

Thorn Creek Nature Center
247 Monee Road
Park Forest, IL 60466

Return Service Requested

Celebrate History



*Thorn Creek
Nature Preserve
40 Year Anniversary*

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60466

THORN CREEK WOODS NATURE PRESERVE



SPRING-SUMMER 2018

THORN CREEK NATURE CENTER

247 Monee Road, Park Forest, IL 60466
708-747-6320 thorn_creek@att.net
Visit our website- tcwoods.org

Nature Center open Friday & Sunday,
noon -4 pm.

Trails open daily year-round, dawn to dusk

Nature Center Closed:

Sunday, April 1 - Easter

Friday, May 25 - Sunday May 27- Memorial Day

Thorn Creek Woods Nature Preserve is comprised of 985 acres of oak-hickory woodland, dotted with vernal ponds and dissected by Thorn Creek and its tributary streams. Over 3 1/2 miles of trails meander through woodland, floodplain forest, scenic ravines and pine plantations. Trails lead to marshy Owl Lake and a wetland overlook. The preserve also shelters the historic Hornicek Farm, old-field habitat and a prairie sampler.

Trail use: For individuals or for groups of less than ten, there is no charge to use the trails. Children must be with an adult. Trails are natural surface across uneven terrain.

Program registration: Most programs require registration unless otherwise noted. Call or email to register. *Note: some programs held at Wetlands Discovery Center.*

Nature Center building can be rented for gatherings: Call or email for information.

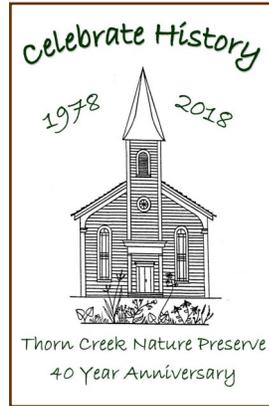
Group Programs: Programs for schools, youth groups, scouts, seniors, homeschoolers, and other groups are offered both at the preserve and off-site. Call or email for information.

THORN CREEK WOODS MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

Forest Preserve District of Will County * Village of Park Forest
Friends of Thorn Creek Woods * Village of University Park

The Preserve is jointly owned by University Park, Park Forest, Forest Preserve District of Will County and Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The Commission manages the Woods as a whole - a single unified dedicated Illinois Nature Preserve providing habitat for native plant and animal communities.

Management Commission meets third Wednesday of each month at 1 p.m.



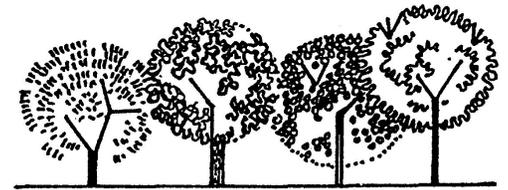
JULY

FIREFLIES NIGHT HIKE

Fireflies or lightning bugs, no matter what you call them, their flashing lights are seen throughout the night. Discover why fireflies flash back and forth to each other and what it means. Let the magic of "lightning bugs" entrance you on this summer night adventure. **Sunday, July 15, 7:30-9:30 p.m. Free! All ages. Registration required by Friday, July 13.**

SOUNDS OF INSECTS NIGHT HIKE

Join us as we venture out on the trail at dusk listening for musical and mechanical insect sounds. Many insects become more active as the sun goes down. We'll listen and learn the distinct sounds of common local species and why they make these sounds. **Saturday, July 28, 7:30-9:30 p.m. All ages. Free! Registration required by Thursday, July 26.**



AUGUST

NATURE CAMP FOR SENIORS: TREES OF THORN CREEK WOODS

What kinds of trees make up Thorn Creek Woods? Where do different types grow in the woods? How do our trees grow? Calling all kids ages 50 years and older to explore trees with activities, crafts and more. For part of the program we'll explore Thorn Creek Woods trails. Lunch will be provided. **Monday, August 6, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Ages 50 or older. \$5 per person. Registration required by Saturday, August 4.**

CREEK WALK FOR KIDS

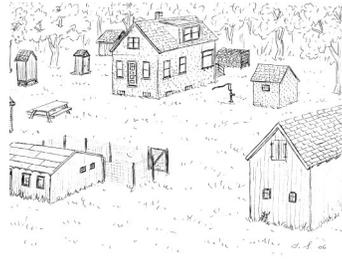
Explore Thorn Creek by taking measurements and doing experiments to learn some of the properties of water. Then we'll walk the waters of the creek and observe what lives there. We'll discover how many of these organisms transform to live on the land! Wear old clothes and boots. **Sunday, August 12, 1-3 p.m. Free! Ages 6-12. Children younger than 6 years must be accompanied by an adult. Registration required by Friday, August 10.**



JUNE

HISTORIC FARM WALK

Enjoy a summer day on the historic Hornicek Farm nestled in the preserve. Tour the farm buildings and the organic gardens. Wander in the old-fashioned flower gardens. Meet brown-egg laying hens and maybe some blue egg layers too. Sip lemonade and listen to music. Meet at the Nature Center, and carpool to the farm. **Sunday, June 3, 1-3 p.m. Free! All ages. Registration required by Friday, June 1.**

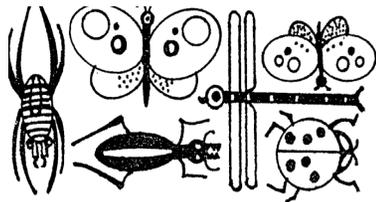


HIDDEN PONDS HIKE

Join us for a guided tour of the wet areas of Thorn Creek Woods. Discover vernal ponds, listen for amphibian choruses and explore the marshes of Owl Lake and beyond. These low lying areas provide vital habitat for woodland creatures and are an integral part of the Thorn Creek ecosystem. **Saturday, June 16, 1-4 p.m. Free! Ages 10 years or older. Registration required by Thursday, June 14.**

THORN CREEK CHAMBER PLAYERS

Cellist Ingrid Krizan and the Thorn Creek Chamber Players present a concert celebrating the advent of summer. Join us for a fun-filled afternoon as the music echoes through the woods. Refreshments. **Sunday, June 24, 3-5 p.m. Ages 12 or older. \$10 per person. Purchase tickets by Friday, June 22.**



INSECTS ABOUND FOR KIDS

Join us to observe the wide variety of these fascinating creatures. Discover what makes an insect unique. Explore the differences between insects, spiders, and other kinds of arthropods. On a hike we'll search for insect habitats and gently capture a few arthropods

to study and then release. This class is led by naturalist April Richards. **Saturday, June 30, 1-3 p.m. \$15 Fee. Ages 6-10. Wetlands Discovery Center, 30 N. Orchard, Park Forest. Registration by June 25 with Park Forest Parks and Recreation Department: 708.748.2005.**

SOLSTICE HIKE

Celebrate the beauty of the summer woods with a woodland hike on the longest day of the year. Discover the naturalist in you as you explore the woods, observing birds and insects, identifying trees and flowers, following tracks and much more. **Thursday, June 21, 6-8 p.m. Free. All Ages. Registration required by Tuesday, June 19.**

WEEKLY PROGRAM

WEDNESDAY MORNING WALKERS

Follow the forest's seasonal changes, enjoy light exercise and experience nature firsthand on Thorn Creek Woods Nature Preserve's winding trails. Trails may be wet or muddy, so please wear sturdy shoes. **Wednesdays, 9-10:30 a.m. Ages 13-adult. Free. Registration required two days before your first walk.**



MARCH

WOODCOCK WATCH

The arrival of the Woodcock is one of spring's most sought-after sights. Discover the fantastic aerial courtship displays of the Woodcock. Join expert birder Sue Zelek for this evening program and watch in amazement as the male Woodcock seeks his mate. Meet at Nature Center and carpool to GSU. This field trip is sponsored by Thorn Creek Audubon Society. **Saturday, March 3, 5:15-7:00 p.m. Rain date: Saturday, March 10, 5:15-7:00 p.m. All ages. Free! Registration required by Wednesday, February 28.**



MAKE A GOURD BIRDHOUSE

This is a fun family workshop to create a welcoming nesting space for birds in your own backyard. Join artist and teacher Pat Moore to make a natural style birdhouse from a gourd. Sponsored by the Thorn Creek Audubon Society. All materials provided. **Sunday, March 4, 1-2 p.m. \$10/house; limit one/person. All**

ages; children under age 6 should be accompanied by an adult. Registration required by Friday, March 2.

WOODS MUSIC

As spring begins come celebrate the woods with music. This year Woods Music features the Molly Rose Trio, Anna Stange and Ingrid Krizan. With the generous donation of the musicians' time and expertise all proceeds will benefit Thorn Creek Woods Nature Preserve. Refreshments. **Sunday, March 18, 3-5 p.m. \$10/person. Ages 12 or older. Registration and payment required by Friday, March 16.**

MARCH continued



SPRING CLEAN UP & TRAIL WORKDAY

Shake the winter blahs and come help in the annual spring cleaning. There will be indoor and outdoor work preparing for spring. Come help build or repair boardwalks and maintain the trails throughout the preserve. Or come weed and nurture our Prairie Sampler and butterfly garden. Bring a lunch and gloves & dress for the weather. Refreshments. **Sunday, March 25. Noon-4 p.m. Free!** All ages; children younger than 15 must be accompanied by an adult. Registration is required by Friday, March 23.

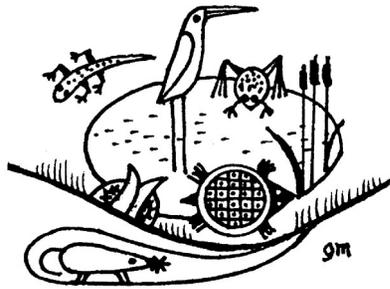
APRIL

FOLLOW THE FOX

Be the fox, following your daily routine along Thorn Creek trails! Look for signs of active bird and mammal neighbors. Call and listen to find your mate and prey, scout out den sites for spring, sniff and mark logs, cache food, mark your territory, and above all, keep out of the way of the coyotes! This event is sponsored by the Thorn Creek Audubon Society. **Sunday, April 8, 1-3 p.m. Free.** For children younger than 12. Children younger than 6 years must be accompanied by an adult. Registration required by Friday, April 6.

EARTH DAY AT THORN CREEK: WILD WATER

A family program to celebrate the waters of Thorn Creek Woods. Explore the creek, the marshes and the low-lying ponds that are home to many amphibians. Enjoy a hike, activities, refreshments and our Spring Raffle. Program is sponsored by Friends of Thorn Creek Woods. **Saturday, April 21, 1 - 4 p.m. Free.** All ages.



FULL MOON HIKE

Join us for a meandering night hike unraveling some woodland mysteries and listening for the first sounds of spring. **Sunday, April 29, 7-9 p.m. Free!** All ages. Registration required by Friday, April 27.

SOILS HIKE

Is all soil created equal? Do we find different mineral layers in different places? Come see, smell and feel for the answers to these questions. Learn how soil fuels and supports every form of life in the wetlands through a variety of hands on activities. Each participant will also take home posters and their very own plant that they can take care of and watch it grow. This class is led by naturalist April Richards. **Saturday, April 28, 10 a.m.-12 p.m. \$15 Fee. Ages 6-10.** *Wetlands Discovery Center, 30 N. Orchard, Park Forest. Registration by April 23 with Park Forest Parks and Recreation Department: 708.748.2005.*

MAY

WILDFLOWER HIKE FOR KIDS

Even in shady Thorn Creek Woods there is a unique bouquet of wildflowers that thrive here. Join us on a hike to discover which species are in bloom, learn their names and examine their physical appearance. **Saturday, May 12, 1-3 p. m. Free!** Children younger than 12. Children younger than 6 years must be accompanied by an adult. Registration required by Thursday, May 10.



FLOWER MOON HIKE

Join us on the night of the Flower full moon. The abundant blooms of spring flowers and trees in May helped the Potawatomi keep track of the seasons. On our hike we'll listen for nocturnal animals and explore the idea that darkness helps predators. **Tuesday, May 29, 7:30-9:30 p.m. Free!** Ages 10 years or older. Registration required by Sunday, May 27.

Calling all school, home school groups, youth groups, seniors groups and clubs!



Bring your group to explore wildflowers, animal tracks, soils, aquatic insects, fall colors, the Historic Farm and more.

Pre-registration and fees apply. These programs are sponsored by Thorn Creek Audubon Society, our Partners for Programming.

Call or email for more information:
708-747-6320
thorn_creek@att.net



Contribute to our Capital Fund

Help us raise funds for vital improvements on our trails and our Nature Center building

Improvements Needed Now

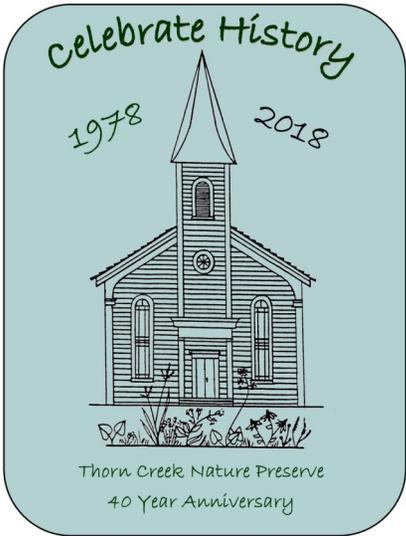
- * *IN PROCESS* Repair and paint Nature Center exterior
- * *IN PROCESS* Trail Improvements
- * North Bridge piers stabilized **DONE**
- * Kiosk sitting area repairs **DONE**
 - * Improve Owl Lake Trail
 - * North bridge Improvements—add ramps
 - * New bypass trail **BEING SCOUTED**



Did You Know?

Our N-S Boardwalk on the Woodland Trail was built in stages. In the summer of 1980 Youth Conservation Corps kids started the 2-foot wide boardwalk over soggy trail starting from the pine tunnel.

This boardwalk was extended 480' north in 1986 by Summer Youth Conservation Employment kids. Another 480' was added by young people in 1988 with an Institute of Museum Services grant.



Sections of this sturdy boardwalk have been rebuilt many times over the years. Volunteer Mark Petnuch has maintained the N-S boardwalk since 2011, replacing boards and stabilizing sections with wood and nails purchased by the Friends Capital Fund.

Our New Boardwalks

are designed to be 6-foot wide. The first new boardwalk was built on the south side of the Nature Center Trail by scouts in 2009.

In the summer of 2017 Boy Scout Troop 185, led by Scoutmaster Dan Chrchrhis, Crete, IL, funded and constructed an 8-foot section of boardwalk over a swampy area on the north side of the Nature Center Trail. Mark Petnuch extended this new section to be 24 feet long.



40 years ago Thorn Creek Woods was formally preserved as an Illinois Nature Preserve.
Let's Celebrate the Past and Look to the Future!

Capital Fund

Friends of Thorn Creek Woods established the CAPITAL FUND for improvements of the Nature Center building and in the Preserve itself over the years - vital projects for which there is no money in the preserve budget.

	Acorn Donation up to \$249	
	Seedling Donation \$250-499	
	Sapling Donation \$500-999	
	Oak Tree Donation \$1000 +	

Over \$25,000 has been raised so far and funded the new north bridge, nature center repairs, north bridge stabilization and kiosk sitting benches

Thank you to ALL who have contributed!

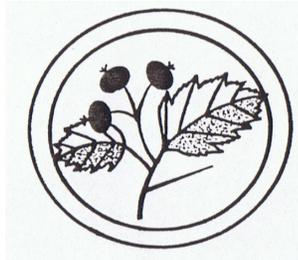
FRIENDS OF THORN CREEK WOODS is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization.

The Nature Center and the Nature Preserve depend on FRIENDS like YOU!

FRIENDS volunteers support nature center staff in so many ways—staff the nature center on weekends, trail work, displays, leading hikes, special events, cleaning, pruning, artwork, music, research, and on and on. Join us!

FRIENDS OF THORN CREEK WOODS

- donates funds for the purchase of equipment, supplies and displays for the nature center and preserve.
- operates the Capital Fund for improvements and the Marzuki Fund for programming
- sponsors an annual meeting and Earth Day.
- members receive a usually quarterly newsletter
- FRIENDS is the citizen activist group that preserved the Woods as an Illinois Nature Preserve.



Join FRIENDS OF THORN CREEK WOODS

Annual Renewal Date is May 1st

Membership.\$20 Life Member.\$200 Organization & Business...\$50

I'd like to volunteer at Thorn Creek Nature Center, please call me.

I am donating \$_____ to the **Jim Marzuki Memorial Fund** - to make a difference in Thorn Creek public programming.

I am donating \$_____ to **Friends** general purposes.

I am donating \$_____ to the **Thorn Creek Woods Capital Fund** for improvements in the Preserve & in the Nature Center building. In memory of _____ In honor of _____

\$_____ Total Enclosed

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

FRIENDS OF THORN CREEK WOODS, Box 32, Richton Park, IL 60471

MAKE NOTE OF OUR NEW 2018 P.O. BOX 32



So What Can You Do To Help?

- Helpers for Nature Center Open Hours on Friday & Sunday, noon to 4 p.m. Closed Saturday.
It is vital to have volunteers to greet visitors and to do many housekeeping and office tasks – all to keep the nature center operating.
- Trail Watchers are our eyes & ears on the trails. Use the blue Trail Watchers forms or email nature center with concerns.
- Trail & boardwalk building projects on our Workdays and for groups like Eagle Scouts.
- Volunteers to bake and/or make soup for our events.
- Assist at programs and help lead nature hikes.
- Become a member of Friends. Come to our monthly Friends Board meetings, usually the 4th Monday at 10:30 a.m. at the nature center.

Nature Center Needs Things

- *Birdseed (mix or black sunflower seed—no corn)
- *Suet cakes
- *Picture Hanging Strips – Command brand, medium size, need lots!
- *Stamps you saved for Audubon
- *Cases of bottled water
- *1" x 2 5/8" address labels- ink jet or laser
- *Large plastic boxes about 1.5'x 3'
- *Hand clippers and loppers
- *Hoes
- *6" x 9" envelopes
- *Night scopes

Visit the website for
Thorn Creek Nature Center and Preserve
www.tcwoods.org

Programming Directions Photographs
Make Contributions Order t-shirts Newsletters