

## THORN CREEK NATURE CENTER

247 Monee Road, Park Forest, IL 60466  
708-747-6320  
thorn\_creek@att.net

Visit our Website - [tcwoods.org](http://tcwoods.org)

Nature Center open Friday and Sunday  
noon to 4 p.m. Closed Saturday.

Trails open daily year-round, dawn to dusk

Nature Center Closed:

Friday, Aug. 31 & Sunday, Sept. 2-Labor Day  
Friday, Nov. 23 & Sunday, Nov. 25 - Thanksgiving  
Friday, December 21 & Sunday, Dec. 23—Christmas  
Friday, December 28 & Sunday, Dec. 30—New Year's



**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 restored 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.

**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 about our Nature Education Programs.

### 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.

Funding for the operation of the Preserve and Nature Center comes from annual contributions by member agencies - monetary & in-kind -, program fees, grants and donations. The bare bones Commission budget has no extra money for needed nature center building and preserve improvements.

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

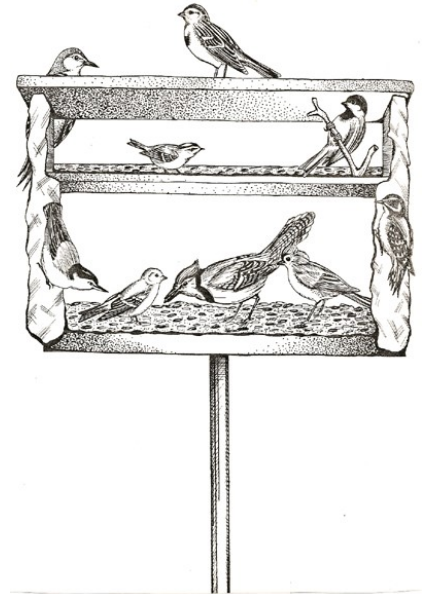
## FEBRUARY

### BEGINNING BIRDING FOR ALL

Who is that feathered creature pecking at your feeder? Come to us. We know. Watch & count birds, participate in "bird" activities, and get help with identifications. Make a bird feeder to take home, play the beaks game, examine the size and mass of birds and other activities.

Don't miss our Beginning Bird Hike at 9 a.m.

Get prepared to be part of Cornell's "Great Backyard Bird Count" nationwide citizen scientist survey this weekend! This event is sponsored by the Thorn Creek Audubon Society. **Saturday, February 16, 9 a.m.-noon. Free! All ages. Registration required by Thursday, February 14.**



### TRACKING ANIMALS IN WINTER

How do animals survive winter's chills? What adaptations have they developed to keep warm and find food? We'll put ourselves in the paws of Thorn Creek's woodland creatures and follow the trails in search of tracks and other spoor. We'll make plaster cast tracks to take home.



Program is sponsored by Thorn Creek Audubon Society. If weather is inclement this program will still take place inside the Nature Center. **Sunday, February 24, 1-3 p.m. Free! All ages. Children younger than age 6 must be accompanied by an adult. Registration required by Friday, February 22.**

## DECEMBER

### STORY OF THE LANDSCAPE HIKE

Join our hike to “read” the landscape of Thorn Creek Woods. Find out what the slopes, depressions, stream channels, and tree communities in the woods can tell us. **Sunday, December 2, 1-3 p.m. Free. All ages. Registration required by Friday, November 30.**

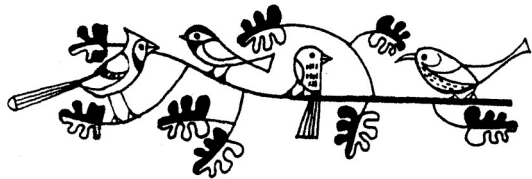
### WILD ANIMAL TRACKS

Tracks can be clues to wild animals’ identities and behaviors. Discover how animals survive through the different seasons. We will walk the trails searching for signs of animals preparing for winter. Bring home your own track replica. Program is sponsored by Thorn Creek Audubon Society. **Saturday, December 8, 1-3 p.m. Free. Ages 4-10. Children younger than age 6 must be accompanied by an adult. Registration required by Thursday, December 6.**



## JANUARY

### BEGINNING BIRDING FOR KIDS



Impress your friends this spring with your birding smarts, binocular savvy and your very own life list of birds you have seen. Come get an early start with this popular

hobby – bird watching. In the Sunday sessions, learn key shapes, markings, habits and songs for our most common local birds with crafts, activities, sounds and hikes. Create special projects for display at Beginning Birding for All program, February 16. Join the 9 a.m. Beginning Bird Hike and host activities at that event. Price includes your own field guide to birds. Sponsored by the Thorn Creek Audubon Society. **4 weekly sessions Sundays, January 13 through February 3, 1-3:30 p.m. and Saturday, February 16, 9 a.m.-noon. Ages 7-12. \$20 prepaid for full 5 sessions. Registration and payment by Wednesday, January 2.**

## WEEKLY PROGRAM



### WEDNESDAY MORNING WALKERS

Follow the forest’s seasonal changes, enjoy light exercise and experience nature firsthand on Thorn Creek’s winding trails. Trails can be wet or muddy, please wear sturdy shoes. **Wednesdays, September 5—December 12 and starts again March 6, 9-10:30 a.m. Ages 13-adult. Free. Registration required two days before your first walk.**

## SEPTEMBER

### FALL WORKDAY

Come out and have fun sprucing up the Nature Center, as well as tackling preserve cleanup, trail repairs, and weeding our Prairie Sampler. There will be indoor and outdoor work to be done. Bring a lunch and work gloves and dress for the weather. Groups and community service are welcome. Refreshment provided. **Sunday, September 16, Noon- 3 p.m. All ages. Children under 15 must be accompanied by an adult. Registration required by Friday, September 14.**



### GARLIC FOR SALE

**THORN CREEK NATURE CENTER WILL HAVE A BOOTH AT THE PARK FOREST FARMERS MARKET FOR ONE DAY**

Garlic bulbs of 20 varieties, all grown at Thorn Creek’s Historic Farm, will be sold for \$2.50 per bulb, for eating and for planting this fall. We have garlic to buy and planting information will be available. **Saturday, September 22. 7 a.m. to Noon. Park Forest Farmers Market, 152 Main Street next to Dollar General.**

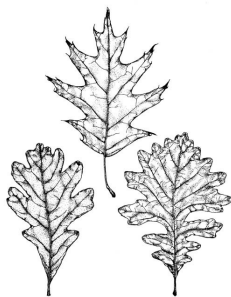
### SEPTEMBER NIGHT HIKE

Come join us to explore the autumn woods at night just after the equinox. **Tuesday, September 25, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Free. Ages 16-adult. Registration required by Sunday, September 23.**

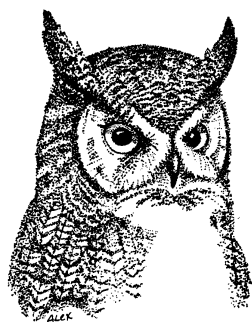
## OCTOBER

### KNOW YOUR OAKS HIKE

Oak trees are common in Thorn Creek Woods, but are they all the same? Find out which oaks are found in our region and how to tell them apart even when the leaves are gone. Discover tips and tricks to help you identify some of the different species of oak trees. **Sunday, October 7, 1-3 p.m.** All ages. Free. Registration required by Friday, October 5.



### DRAWING OWLS



Artist Pat Moore will help young artists draft from nature, studying real owl taxidermy specimens to explore the basics of realistic drawing, shading and texture. Artists will also learn about America's rich tradition of artist/naturalists like John James Audubon. All materials will be provided and refreshments will be served. **Sunday, October 14, 1-2 p.m.** All ages. Children younger than age 6 must be accompanied by an adult. \$5 per person per session. Registration required by Friday, October 12.

### AUTUMN NIGHT HIKE

Come join us to share the smells, sounds and sights of Thorn Creek Woods at night. A naturalist will guide us in a "quiet time" experience to take in the nocturnal activities occurring in the preserve before winter sets in. No flashlights, please. **Wednesday, October 24, 6:30-8:30 p.m.** Free. Adults and children over 10 years old. Registration required by Monday, October 22.

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

Bring your group to explore fall colors, animal tracks, soils, aquatic insects, the Historic Farm and more. These Nature Education Programs are sponsored by Thorn Creek Audubon Society. Pre-registration and fees apply. Call or email for more information: 708-747-6320, thorn\_creek@att.net



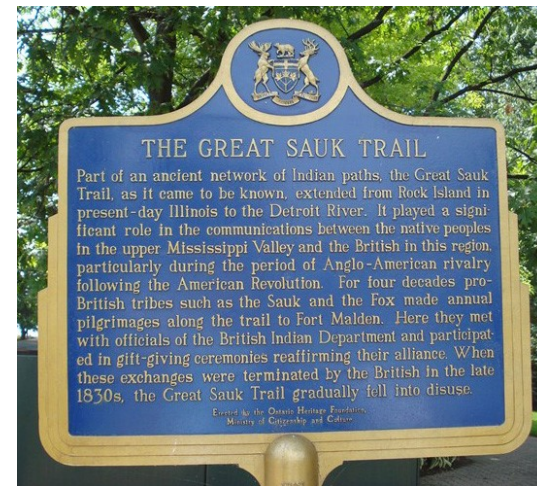
### STORIES FROM THE OLD SAUK TRAIL: AN AFTERNOON WITH FRIENDS OF THORN CREEK WOODS

The Great Sauk Trail began as a Native American trail running through Illinois, Indiana and Michigan. The trail evolved into a major wagon and stage coach road and the route for countless fugitive slaves seeking their freedom in Canada.

Local historian Larry McClellan has stories to tell about this now-busy thoroughfare on the northern edge of our Thorn Creek Woods.

At our annual gathering of nature lovers which is open to the public, there will be a short Friends meeting, the presentation and refreshments. Larry McClellan is a founding member of Governors State University, retired professor of sociology and community studies, local pastor, former mayor of University Park and historian. McClellan has co-authored two books on the history of the south suburbs and written hundreds of columns for local newspapers.

**Saturday, October 27, 1-3 p.m.** Free. Ages 12-adult. Open to the public. Freedom Hall, 410 Lakewood Blvd, Park Forest



## NOVEMBER

### ANIMALS IN AUTUMN—FOR KIDS

Come and explore how plants and animals prepare for the cold weather and darker days. Participants will create a bird feeder, conduct an experiment and look for clues of winter preparation on a hike in the preserve. This program for children is sponsored by Thorn Creek Audubon Society. **Sunday, November 11, 1-3 p.m.** Free. Ages 9-12. Registration required by Friday, November 9.



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

Return Service Requested

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 2  
PARK FOREST IL  
60466

If you no longer wish  
to receive our  
program brochure,  
please call  
708-747-6320  
or email  
thorn\_creek@att.net

Cover photo by Dan Moore



# THORN CREEK WOODS NATURE PRESERVE

## FALL-WINTER

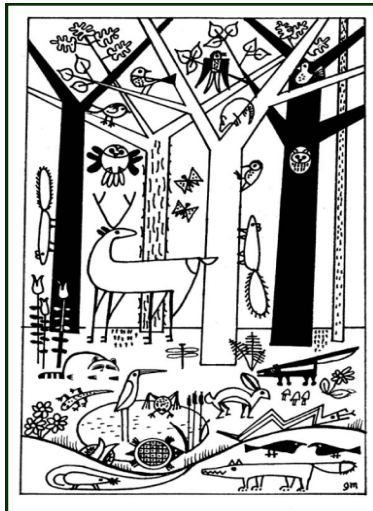
September 2018 - February 2019

## 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 as well as Earth Day.
- members receive a usually quarterly newsletter
- FRIENDS is the citizen activist group that preserved the Woods as an Illinois Nature Preserve.



## 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** & for groups like Eagle Scouts.
- Volunteers to **bake** and/or make **soup** for our events
- Assist at **programs** and help lead **nature hikes**

\*Birdseed (mix or black sunflower seed—no corn)

\*Suet cakes

\*Picture Hanging Strips – Command brand, medium size, need lots!

\*Stamps you saved for Audubon  
\*1" x 2 5/8" address labels- ink jet or laser

\*Plastic boxes with lids- shoe box size & medium size

### 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**

### Parking for Thorn Creek Nature Center

As of fall of 2017 Thorn Creek Nature Center is no longer able to use the parking at the church just north of the nature center for overflow parking for nature center programs. Added to that, the nature center use of the grassy parking across Monee Road at old Camp Pompei for overflow parking has become extremely difficult due to year- round soggy conditions at the entrances.

Thus, the kind and size of programs that the nature center can offer has been severely affected. The 15-car nature center parking lot can still accommodate the many popular hikes and classes. However, parking for the mid-sized programs like our popular music programs cannot be easily and safely accommodated. So, for the foreseeable future we will not be able to hold music programs at Thorn Creek Nature Center.

The Thorn Creek Management Commission was planning to build an overflow parking lot for 20 cars in the old Camp Pompei property. Unfortunately, that will not be possible because the Will County Highway Department does not allow pedestrians crossing Monee Road since it is mid-block and unsafe with poor sightlines. With this setback, the Commission will explore some other alternatives.

In the meantime, you can look forward to many fine nature center offerings including night hikes, nature hikes, children's programs and nature art programs.

Thank you for your patience and understanding.  
Thorn Creek Nature Preserve Management Commission



## The Perfect Holiday Gift

Inspired by  
Thorn Creek Nature Center  
**Prairie Chapel**  
is an original  
graphite drawing  
by Marikay Peter Witlock

Intrigued by a promise of a patch of prairie, Witlock visited Thorn Creek Nature Center in the late summer of 1988. She left that visit with a vision of prairie and chapel woven as one, and a profound sense of the sacred in the land. *Prairie Chapel* became the first in a series of over 35 drawings combining architectural elements with the grasses and forbs of Illinois.

Available in limited edition of 300 signed and numbered prints  
Image size 13" x 17", finished size 18" x 21"  
Printed on acid free 80 lb. paper, the reproduction retains every detail of the original graphite drawing

Through the artist's generosity, this print is available with a donation to Friends of Thorn Creek Woods of \$75 or more.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

FRIENDS OF THORN CREEK WOODS is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization. Donations to FRIENDS, over the value of the *Prairie Chapel* print (valued at \$75) are tax-deductible. Consult your tax advisor.

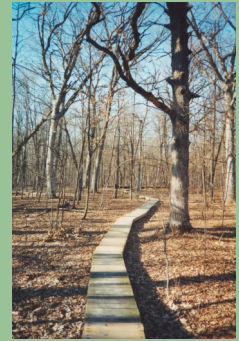
Donation - \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Shipping/Handling for a print - \$ 5.00  
Total amount enclosed - \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail check made out to: Friends of Thorn Creek Woods  
P.O. Box 32, Richton Park, IL 60471

## CAPITAL FUND

## Contribute to our Capital Fund today

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



## Improvements Needed

- \* North bridge Improvements - add ramps. *PIERS STABILIZED*
- \* *IN PROCESS* Repair and paint Nature Center exterior
- \* *IN PROCESS* Trail Improvements
  - \* Kiosk sitting area: Benches *REPAIRED*;  
Path repairs *BEING PLANNED*
  - \* Improve Owl Lake Trail
  - \* New bypass trail *BEING SCOUTED*



## 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!**

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