



Bur Oak Tribune



Wildwood Nature Center

Park Ridge Park District

December 2011

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General Information

During your visit to Wildwood Nature Center you will find an **Animal Exhibit Room** with a turtle pond, snakes, prairie dog, snapping turtles, and more.

Wildwood also offers an activity room called the **Nature Nook** complete with books, puzzles, puppets, and activities. Visit the Nook this month to learn about rocks!

Wildwood Nature Center is located at:

529 Forestview Ave.
Park Ridge, IL 60068

Contact Info:

847-692-3570
jclauson@prparks.org

Website: www.prparks.org

Visiting Hours:

Tuesday -Thursday 10:00am-6:00pm
Saturday 10:00am-4:00pm

Admission : FREE

CLOSED: Dec. 24 and Dec. 31

Wildwood Nature Center Bur Oak

Editor: Hillary Wells-Pranga

Nature Feature

This month's feature is the red fox. The red fox gets its name from its thick fluffy reddish-brown coat of fur, although they can also be silver, golden, or black. Their other features include large pointed ears, a pointed snout which aids in their sense of smell, and a very bushy tail used to



images.nationalgeographic.com

communicate and keep them warm. Red foxes are extremely adaptable so you can find them in various habitats around the world including grasslands, forests, mountains and deserts. They can even adapt to living close to people around farms and urban neighborhoods. Although not a threat to people they have been known to follow

and bark at people that come to close to their family.

They also mark their territory by urinating on rocks and trees to tell other foxes they are around.

Red foxes start their families in winter and the female fox, called a vixen, gives birth to around 2 to 12 brownish-gray pups. The pups' fur starts turning red



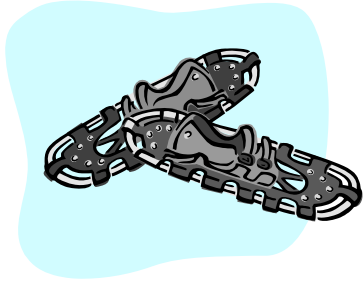
animal.discovery.com

after a month. Both parents take care of the pups through the summer. The pups go out on their own in the fall. The red fox is a resourceful and clever hunter, feasting on a variety of small animals, even frogs and worms. Red foxes have also been known to dine on vegetables, fruit, dog food and garbage.

Upcoming Events & Classes

Bald Eagle Days* (Ages 7 & Up): Jan 7, 8am-5:30pm~ Soar on over to Bald Eagle Days in Rock Island, the largest event in the Midwest dedicated to this magnificent bird. Enjoy a guided tour to see the Bald Eagles, eagle programs, bird of prey demonstrations, and a wildlife art show and sale. Please bring money for lunch.

Fee: \$40 residents/nonresidents, Class #22269



Snowshoe Hike* (Ages 7 & Up): Jan 16, 10:30am-12:30pm or 1pm-3pm ~ Enjoy the winter weather and scenery by snowshoe through the Des Plaines River Forest Preserve, just blocks away from Wildwood. Great for first timers, fee includes snowshoe rental and guided hike. **Registration deadline: Jan 9.**

Fee: \$17 residents/nonresidents, Class #22267 or 22323

Wily Weasels* (Families): Jan 19, 6pm-7:30pm ~ With their cute little faces, long furry bodies, and playful personalities, weasels are entertaining for the whole family. Weasel into Wildwood and learn about our local weasels, create a craft, and meet a 'rascal'ly member of the weasel family living at Wildwood.

Fee: \$15 per family, Class # 22290



Green and Serene* (All Ages): Jan 28, 9:00am-11:30am ~ Take in the sights and smells of a green paradise on a guided tour of Garfield Park Conservatory's 3.5 acres of greenhouses. Walk through natural looking landscapes containing everything from giant palms to exotic cacti, check out the children's play area, and make a stop at the gift shop.

Fee: \$12 residents/\$16 nonresidents, Class #22268

***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**

Volunteer News

Thank you to all of our Animal Volunteers and Program Volunteers— your dedication and hard work are appreciated! Don't forget to RSVP to the Holiday Party!

Family Fun Corner

Homemade Nature Wrapping Paper

Many people exchange gifts in December for various holidays. Here is a fun way to make cool environmentally friendly wrapping paper.

Materials: paper bags, newspaper, tempera paint, paint brushes, bowls, jar of water, scissors, crayons without wrappers, glue, nature items (leaves, pinecones, seed pods, evergreen needles, mushrooms, etc.)

1. Cover your workspace with newspaper to control the mess. Pour desired paint colors into bowls.
2. Cut open the paper bags (cut down one corner and along all four sides of the bottom).
3. You can use tempera paint or stamp pads for the ideas below.
4. Leaves—paint one side of a leaf or flower (or several) and turn paint-side-down and stamp paper. Repeat as many times as you like to create pattern. Or put leaves under paper (with the paper plain-side up) and rub with crayons.
5. Pinecones or seed pods—dip one side of pinecone/seed pod into paint and use it as a stamp (like the leaf).
6. Pine needles—use them to paint a cool pattern or glue them to the paper in a pattern.
7. Mushrooms—cut off the stem and paint the underside of the mushroom (where the grooves are) and use it like a stamp and/or cut the mushroom in half (stem and all), paint the flat side and stamp it.



redtedart.com

Earth Stewards

You can be an earth steward by recycling your Christmas Tree.

Why should I recycle my Christmas Tree?

- ~ So it doesn't take up space in the landfill.
- ~ Recycled Christmas trees get a second life as useful mulch.



How do I recycle my Christmas Tree?

- ~ During the week of January 9th, Park Ridge residents can place their trees curbside the night before their regular refuse collection day. Trees need to be free of any bags, decorations, lights and garland.
- ~ Drop them off at North Park Village: 5801 N. Pulaski Rd in Chicago. Please call the Department of Environment at 312-744-7606 for the January Deadline. The Chicago Park District does not take wreaths and garlands.



Junior Naturalist Pages



Wild Wonders

Welcome my nature-loving friends, to another edition of the Wildwood wildlife news brought to you by me, Merry Mouse. Well, it is December, which means there could be some snow in our forecast. So I bet you are wondering how we little creatures make our way around with all that white stuff in our way. As for me and my fellow mice, we tunnel through the snow to get around. I bumped into



Susan Squirrel a couple weeks ago and asked her how she finds her way. She told me she uses these things in her chin called glands which make smelly stuff and rubs the scent on trees and things so she can make a trail to follow by smell! Pretty cool! I would rather use my tunnels though, because this time of year it's easy for predators to see us little guys! Just a few days ago I was out for an evening scurry when I heard the call of one of those

predators: Galen Great Horned Owl. He was calling to tell other male owls to stay out of his territory (his home). Soon he and Gabriella Great Horned Owl will be starting a family. Speaking of families I saw Wanda White-Tailed Deer the other day and she had a big belly, which means a fawn is on the way (that is what a baby deer is called). Wanda was hanging out with a group of deer she will stay with all winter. They even sleep together in a group to stay warm, they call the place where a bunch of deer sleep "deer yards"! The deer are not the only ones hanging out together. Last night I saw Connor Cottontail Rabbit playing on the snow with other rabbits. That playful gathering was probably because they have been stuck in their burrows for awhile during bad weather! Now you've heard about how some animals tough it out in bad weather but what about the prairie plants? The top may look dead but the roots underground have food to last the winter so they will send up new stems and leaves in the spring. I hear there is snow coming, so I better go get ready to dig another tunnel, see you in January!



Merry's Challenge: Use the code to find out what a Great Horned Owl's call sounds like.

1 2 — 4 5 — 3 7 9

1 2 6 — 3 8 5

1=H 2=O 3=H 4=H 5=O 6=O 7=O 8=O 9=O



Junior Naturalist Pages



In December of the year 1818, Illinois officially became one of the United States of America. In honor of Illinois' Birthday, here is a puzzle for you! Can you guess the state symbols of Illinois by unscrambling the words?

1. Insect: rchmoan ttubreylf

2. Flower: livtoe

3. Prairie Grass: bgi esmtuelb

4. Fish: iguelbll



5. Bird: acdarlin



6. Tree: ewith koa

7. Animal: hewit-atledi rede

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 and 3:30pm

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: Saturdays

Time: 10:15am

Location:

Nature Nook



Ask the Naturalist

Wildwood is a great place to find answers about the natural world.

Q: Are sirens related to eels?



A: No, sirens are a kind of salamander.

They look like eels because they stay in their larval (tadpole) form their whole life, only growing two legs and keeping their external gills.

Submit your questions to Wildwood's mailing address (2701 W. Sibley Street) or email them to: jclauson@prparks.org. We encourage people of all ages to write in with their questions!

Pet Connection

Needs a home:

- ~ Two female 1.5-2 year old, short-hair guinea pigs, Piggers and Teddy. Come with cage and supplies.
- ~ Female 3 1/2 year old, short-hair guinea pig. Comes with indoor and outdoor cages and supplies.
- ~ Female 2 year old, short-hair guinea pig named Lucy. Comes with cage and accessories.
- ~ Male, short-hair guinea pig. (not neutered). Comes with cage, food and accessories.
- ~ Cumberland slider turtle (semi-aquatic), 2 1/2 years old.

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