



Bur Oak Tribune



Wildwood Nature Center

Park Ridge Park District

March 2010

Inside This Month's Issue:

- Baby Food Jar Donations (p 2)
- Spring Flower Bulb Sale (p 2)
- Upcoming Events (p 2)
- Earth Hour (p 3)
- Cabin Fever (p 3)
- St. Patrick's Day Puzzle (p 5)
- Volunteer News (p 6)

And more...

General Information

During your visit to Wildwood Nature Center you will find an **Animal Exhibit Room** with a turtle pond, snakes, prairie dogs, snapping turtles, and much, much more. Wildwood also offers an activity room called the **Nature Nook** complete with books, puzzles, puppets, games, and activities. Visit the Nook this month to learn about reptiles!

Wildwood Nature Center is located at:
529 Forestview Ave.
Park Ridge, IL 60068

Contact Info:
847-692-3570
jclauson@prparks.org

Web: www.prparks.org

Visiting Hours:
Tuesday -Thursday 10am-6pm
Saturday 10am-4pm

Admission : FREE

Wildwood Nature Center Staff
Editor: Hillary Wells-Pranga

Nature Feature

Each month the Bur Oak Tribune features a special plant or animal found in or around the Wildwood Nature Center. This month it is the muskrat. The muskrat is a member of the rodent family and looks like a cross between a rat and a beaver. Like its cousin the beaver, it is covered in a thick layer of insulating brown and gray fur, and spends much of its time swimming in the water. The

muskrat's tail however, is not flat like a beaver's but shaped more like a rat's tail (only thicker). Their strong tail helps propel them through the wa-



www.richwooders.com/

ter; enabling them to travel long distances under water to escape danger. Muskrats also make their home in the water, gathering reeds and grasses from the water's edge to make a lodge. Inside their lodge they will have a litter of as many as 11 young several times a year. As with all rodent offspring, baby muskrats (called kits) are born hairless and unable to open their eyes. Like many animals that live around the cities of Illinois, muskrats are very adaptable, able to live in a variety of wetland habitats. They are also willing to venture far onto land to find food if necessary. Muskrats feed mostly on aquatic plants but will also eat snails, frogs, crayfish and clams. They are mostly nocturnal but you might be able to catch a glimpse of them at dawn and dusk sitting on a log in the water munching on their meal.

News Bulletins

- Come celebrate spring with us! The Spring Park District brochure has been mailed out, take a look at our fun classes, trips and events!
- Mark your calendars: our Earth Day celebration is Saturday, April 17th from 11am-3pm. Keep an eye out for the flier in the April issue. We still have spots for vendors to sell their wares at the celebration, if you are interested contact Jenny Clauson at 847-692-3570.
- The Nature Center uses shredded paper for animal bedding, we would greatly appreciate donations of shredded paper for those of you who shred at home (small shavings preferred).
- Attention families with babies: Wildwood is looking for donations of clean empty baby food jars with lids.
- Help the Bur Oak be green! Send us your email address so we can save paper. Your email will only be used for the publication and will not be given to any other organization. If you are interested email your address to jclauson@prparks.org.
- The Wildwood spring flower bulb fundraiser sale is now underway, visit www.prparks.org to download your order form for Irises, Lilacs, Coneflowers, Blueberries and more. Orders are due April 9th. Half of the proceeds will go toward the restoration of Wildwood Prairie.

Upcoming Events

Living With Wildlife* (ages 18 and Up): *Mar 11, 6:30pm-8:00pm* ~ Join ABC Humane Wildlife Control and Prevention for a talk about living with wildlife.
Fee: FREE

Make Your Own Rain Barrel* (Ages 12 & Up): *Mar 18 at 6:30pm, Mar 27 at 1:30pm, or Mar 27 at 3:00pm* ~ Save water and by using free rainwater from your roof to water indoor and outdoor plants. Fee is per rain barrel, tools and supplies provided.

Fee: \$49 resident/nonresident

Make Your Own Composter* (Ages 12 & Up): *Mar 25 6:30pm, Mar 27 4:30pm* ~ Create your own 55 gallon rotating barrel composter and stand. Your composter will provide you with chemical-free rich garden soil and reduce the waste you put in the landfill. Fee is per composter.

Fee: \$60 resident/nonresident



Organic Lawns and Gardens* (Ages 18 & Up): *Mar 31 6:00pm* ~ Join Marc Wise from Greenwise and discover organic lawn and garden care.

Fee: \$3 resident/nonresident

* Registration is required for all classes, for more information call 847-692-3570 or Discover the Fun on the Park District website at www.prparks.org

Family Fun Corner

Cabin Fever

March 20th is the first day of spring, get outside with your family and investigate the new season!

Materials: journal, crayons or colored pencils, camera (optional), binoculars, trowel, ruler

- Take your child on a walk around the neighborhood or through a local park or preserve. Help your child find and observe seasonal changes in nature:
 - ♣ Spring flowers coming up.
 - ♣ Flocks of geese flying overhead.
 - ♣ Tree buds growing.
 - ♣ Sap flowing out of trees.
 - ♣ Robins returning.
- Give them a journal and crayons or colored pencils to draw or write what they find.
- Find a spot in your yard to dig a hole. Have your child dig down as far as they can, measure how deep the hole is and record it in their journal.
- Throughout the month have them try digging again to see if the ground has thawed any more.



Earth Stewards

This month we encourage you to be good earth stewards by participating in Earth Hour.



What is “Earth Hour”?

Every March millions of people across the globe turn off their lights for one hour in support of environmental awareness. Earth Hour is a campaign to raise awareness about “dirty” vs. “clean” energy, and other things that could contribute to global climate change.

Why Should We Participate in “Earth Hour”?

- ◆ Help bring attention to important global issues.
- ◆ Save electricity.
- ◆ Create an opportunity for your family to do something positive together and plan a fun family bonding activity by candlelight!

How Can We Participate in “Earth Hour”?

- ◆ On Saturday, March 27 from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30pm, flip off the lights in your house.

(For more info, go to www.myearthhour.org/about)

Junior Naturalist Pages

Wild Wonders

Hey there my young naturalist friends! This is Merry Mouse welcoming you to another update on the wildlife happenings around Wildwood. So it is finally March, which means the first day of spring is upon us. Spring of course means lots of wild animals are starting families. A couple weeks ago I went out for an early evening scurry by the pine trees when I overheard Gabriella Great Horned Owl talking to her mate about how excited she was. Why was she excited? Great Horned Owl eggs hatch in March! Which means I have to be extra careful; owl babies love a mouse dinner!



The beginning of spring not only means the arrival of babies but also animals beginning to wake up from their winter sleep called hibernation. On one of the warmer mornings I was foraging (looking for food) by the pond and heard “cree-ee-ee-ek” coming from the water. It was Chad Chorus Frog looking for a lady frog to start a family. He said Teddy Toad will be burrowing out of his muddy winter bed soon too. Chad will stay in the water until it gets a little warmer in April. Not only are animals waking up from their winter sleep but so are the plants. March is a good time to keep an eye on tree buds. From these bud new spring leaves will start to emerge.

Also, keep an eye out for field mice (like me) in March. As the snow melts you might be able to spot the burrows of field mice that went through the snow (look for flattened grass). That is it for this month, happy spring everyone!

Merry’s challenge: What other frogs can you find around ponds in Illinois? Use the letters on the frog’s throat to complete the names (some letters are used more than once).

1. B__llfrogs
2. Sp__ng P__pers
3. W__d Frogs
4. Cr__ket Frogs
5. G__ee__ Frogs
6. No__th__rn Leo__ar__ Frogs



Photo by Nerele Ring

Junior Naturalist Pages

Green is Good

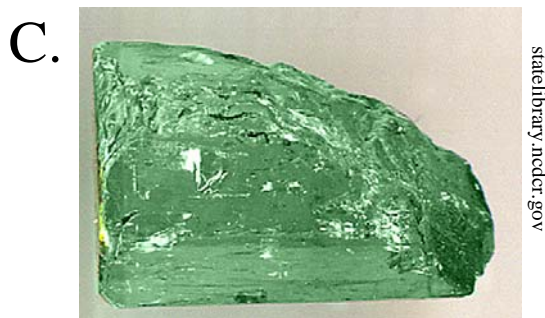
In honor of St. Patrick's day we have a green puzzle for you. Check out the pictures below of things from nature that are green. Read the clues below each picture and see if you can solve the puzzle.



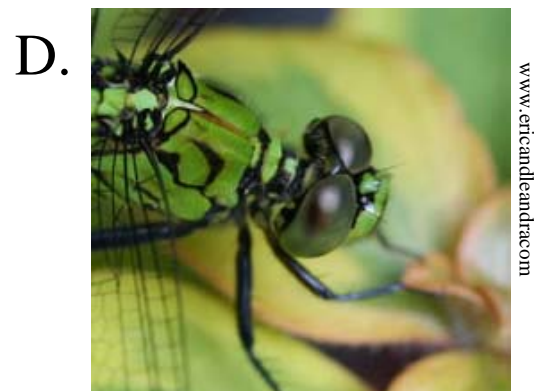
I help you help your breath
smell fresh.



I have sticky feet to help me
climb trees.



Jewelers carve me into a
gemstone



I love to fly around
Wildwood's ponds.



I have big flippers and a
shell on my back.



I am full of salty water and
many animals live in me.

Animal Feeding Times

Watch the Wildwood staff feed some of your favorite animals! Call the Nature Center for more information at 847-692-3570.

This Month:

Saturdays 10:30am
Wednesdays 10:30am and 3:30pm

Location: Animal Room

Critter Connection

Get up close to a Wildwood animal during a short, family friendly presentation. Learn about the featured animal, what makes him special, what he eats, and more. Make sure to pet him before he heads back to the animal room. Visit different animals each month.

Day: Every Saturday

Time: 10:15am-10:30am

Location:

Nature Nook



Volunteer News



Happy Birthday to
Birthday Party
Volunteer Connie!

A warm welcome
to our new
Birthday Party
Volunteer Maggie!
Thanks for joining
our team!



Pet Connection

- ~ **Wanted:** Lizard
- ~ **Needs a home:** Six cats, male and female. Cats have been fixed, vaccinated and microchipped.



To respond to these ads or to post an ad, please contact Wildwood at 847-692-3570.