



Friends of Thorn Creek Woods

Thorn Creek News

Winter 2019

Beginning Birding For All

Saturday, February 16 9 a.m.– noon

Beginning Bird Hike at 9 a.m.

Call or email to register by Thursday, February 14



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

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.

And sip hot chocolate, coffee or tea at the bird viewing window.

*Tips on Identifying Birds * Games * Crafts * Bird Feeding * Using Binoculars * Bird Checklists & Field Guides*

TCAS



Beginning Birds for All, like all of our bird programs and all of our Nature Education programs, is sponsored by the Thorn Creek Audubon Society. Our Partnership for Programming with TCAS furthers the Society's environmental education mission and gives valuable assistance to Thorn Creek Nature Center in providing nature programming for groups of area children and adults. Thorn Creek recently received a \$500 grant from TCAS which was used to purchase bird and insect guides and insect displays. TCAS is a longtime supporter of Thorn Creek and its continued support is essential and much appreciated.

*For information about Thorn Creek Audubon Society membership, events and projects:
Thorn Creek Audubon Society, P. O. Box 895, Park Forest, IL 60466, or thorncreekaudubonsociety.org.*

Spring Clean Up and Trail Workday

Sunday, March 17

Noon- 4 p.m.

Shake the winter blahs and come help in our annual spring cleaning.

There will be indoor and outdoor work.

Help clean inside the nature center.

Or help maintain the trails or build and repair boardwalks
throughout the preserve.

Or come weed and nurture our Prairie Sampler
and butterfly garden.

Bring a lunch and gloves and dress for the weather.

Children under 15 must be accompanied by an adult
Registration required 2 days before the program day.
Community groups are welcome!



A Short History of Thorn Creek Nature Preserve Trails

Revised Jan 23, 2019



Summer of 1974- Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) group of 22 young people under direction of David Sheridan, Jan Stark and Ray Ring environmental instructors. \$16000 grant funded by Park Forest & US Depts of Interior and Agriculture.

Nature Center Trail, a 1/2-mile loop through 10 acres, cleared 6' wide, covered with wood chips, and numbered interpretive posts, trail guide.

Summer of 1975- YCC group of 22 young people administered by John Joyce, directed by David Sheridan with Jan Stark and Don Lorenzen environmental instructors. Nature Center Trail maintenance, parking lot railroad ties, fence at entrance, created nature center path of rounds. Also various nature center displays including the cross section of the white oak.

Summer of 1976- YCC group of young people under direction of David Sheridan with Jan Stark and Steve Lee program supervisors.

New 1-1/2 mile loop trail (Woodland Trail), maintenance of old trail (Nature Center Trail), signage, walkway rounds, two bridges over Thorn Creek, nature center displays.

Summer of 1977- YCC program through Park Forest.

Trail repairs, plantings around the nature center and prairie, signs, trail guide.

Summer 1979- Illinois Youth Conservation Corps group of young people under direction of Bob Cherney.

Maintenance of trails and placed crushed limestone or wood chips on trails. Boardwalk that passes through a field of nettles near bridge was rerouted and handrails added. Bridge over ravine was widened and handrails added. (probably ravine on Woodland Trail just east of the north bridge-this bridge was destroyed in the fire of 1986).

Summer of 1980- YCC through Forest Preserve District of Will County under direction of Judy Dolan. Group of young people with Bill Luft and program supervisors. \$26322 grant. Nature center walkway rebuilt (rounds removed -replaced with gravel), fence installed, and plantings at nature center. Nature Center Trail widened and covered with wood chips. New trail signs. Major boardwalk over wet areas on Woodland Trail built (starting from the intersection with the pine tunnel and going north). At Hornicek Farm, clean up and painted the outside and inside of the barn.



1982- Bridge (which one?) that was damaged due to recent problems with horses was completely rebuilt with Park Forest providing materials and John & Betty Weber and Alex Hamilton providing labor.

April of 1986- Wildfire burned about 30 acres in the center of the woods just north of where the north-south portion of the Woodland Trail turns west.

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Summer 1986 - Summer Youth Conservation Employment Grant Program through University Park; eight young people and a leader.
Built 480' of boardwalk on Woodland Trail, installed 100 water bars, 2 benches, trail maintenance, cleared trail to Owl Lake.

Summer 1987 & 1988- IDOC Kankakee State Park staff
Trail maintenance.

Summer 1988- Institute of Museum Services grant of \$1591 to hire eight young people under the direction of Assistant Naturalist Margo Mair.
Created Owl Lake Loop Trail, extended boardwalk north on the Woodland Trail about 480 feet, new signs, trail maintenance such as 100 water bars, & handrails.

Summer 1990-Eagle Scout Chris Abramson Troop #156
Installed French drains and gravel in the long wet stretch on the south side of the Nature Center Trail referred to as the "witches' area" (because it was the perfect place for the "witches" in our Halloween Ghost Jaunt program). Installed shorter French drain on Nature Center Trail by St. Mary's. Installed water bars at various trail locations.

Summer 1991- University Park Scout Troop 168 under leadership of Richard Beil and with Thorn Creek Audubon funds.
New kiosk.

Summer 1993- Scout Troop 185 of St. Paul Good Shepherd Church as a project of Eagle Scout Matt Pursley.
40-foot bridge in floodplain.

1990's on- Forest Preserve District of Will County's Mike Deardorff and crew rebuilt and repaired both Thorn Creek bridges many times.

1994- Forest Preserve District of Will County and volunteers.
Rebuilt sections of the boardwalk on Woodland Trail after storm damage in 1993 and 1994.

Fall of 1995- Volunteers redid the French drain at "witches area", water bars, repair signs, benches.

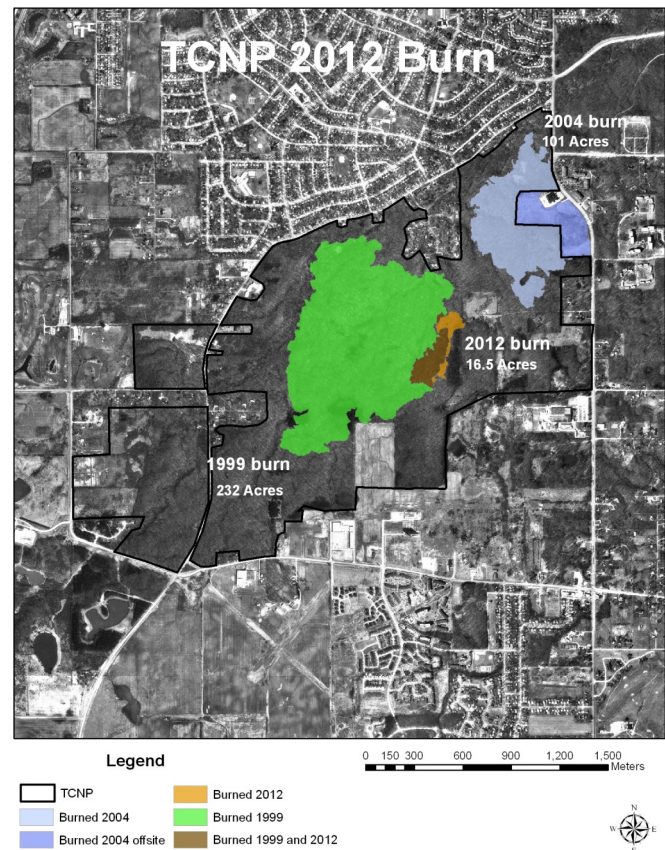
Summer of 1996- Hornicek Farm- building repairs including foundation repair to shed, reroofing shed/garage and house, porch brickwork, and gutters for house. Done by contractors. Mendelson's \$12,158 and TCMC \$3000.

1997- Forest Preserve District of Will County did aerial and topographic mapping for preserve at 1:100 scale with 2-foot contour intervals.

October 1999- wildfire in center of woods.
232 acres burned over two days.

Summer 2000-Forest Preserve District of Will County crew and Kevin Butler and other volunteers, with funds (\$1719) from FPDWC & Park Forest after the wildfire of October 1999.
Rebuilt 400 feet of Woodland Trail boardwalk.
*1999 fire also damaged the bridge over ravine on Woodland Trail east of the north Thorn Creek bridge. Bridge was not replaced, rather, trail was rerouted.

April 2004- wildfire in eastern portion of the woods-just west and north of old medical center and just north of Hornicek Farm. 101 acres burned. No buildings damaged or trails affected.



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and Junior Ecologists Club and Earth Day. Thorn Creek Audubon Society grant and a generous donation of plants from TCAS and Patricia Albert, plus a birdbath from Linda Bravo.

June 2009 – Scout group built new 10' long x 6' wide boardwalk section over wet area on Nature Center Trail (the south side before the witches area).

2009– Bloom Township Youth Conservation and Leadership Corp spent two weeks. Ripped out the old railroad ties in the parking lot and installed new ones and built another boardwalk.

2011 -ongoing – Volunteer Mark Petnuch maintains the N-S boardwalk, replacing boards and stabilizing sections with wood and nails purchased by the Friends of Thorn Creek Woods Capital Fund.

December 2011 – New North Bridge over Thorn Creek on the Woodland Trail was completely rebuilt, thanks to a grant from the American Hiking Association, the Capital Fund of Friends of Thorn Creek Woods, generous donations in memory of the late Joe Hanes, and the work of the Village of Park Forest and Forest Preserve District of Will County crews. Built in 1974 the old bridge suffered over the years from repeatedly being struck and damaged by debris carried on flood waters and finally had to be rebuilt.

-mid August FPDWC crew removed old bridge and dragged out 2 - 34 ft beams and set them in place. We had to order a replacement 1' x 1' x 8' timber since the June storms took the old ones downstream! Grant/Friends paid for new one. Readjustments were made (Glu-Lam beams too short for the span) by FPDWC to dig and set 2 sono tubes with concrete on each side to elevate and support the Glu-Lam beams.

-Village of PF cut the rest of the decking and handrail boards.

-October, volunteer cleaned dirt off the Glu-Lam beams.

-November, Village of Park Forest moved wood out to bridge site.

-December Village of Park Forest constructed the new north bridge, readjusting the Glu-Lam beams, adding decking, handrails and steps.

They weren't able to apply preservative to the untreated glu-lams before construction. Large metal braces are on order to secure the Glu-Lams.



2006– TCMC awarded a C2000 grant with in kind services provided by GSU. Contract with Natural Resources Management, Doug Short.

At TCNP prairie on east edge of preserve: the newly acquired old Park Forest gardens were graded and prepared and seeded with prairie seed. In the preserve prairie east of old gardens, removed shrubs to create openings and corridors in the prairie.

2009– Eagle Scout Ian Toppett. New boardwalk on north side of Woodland Trail just west of the north bridge. Cleared Owl Lake Trail.

Spring 2009– volunteers
Butterfly garden established just south of parking lot, as part of Roots & Shoots

2012 - Eagle Scouts.

Created the new switch back trail designed by naturalist Tara Wisniewski, and installed donated water bars on the ravine slope- all just east and uphill of the new North Bridge.

2012- Wildfire. 16.5 acres burned just west of Hornicek Farm barn.

April 29, 2013- South Bridge closed due to hazardous condition.

Bridge was assessed by FPDWC and PF and after much discussion, meetings with volunteers and agencies, the Thorn Creek Management Commission decided not to rebuild this bridge and instead create a new connecting section of trail to make the Woodland Trail a complete loop utilizing only the North Bridge. (See March 2017 Building and Trail Plans at Thorn Creek Woods.) (The dilapidated old bridge was removed with a grant arranged by FPDWC.)



March 2013 - Volunteers Jim Pisani and Mark Jackson

Placed 5 new benches built by David Mauger along the trail: 2 along north loop of Woodland Trail by North Bridge, 1 in the pines, 1 on the way to Owl Lake, and 1 along the far side of Owl Lake. Jim and Mark also removed the dilapidated bench from the far side of Owl Lake and assisted in the removal of the "tractor trail" marks from the trees. Bench wood purchased by Friends of Thorn Creek Woods Capital Fund.

April 2015 - A new bench was installed at the beginning of the trail in memory of Jon Mendelson. Bench was donated by Environment Commission of Park Forest and was built and installed by Park Forest Parks and Recreation staff.



2016- rip rap at north Bridge.

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, funding provided by Friends Capital fund \$6100 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.

Summer 2016- Monthly Trail Workdays and 12 hours of AmeriCorps young people program led by naturalist April Richards. Trails were clipped and widened, especially the Nature Center Trail and the pine tunnel on the Owl Lake Trail which had both become very overgrown. Parking lot edges were cleared and fencing stabilized.

The small Owl Lake Trail bridge was repaired and stabilized by Jim Pisani and Mark Jackson and Kenny.

Summer 2016- Kiosk area

Kiosk benches were revamped with materials from Friends Capital Fund-wood replacement and raising up a very low bench by Wendy Leonard and Jim Pisani and helpers.

Volunteer Carolyn Gann adopted 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. Trail workers cleared the brush and undergrowth from around the kiosk benches and April designed a new mowing plan for the kiosk area.

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Summer 2016- Bird feeders

New bird feeding area designed by Penny Chamberlain and installed by Jim Pisani and helpers. They took out the old poles and old large wooden platform feeders and installed two new T-posts with wire strung between them, holding many light weight feeders, all of which should not be readily accessible to the wily squirrels.

Summer 2017- Boy Scout Troop 185, 4 scouts and their chaperones led by Scoutmaster Dan

Chrchrhis, Crete, IL.

Funded and constructed an 8' section of boardwalk located over swampy area on north side of Nature Center Trail.

Summer 2017 - AmeriCorps (as part of the Village of Park Forest grant) under direction of naturalist April Richards and assisted by volunteer Mark Bass. Cost of materials and supplies born by Friends of Thorn Creek Woods Capital Fund.

Corrected 13 water drainage bars on the Woodland Trail just east and above the North Bridge. They cleared vegetation around and retrenched the 25 water bars all along the Woodland Trail. Cleared and widened over a quarter mile of the Nature Center Trail and realigned and cleared a damaged section of the Woodland Trail.

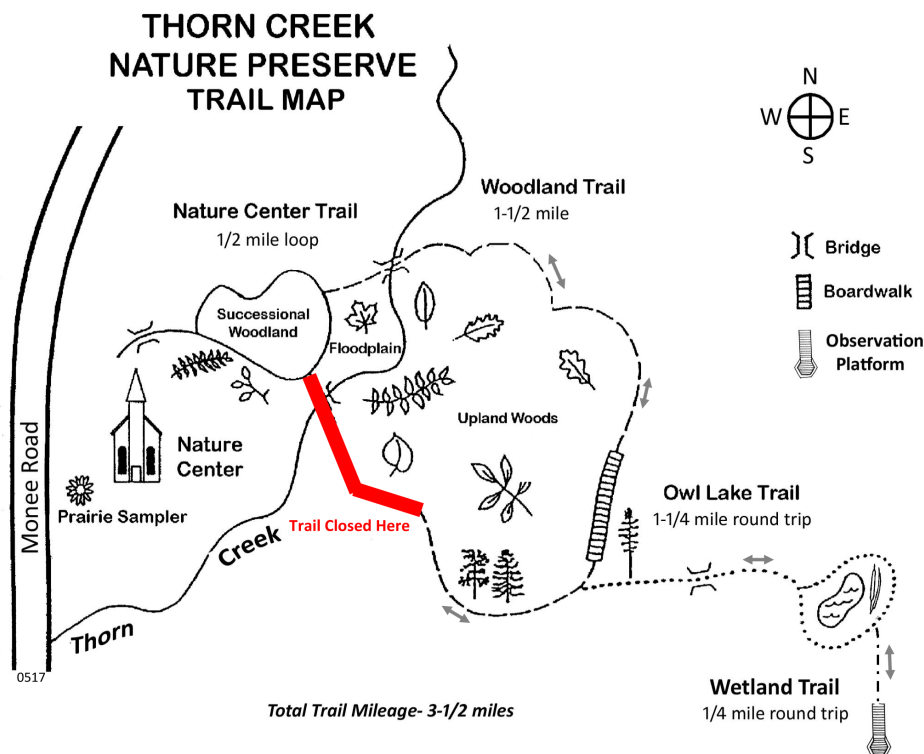
Fall 2017 - Volunteer Mark Petnuch completed remaining 16' sections to the 2017 scout boardwalk. Completed boardwalk is 24' long and 8' wide. Materials funder by Friends of Thorn Creek woods Capital Fund.

Winter 2017-18 - Volunteers Jim Pisani, Mark Jackson and Dave Kenny replaced old and installed new water bars on the Nature Center Trail at the intersection with the Woodland Trail.

August 2018 - AmeriCorps (part of VOPF grant) under the direction of naturalist April Richards, August 20-24. Supplies provided by Friends of Thorn Creek Woods Capital Fund. University Park Police allowed us to park vehicles and use restrooms at the Police Station for the one-week program. FPDWC mowed a path from behind the University Park Police station to an opening near Salamander Pond in the preserve to assist AmeriCorps in accessing the work site. Village of Park Forest loaned a golf cart to ferry supplies to the work site.

Cleared 2,640 feet of trail including Owl Lake Loop Trail (1,320'), the entire N/S boardwalk (660'), Wetland Overlook platform and parts of the Woodland Trail (660'). Also installed sign posts and benches around the Owl Lake Trail.

Editor's Note: Let us know if you have any additions or corrections.



Our Simple But Complicated Woods

The last piece of the puzzle that is our Thorn Creek Woods Nature Preserve has fallen into place. The preserve land that was owned by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources has been turned over to the Forest Preserve District of Will County. This resolves technical issues and ensures that the Nature Preserve can continue to delight us all.

Thank you to the Forest Preserve's representative to our Commission, Andy Hawkins, and the staff of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Nature Center Needs Things and Helpers of All Kinds

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



◇ *Trail workers-scouts, groups, individuals*

◇ *Assist at programs and hikes*

◇ *Assist with clerical tasks*

- △ Batteries—C and A's
- △ Hand clippers, loppers & hoes
- △ Large plastic storage boxes 1.5' x 3' w/lids
- △ Middle sized plastic boxes with lids
- △ Shoe box size boxes with lids
- △ Night scopes
- △ Cases of bottled water
- △ 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 med. Picture Hanging Strips
- △ 6" x 9" mailing envelopes

Open Hours helpers keep the Nature Center open and...

- Fold and collate and stuff mailings
- Deliver flyers
- Set up for programs
- Updating our mailing lists
- Cleaning of all kinds- sweeping, mopping, vacuuming, dusting – everything!

Trail work of all kinds from monitoring trails to clipping, hauling, digging water bars, repairing benches and bridges and boardwalks



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

Sign up today to help!

*Sign up now to give one day a month as an Open Hours Volunteer.
We provide training, snacks and a variety of fun tasks.*

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:
April 21—Easter

Beginning Birding For All Free! All Ages	Saturday Feb 16 9 am-noon
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Tracking Animals in Winter	Sunday February 24 1-3 pm Free! All ages
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Wednesday Walkers starting March 6	Wednesdays 9-10:30 a.m. Ages 13-adult
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Woodcock Watch	Sat, March 2 Rain date: Sat. March 9 5-7 pm
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Make a Gourd Birdhouse	Sunday March 10 1-2 pm \$10/birdhouse
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Spring Clean Up & Trail Workday	Sunday March 17 Noon-4pm
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Follow the Fox Kids younger than 12	Sunday April 7 Free!
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Earth Day at Thorn Creek: Woodland Wildflowers	Saturday April 20 1-4 p.m. Free! All ages.
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Spring Night Hike Free! All ages.	Sunday April 28 7-9 p.m.
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Please clip commemorative stamps
& bring to Nature Center for
Audubon Stamps
for Wildlife Habitats



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

Renew Now!

Be a FRIEND OF THORN CREEK WOODS

Membership.....\$20 Organization & Business.....\$50 Life Membership.....\$200
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 32, Richton Park, IL 60471



Annual Renewal Date is May 1st