersink Creek flow among sedges and wetland wildflowers. This time of year this vibrant and diverse habitat should be ablaze with summer wildflower colors! The hike is approximately 3 miles off-trail across wet and rugged terrain. Dress for the weather with long pants and sturdy shoes. Participants receive specific directions and parking location after registration.