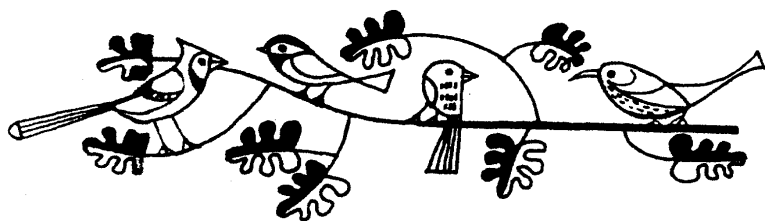




Friends of Thorn Creek Woods

Thorn Creek News

Winter 2016-17



BEGINNING BIRDS FOR KIDS

4 weekly sessions
Sundays, January 15 through February 5, 1-3 p.m.
plus
Saturday, February 11, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Impress your friends this spring
with your birding smarts, binocular savvy and
your very own life list of birds you have seen.

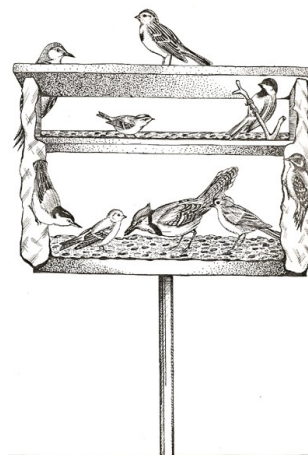
In the Sunday sessions, learn key shapes, markings,
habits and songs for our most common local birds
with crafts, activities, sounds and hikes.

Create special projects for display
at the Beginning Birding for All program February 11.
Join the 9 a.m. Beginning Bird Hike and host activities .

Price includes your own field guide to birds.
Sponsored by the Thorn Creek Audubon Society.

Ages 7-12

\$20 prepaid for full 5 sessions
Registration and payment required



Beginning Birding For All

Saturday, February 11 9 a.m.- 1 p.m.

Beginning Bird Hike at 9 a.m.

Call or email to register

Who is that feathered creature pecking at your feeder?
Come to our open house for help with *all things BIRDS!*

*Tips on Identifying Birds * Games * Crafts * Viewing Window* Bird Feeding
Thorn Creek Audubon Society Exhibits * Bird Checklists & Field Guides * Using Binoculars*

2016 at Thorn Creek Nature Center and Nature Preserve

In 2016 we offered an old program "Learn 70 Birds by Spring" with former naturalist and master birder Sue Zelek presenting. Sue and our naturalists designed this very successful program with materials assistance from Thorn Creek Audubon Society.

April replaced Junior Ecologist Club with monthly children's programs designed for different age groups. This worked along with all the new public programs and Nature Education programs that the naturalists have been designing and refining such as Animal Tracks in Winter, the Lorax, Spring Wildflowers, and more. Our Partnership for Programming with the Thorn Creek Audubon Society supports our programs, along with the Jim Marzuki Fund of the Friends of Thorn Creek Woods.

Nature Education programs were given for special groups: South Suburban Garden Club- Wildflowers; Park Forest Library – Animal Tracks; Church youth group; high school group; Monee Historic Society- Bats; Glenwood Academy; and the Park Forest Campout.

The Nature Center and Friends had information tables at various local events: Senior Fair, Plum Creek Fall Fest, GSU Volunteer Fair, Park Forest Volunteer Fair.

Special guest naturalists and guest presenters gave very popular programs this year: Stories of the Nature Center Building by Richard Stuenkel; Earth Day Amphibians by Dave Mauger; Women's Nature Retreat by Lynda Randa; Local Geology by Olivier Caron; Singing Insects with Wendy Leonard; Make a Gourd Birdhouse and our annual fall art program with artist Pat Moore.

Musicians provided their talents for our 4 music programs, Woods Music, two Chamber Music programs and Woodland Carols. Thank you musicians.

A special project this year was Naturalist Ingrid Krizan and volunteers doing Frog Monitoring of the ponds in the preserve.

Our programming would not be possible without helpers- volunteers who assist our naturalists at programs, volunteers who co-lead presentations and hikes, and volunteers that provide materials and snacks for programs.

Many donations to Friends and to the Nature Preserve from groups and individuals: Books, bird seed, materials, food, camera, gourds, posters, labels, water, stamps for Audubon Society, stage boxes, 3M hanging strips. Funds donated by individuals and groups like Park Forest Garden Club. \$250 grant to convert slides to digital and \$500 general donation and \$500 donation for new Beginning Birds for Kids program materials- all from Thorn Creek Audubon Society. See Friends Treasurers Report for the donations to Friends and to Friends Capital Fund.

This past year Friends donated much to the preserve including a new order of T shirts, laminating of materials for programs (costly but wonderful in developing good program materials that can be reused), materials for five new Aldo Leopold trail benches, and kiosk benches materials. Friends Capital Fund provided \$6100 for essential rip rap at the North Bridge.

Our partner, Forest Preserve District of Will County (FPDWC), continues to provide downed tree removal, special trail maintenance, plowing, removal of trimmings, publicity for our programs, assistance in design of trail and bridge projects, and more.



Another partner, Village of Park Forest provides nature center building maintenance, loan of resource boxes, publicity for our programs, special maintenance projects, and handling of our staff payroll, and more.

We are so grateful to New Community Church which continues to allow us to use their parking areas for our larger events. They are such good neighbors.

Trail Work

Mark Petnuch continues to maintain the very long N-S Boardwalk- the two foot wide raised boardwalk in the center of the woods along the Woodland Trail. It was built over a number of years and by a number of work groups starting with Youth Conservation Corps in 1980. Mark removes old rotten boards and replaces them with new boards provided by the Commission (and carried out by various sturdy volunteers!).

(Continued on page 3)



(Continued from page 2)

New in 2016, April held monthly Trail Work Days and lots of work was accomplished. Individuals and the Americorps group loaned to us by the Village of Park Forest provided the labor. Trails were clipped and widened, especially the Nature Center Loop Trail and the pine tunnel on the Owl Lake Trail which had both become very overgrown. Keeping these areas under control is a priority. The small Owl Lake Trail bridge was repaired and stabilized. The parking lot edges were cleared and fencing stabilized. A much needed facelift for the kiosk area was done-see below. Sign up for Trail work in 2017!

Trail benches were built by Dave Mauger with materials donated by Friends and placed on trail by Jim Pisani and helpers.

Kiosk benches were revamped with materials from Friends Capital Fund. The work on wood replacement and raising up the very low bench by Wendy Leonard and Jim Pisani, Mark, Dave and Kenney.

Vital rip rap (large rocks) was placed around the piers of the new North Bridge. Thanks to FPDWC landscape architect who prepared proposals and made arrangements; New Community Church that allowed the work to cross their property; April Richards who worked with the LA to plan the path for big trucks; and, \$6100 provided by Friends Capital Fund to clear a wide pathway and for the placement of the rip rap. This work was essential to stabilize the bridge's piers which have been exposed by water erosion.

Gardeners worked at our Prairie Sampler and butterfly garden at the nature center and at the Thorn Creek Historic Farm. Prairie Sampler volunteers worked monthly. Carolyn Gann has adopted and worked on the butterfly garden next to the nature center parking lot, providing plants and hard work. Emily Thiel donated bags of her compost for the garden. April had trail workers clear the brush and undergrowth from around the kiosk benches and designed a new mowing plan there, which along with the kiosk benches repairs provided a real facelift for the kiosk area.

The nature center bird feeding area was originally designed in the 1970's, and, of course, is viewable from inside the nature center at the bird window donated by Thorn Creek Audubon Society. Do come see the NEW BIRD FEEDING AREA designed by Penny Chamberlain and installed by Jim Pisani, Mark, Dave and Kenney. They took out the old poles and very old large wooden platform feeders, and installed two new T-posts with wire strung between them, holding lots of light weight feeders, all of which are not readily accessible to the wily squirrels. Come see!



Helpers

We have helpers of ALL sorts.

-Open Hours- Friends and the Management Commission were forced to close the nature center on Saturdays to walk in visitors, since we are not able to provide volunteers to staff the nature center for Open Hours on Saturdays. So the nature center is indeed open on Fridays and Sundays and this depends on our wonderful Open Hours volunteers. Sign up today to help!

- Fold and collate and stuff our mailings
- Deliver flyers
- Wash tablecloths
- Put out garbage cans
- Trail work of all kinds from monitoring the trails to clipping, hauling, digging waterbars, repairing benches and bridges and boardwalks
- Updating our mailing lists
- Cleaning the nature center- sweeping, mopping, vacuuming, dusting – everything!

And help of all sorts is always needed, especially:

- Open Hours
- Trail work and Trail Watchers
- Program assistants
- Updating our lists

Call or email the Nature Center 708-747-6320,
thorn_creek@att.net.

Thank You All





Deer Management at Thorn Creek Nature Preserve

Presented at Friends Annual Meeting November 2016 by Judy Dolan Mendelson

*Over population of deer in natural areas- Effects

- Overbrowsing of native vegetation.
- Deer herds that reach high density levels tend to be in poor health, and are prone to cyclic population fluctuations and catastrophic losses.
- Can include public safety risks through increased deer-vehicle collisions.

How to measure

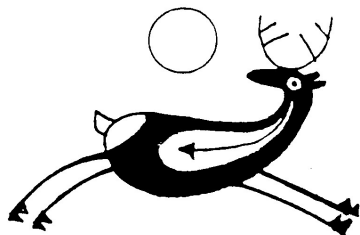
Vegetation studies- The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) requires deer browse monitoring during the growing season preceding any proposed culling activities. Usually the evaluation of deer exclosures that show damage done to plants outside of the exclosure which are contrasted with plants protected within the exclosure.

Aerial deer surveys- deer counts from a helicopter during winter December-March when there is snow cover, to determine deer herd density. Represents a conservative population estimate based on the presence of deer within the preserve at the specific time of the flyover. Aerial surveys are generally considered to underestimate the actual population size by 25%. Also, it is very common for deer to exhibit daily movements between District properties and adjacent properties depending on various conditions.

Current data for TCNP- (from Table 2 page 39 of Forest Preserve District of Will County (FPDWC) report to their commission.) At Thorn Creek Nature Preserve (TCNP) 73 deer were counted in early 2015 flyover representing 47 deer per square mile. Goal of 2016-17 is to remove 33 deer resulting in 26 deer per square mile.

Deer Population Goal = 20-30 deer /square mile for health herd and healthy vegetation.

*Here at TCNP the FPDWC is a partner and member of TCMC and takes the lead in preserve maintenance and management.



1980's-2014: Various vegetation studies by FPD and other researchers, including deer exclosures studying the effects of deer browse. All show deer browsing effecting the forbs, shrubs and tree seedlings. Browse line is visible in the preserve.

1990's on: FPD WC has done aerial deer surveys at TCNP and their other preserves, usually annually in the winter with snow cover. Counts deer seen/square miles of preserve and calculate the density (deer per square mile.)

TCNP counts- very high 1990's thru 2008, then very low; by 2012 high. Then 2012 virus killed about 2043 deer in the area + chronic wasting disease effects.

2010: FPDWC proposed deer culling in their District land holdings

(Continued on page 5)

Winter Events at Thorn Creek Woods

247 Monee Rd
Park Forest
708-747-6320

Thorn_creek@att.net
Nature Center open Friday and
Sunday, noon to 4 pm
Closed:
December 23-25
December 30 - January 1

Beginning Birds for Kids	Sundays, Jan 15-Feb 5 1-3 pm + Sat, Feb 11 9 am-1 pm
Ages 7-12	
\$20 prepaid	

Beginning Birding For All	Saturday Feb 11 9 am-1 pm
Free! All Ages	

Thank You Friends & Volunteers	Sat, Jan 28 Noon-4 pm Chili Pot luck, games & hike
---	---

Hoo Eats Whom	Sunday Feb 19 2-4 pm
Ages 8-12	\$3/person

Tracking Animals in Winter	Sunday February 26 2-4 pm Free! All ages
---	---

Make a Gourd Birdhouse	Sunday March 5 1-2 pm or 2:30-3:30 \$10/birdhouse
---------------------------------------	--

Chili Evening Hike	Sunday March 12 7-9 pm \$5/person
-----------------------------------	---

Woods Music	Friday March 17 7-9 pm
\$10/person	

Vixen's Trek Children younger than 12	Saturday March 25 2-4 pm Free
--	--

Newsletter editor:
Judy Dolan Mendelson
Friends: P.O. Box 159,
Richton Park, IL 60471,
dolanmendel@aol.com

(Continued from page 4)



(and proposed including TCNP). TCMC, their SAP (Scientific Advisory Panel) and Friends agreed that: TCNP not be included in the program for a few years, allowing FPDWC to work out and implement the procedures, and not start with TCNP's multi-jurisdictions; that deer should probably be controlled at TCNP but we did not want to use any form of public hunting (which was being considered but never used).

2010: FPDWC began deer management program at other preserves using sharpshooters and basically the system now being used.

(2013: when FPDWC prepared the Thorn Creek Greenway Plan, it was reviewed by TCMC and discussed by Friends-this plan includes statement that deer management should be pursued as needed in the greenway. So we all conceptually approved deer management.)

Jon Mendelson, long time vice president and president of Friends and member and Chair of the Thorn Creek Management Commission, was not in favor of active management in nature preserves and in particular at Thorn Creek Woods. He wrote and spoke expressing opposition to such use of herbicides and pesticides, burning woodlands and culling deer populations. Around 2010, Jon and the SAP concurred with the need for deer management; see above.

*2016: Thus FPDWC included TCNP as one of the sites for deer culling this coming Dec 2016-March 2017. This plan was reviewed by the TCMC at their September meeting and at the September Friends Board meeting. They concurred with the plan. There were some operational questions.

*Deer Culling mechanics: Habitat conditions, access and safety considerations

Timing: Dec-March

Compliance with all rules and regulations mandated by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), and Illinois Nature Preserves Commission and in accordance with the risk management guidelines set forth by the District's insurance administrator, the Park District Risk Management Agency.

Sharpshooters include District police officers and volunteers who are certified annually by IDNR.

Culling operations occur at dusk when the preserves are closed.

Signs will be posted at the entrance to the preserve when sharpshooting activities are scheduled. At all official access points and known non-official access points and there will be a police presence at access points at the time the culling is being conducted.

Safety buffers in place at least 300 feet from preserve boundaries.

3 (for TCNP- see map for locations; 1 in Camp Pompeii, 1 in old PF gardens across from GSU and 1 on edge of old Powell property field at south end of preserve over 1000 feet south of salamander pond.) Firing or bait stations have been selected to ensure that there is an acceptable backdrop for shooting in a downward trajectory at all times over a distance of 50 yards; so that sharpshooters are shooting into the preserve, not toward or beyond the preserve boundary.

These 3 stations baited with corn and salt licks, beginning several days before culling.

FPDWC operational meetings will be held at the beginning of each night's culling shift to review safety considerations.

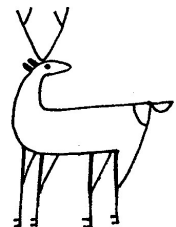
The FPDWC police officer in overall charge of the program will contact the nature center to review details.

Sex- FPDWC recommends preferential, but not exclusive, removal of does allowing for the removal of younger males if necessary to achieve removal targets. Mature males showing ten or more antler points will not be removed. Taking all females can help create a sex ratio favoring males, not healthy for the herd.

Processing and diseases: Culled deer will be field dressed at another location, transported to an IDNR-approved, licensed facility to process the meat, and the meat will be donated to local food pantries, according to IDNR regulations.

-Freedom Sausage, of Earlville, Illinois, processed

-Northern Illinois Food Bank, <http://solvehungertoday.org/> receives the ground venison (38,385 lbs. over 5 years) for distribution to needy families in northeastern Illinois. Internal organs and waste materials were collected for rendering by Kuluzny Brothers of Joliet, Illinois.

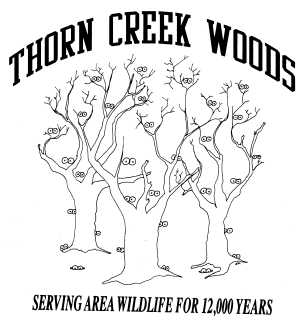


* **Deer Management Information contact=**

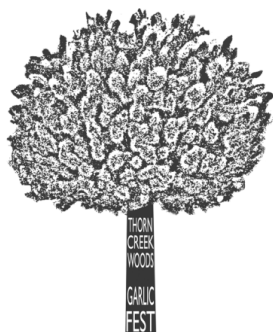
Cindy Cain, FPDWC 815-727-8700

FAQ: Deer Management on the FPDWC website

Get your Thorn Creek T-Shirts– Perfect Holiday Gifts



Long sleeve -
Sagestone with Green Design
Short sleeve -
Blue with White Design



Short sleeve Garlic
T-Shirts
Dark Brown with Blue Garlic
Scape Design

Short Sleeve Thorn Creek Woods = \$ 8 + \$3 per shirt shipping/handling
Short Sleeve Garlic Fest = \$10 + \$3 per shirt shipping/handling
Long Sleeve = \$15 + \$3 per shirt shipping/handling

Please make your check to:

Thorn Creek Nature Center
247 Monee Road
Park Forest, IL 60466
708-747-6320

Or stop by the nature center Friday–Sunday
Noon-4 pm

Prairie Chapel

The perfect gift for a

*Nature Lover

*Art Lover

*Thorn Creek Supporter

A quiet and haunting image of the prairie...

Inspired by the Thorn Creek Nature Center, *Prairie Chapel* is an original graphite drawing by artist Marikay Peter Witlock. Through a generous donation by the artist, the *Prairie Chapel* print is available with a donation to Friends of Thorn Creek Woods of \$75 or more. 100% of donated dollars will benefit Thorn Creek Woods Nature Preserve.



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.

A local professional artist and tireless volunteer for the arts, Marikay's current artwork is available through The Illinois Artisans' Shop, Chicago, Illinois, and Union Street Gallery, Chicago Heights, Illinois.

The *Prairie Chapel* print is a limited edition of 300 signed and numbered prints, with image size of 13" x 17" and finished size of 18" x 21". It is printed on acid free 80 lb. paper. 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.

For more information please contact: Thorn Creek Nature Center, 708-747-6320 or thorn_creek@att.net. To view a framed *Prairie Chapel* print, visit Thorn Creek Nature Center Friday through Sunday from noon to 4 p.m.

Be a FRIEND OF THORN CREEK WOODS

Membership....\$10 Organization & Business.....\$50 Life Membership....\$150
 New Member _____ Renewing Member _____

____I'd like to help as a volunteer at Thorn Creek Nature Center, please call me.

____I am donating \$_____ to the Friends **Capital Fund** for improvements in the Nature Center building & in the Preserve.
 In memory of _____ In honor of _____

____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.

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Telephone _____
 E-mail _____

Make checks payable to: FRIENDS OF THORN CREEK WOODS, Box 159, Richton Park, IL 60471



Annual Renewal Date is May 1st



Calling Young People Age 9 to 12!

Thorn Creek' Nature Center is offering a series of programs designed for kids.

Beginning Birding for Kids—
5 sessions in January and February for ages 7-12

Beginning Birding for All—
Saturday, February 11 for all ages

Hoo Eats Who—
Sunday February 19 for ages 8-12

Tracking Animals in Winter—
Sunday, February 26 for all ages

Making a Gourd Birdhouse—
Sunday, March 5 for all ages

Vixen's Trek—
Saturday, March 25 for children younger than 12

Call or email now for information
 708-747-6320 Thorn_creek@att.net

Friends Annual Meeting November 2016

We elected the slate of officers:

Sue Zelek—*President*
 Jim Pisani—*Vice President*
 Dan Moore—*Treasurer*
 Allison McCray—*Recording Secretary*

The annual dues for regular Friends members was changed from \$10 to \$20, and the Life membership changed from \$150 to \$200 effective May 1, 2017.

At the Friends Board Meeting November 28, Board Directors were appointed for one years terms: Penny Chamberlain, Carolyn Gann, Alice Hanes, Diane Kozlowski and Judy Dolan Mendelson. Alice and Judy were reappointed to represent Friends to the Thorn Creek Woods Management Commission.

Friends Board usually meets the 4th Monday each month at the nature center at 10:30 a.m.

Thorn Creek Woods Management Commission usually meets every third Wednesday at 1 p.m.

Nature Center Needs

► **Helpers for Nature Center Open Hours, Fridays and Sundays from noon—4 p.m.**

- Batteries—C and AA
- Hand clippers and loppers
- Hoes
- Middle sized plastic storage boxes with lids
- Night scopes

△ Birdseed (mix or black sunflower seed—
no corn)

- △ Suet cakes
- △ 1" x 2 5/8" address labels – ink jet or laser
- △ Stamps you saved for Audubon Society
- △ 3M Command medium Picture Hanging Strips
- △ 6" x 9" mailing envelopes
- △ Cases of bottled water

Friends of Thorn Creek Woods
Box 159
Richton Park, IL 60471

Please clip commemorative stamps
& bring to Nature Center for
Audubon Stamps
for Wildlife Habitats



Want to receive
Thorn Creek News
only via email-
then email editor
Judy Dolan
Mendelson at
dolanmendel@aol.com

Renew Now!



Friends & Volunteers of Thorn Creek Woods
YOU ARE INVITED TO

THANK YOU Game Time PARTY

Saturday, January 28, noon-4 p.m.



We'll provide the chili and the drinks,
you bring the whatever
-appetizers, breads, desserts,
veggie trays or

Chili Pot Luck
Bingo Contest with Prizes!
Hike
Keep up with what's going
on at Thorn Creek Woods

Call, email or drop by the nature center
to RSVP by Thursday, January

708-747-6320 thorn_creek@att.net
Add'l parking at New Community Church

