

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

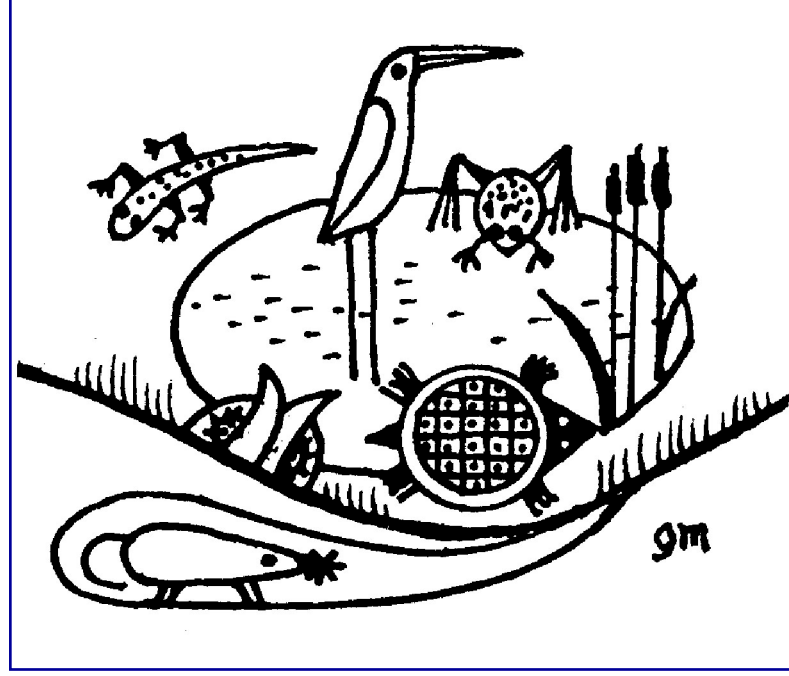
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If you no longer wish
to receive our
program brochure,
please call
708-747-6320
or email
thorn_creek@att.net

Cover Art by Jim Marzuki

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THORN CREEK NATURE PRESERVE



SPRING
SUMMER
2024

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 Fridays, noon -4 pm.
Nature Center Closed: **Friday, May 26—Memorial Day**

Trails open daily year-round, sunrise to sunset

Thorn Creek Woods Nature Preserve is comprised of over 1000 acres of oak-hickory woodland dotted with vernal ponds and dissected by Thorn Creek and its tributary streams. 3.5 miles of trails meander round trip 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.

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 and Forest Preserve District of Will County. 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. *Saturday, July 27, 7:30-9:30 p.m. Free! Ages 13-adult. Registration required by July 22.*

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 5, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Ages 50 or older. \$10 per person. Registration required by July 29.

OUR POLLINATORS

We'll look for pollinators such as bees, wasps, flies, moths, butterflies, beetles and thrips and observe the important job they do helping plants grow. And we'll search for the types of insects that support our bird populations. Participants take home a milkweed planting. Sponsored by the Thorn Creek Audubon Society. *Sunday, August 11, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. All ages. Registration required by August 5.*

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. *Sunday, August 18, 7:30-9:30 p.m. Ages 13-adult. Free! Registration required by August 12.*



JUNE

HIDDEN PONDS HIKE

Join us for a guided tour of the wet areas of Thorn Creek Woods. Discover vernal ponds, listen for the return of 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. Sponsored by the Thorn Creek Audubon Society. *Sunday, June 23, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Free! Ages 13-adult Registration required by June 17.*

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. Sponsored by Thorn Creek Audubon Society. *Sunday, June 30, 1-3 p.m. Free. Ages 6-12. Registration by Monday, June 24.*

JULY

SUMMERTIME AT THORN CREEK WOODS

We'll check on the happenings at the preserve's prairie, meadows, and woodlands. Join us to observe sunflowers and pollinators at the prairie. We can hear singing critters and see other fascinating insects in the meadow. And then back to the woods to watch for birds and more. Sponsored by Thorn Creek Audubon Society. *Saturday, July 13, 10:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. Free. All ages. Registration required by July 8.*

55 YEAR ANNIVERSARY PICNIC



You and your family are invited to a fun filled afternoon to celebrate 55 years of Thorn Creek Woods. We'll meet for food and fun at the newly opened Somonauk Nature Adventure Park. We'll provide the main dishes, water and ice: you can bring a side dish or dessert to share. Join our naturalists for a Pond Life exploration of the Somonauk pond. We'll learn names of its common plants and critters, view displays of aquatic grasses and forbs, and take a closer look at aquatic critters. Plus make your own dragonfly to take home.

Sponsored by Friends of Thorn Creek Woods in celebrating 55 years of support and volunteerism at Thorn Creek Woods. Updated Somonauk Park features kayak rentals, fishing piers, an all-abilities playground, a new basketball court, and a new pavilion equipped with a kitchen and restrooms.

Sunday, July 21, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Somonauk Park Pavilion, Somonauk St. & Sangamon St., Park Forest. Free! All ages. Rain or shine. Registration required by July 15.

MARCH

MAKE A GOURD BIRDHOUSE

This is a fun family workshop to create a welcoming nesting space for birds in your own backyard. Make a natural style birdhouse from a gourd. Sponsored by the Thorn Creek Audubon Society. *All materials provided. Sunday, March 17, 1-3 p.m. \$15/house; limit one/person. All ages; children under age 6 should be accompanied by an adult. Registration required by March 11.*



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 tracks and other animal clues. Bring home your own track replica. Program is sponsored by Thorn Creek Audubon Society. *Sunday, March 24, 1-3 p.m. \$10 per person. All ages. Registration required by March 18.*

APRIL

SPRING CLEAN UP AND TRAIL WORKDAY AT THORN CREEK

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. Bring a lunch and gloves and dress for the weather. Refreshments will be provided. *Sunday, April 7, Noon-4 p.m. Free! All ages: children younger than 15 must be accompanied by an adult. Registration is required by April 1.*



PRAIRIE SAMPLER WORKDAY

Get down and dirty and help care for Thorn Creek's Prairie Sampler. Located in front of the Nature Center, the small prairie needs your help with weeding, pulling tall goldenrod, and trimming out woody plants. Our Butterfly Garden on the side of the nature center also needs weeding and care. And if the non-native invasive plant Garlic mustard, *Alliaria petiolata*, is present again in our woodland, we can slow it down by pulling individual plants before they set seed. Bring your own gloves, hand clippers, and kneelers if you like. Dress for the weather and wear sturdy shoes or boots. Refreshments will be provided. Bags and a short orientation will be provided. *Saturday, April 13, 1-3 p.m. Free! Ages 12-adult; children under 15 must be accompanied by an adult. Registration required by April 8.*

APRIL

EARTH DAY AT THORN CREEK: YEAR OF THE CICADA

Earth Day at Thorn Creek Woods celebrates the 17-year Cicada. Learn about this cryptic insect that spends 17 years of its life underground! Find out about the natural history of cicadas and the impact of their eruption this spring. A fun family program that includes cicada exhibits, slide show and recordings, origami cicada craft, games, cicada recipes, Earth Day Raffle and refreshments.

1:00- Learn all about Cicadas

1:30-origami cicada craft

2:00-insect bingo and more

2:30- self guided walk in the woods

3:00 - Raffle Drawing.

The program is sponsored by Jim Marzuki Fund for Public Programming. *Sunday, April 21, 1-3 p.m. Free. All ages. Registration required by April 15.*



CENTRAL PARK WETLANDS WALK

We'll explore the Central Park Wetlands, a haven for amphibians, dragonflies, damselflies, birds and soil critters. Learn the names of some water loving plants and animals and enjoy a craft and game. Sponsored by the Thorn Creek Audubon Society. Participants

should be able to walk 1 mile outdoors on paved paths and boardwalks. *Sunday, April 29, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Wetlands Discovery Center, 30 N. Orchard Drive, Park Forest, located on the west end of the bathhouse. Free! All Ages. Registration required with Thorn Creek Nature Center by April 22.*

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

Bring your group to explore wildflowers, soils, animal tracks, aquatic insects, and more.

Pre-registration and fees apply.

These programs are sponsored by Thorn Creek Audubon Society, our Partners for Programming.

Call or email to schedule a nature education program for your group:

708-747-6320 thorn_creek@att.net



MAY

PRAIRIE SAMPLER WORKDAY

Get down and dirty and help care for Thorn Creek's Prairie Sampler and our Butterfly Garden. Both need your help with weeding. Bring your own gloves, hand clippers, and kneelers if you like. Dress for the weather and wear sturdy shoes or boots. Refreshments will be provided. Bags and a short orientation will be provided. *Saturday, May 4, 1-3 p.m. Free! Ages 12-adult; children under 15 must be accompanied by an adult. Registration required by April 29.*

TRAIL WORKDAY

Workdays are an excellent way to give back to Thorn Creek Woods Nature Preserve! Help repair boardwalks and the bridge, clear undergrowth from the paths and boardwalks, plus open channels on the water diversion steps. Or weed and nurture our Prairie Sampler and Butterfly Garden. Bring your own gloves, hand clippers, and kneelers if you like. Dress for the weather and wear sturdy shoes or boots. Refreshments will be provided. *Sunday, May 5, 1-3 p.m. Free! Ages 12 - adult, children under 15 must be accompanied by an adult. Registration required by April 29.*

BIRD HIKE

Let's watch for our year-round resident birds and also look for birds arriving to spend the summer here. Find out about the extraordinary migration patterns of birds. We'll have some binoculars, field guides and identifiers available. If you have your own bring them along. Sponsored by Thorn Creek Audubon Society. *Sunday, May 19, 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., Free. All ages. Registration required by May 13.*

FLOWER MOON HIKE

The abundant blooms of spring flowers and trees in May helped the Potawatomi keep track of the seasons. Join us around the night of the Flower Full Moon. On our hike we'll listen for nocturnal animals and explore the idea that darkness helps predators. *Thursday, May 23, 7:30-9:30 p.m. Free! Ages 10 years or older. Registration required by Thursday, May 20.*

JUNE

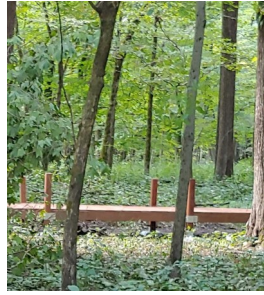
PRAIRIE SAMPLER AND TRAIL WORKDAY

Get down and dirty at our Thorn Creek Workday. Help repair boardwalks, maintain trails, or weed and nurture our Prairie Sampler and butterfly gardens. Bring your own gloves, hand clippers, and kneelers if you like. Dress for the weather and wear sturdy shoes or boots. *Sunday, June 2, 1- 3 p.m. Free! Ages 12 - adult, children under 15 must be accompanied by an adult. Registration required by May 27.*



Contribute to our Capital Fund - Focus on our Trails -

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



Improvements Needed Now



- * New bypass trail DONE
- * Trail Improvements-small bridges & boardwalks—NEEDED
- * Parking lot, kiosk sitting area and path repairs
-STARTED 2022;
COMPLETION PLANNED FOR 2024
- * Improvements to Owl Lake Trail—
PLANNED
- * Boundary signs— MORE NEW ONES TO BE
INSTALLED

* Paint, gutters and repair Nature Center exterior— DONE



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 Commission 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 and has funded the new north bridge, boardwalks,
nature center repairs, north bridge stabilization, benches and more.

Thank you to ALL who have contributed!

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

So What Can You Do To Help?

Four hours each month can make **all the difference**

Our nature Center is open to the public on Fridays, noon—4 p.m.

But **ONLY** with **YOUR** assistance.

Open Hours volunteers greet visitors and answer phones, plus they use their
unique talents to do office or housekeeping tasks or set up displays —
all to assist our Naturalists and keep the Nature Center open.

Call or email now to volunteer your time. We'll train you.

- Trail Watchers are our eyes & ears on the trails. Use the blue Trail Watchers
forms or call/email nature center with concerns.
- Assist at programs and hikes.
- Trail workers, scouts, groups, individuals—Trail work of all kinds from monitoring
trails to clipping, hauling, digging water bars, repairing and building boardwalks.
- Help prepare mailings and other clerical work.
- Become a member of Friends.

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

*Suet cakes

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

*Cases of bottled water

*Hoes and loppers

*1" x 2 5/8" address labels- ink jet or
laser

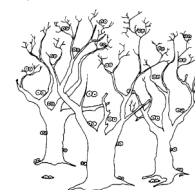
*Large plastic boxes with lids 1.5'x 3'

*Plastic shoe boxes with lids

*6" x 9" envelopes

Get your Thorn Creek T-Shirts

THORN CREEK WOODS



Serving area wildlife for 12,000 years

Long sleeve -
Forest Green with Mint
Design
Short sleeve -
Blue with White Design

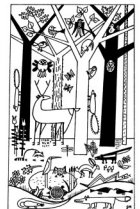
Short Sleeve = \$ 10 + \$5 per shirt
shipping/handling

Long Sleeve = \$15 + \$5 per shirt
shipping/handling

Please make your check to:
Thorn Creek Nature Center, 247
Monee Road, Park Forest, IL, 60466

Call 708-747-6320 or mail or email
thorn_creek@att.net your order.

Thorn Creek Woods



"Serving area wildlife for 12,000 years"

Short sleeve -
Heather Maroon with
Crème Design
**NEW Long sleeve -
Maroon with Crème
Design**



Photo Cards in Memory of Aura Duke

A true citizen scientist, Aura was a local leader in the effort to conserve natural resources. An avid birder, Aura was a longtime Illinois Audubon Society board member who recognized the importance of educating the next generation of conservationists and her goal was "to get youth actively involved in conservation, not just reading about it."

In 1973, Aura co-founded the Thorn Creek Audubon Society (TCAS). And because of her championing, TCAS has been a steadfast and main supporter of the Thorn Creek Nature Center and the Friends of Thorn Creek Woods.

Aura Duke was a force of nature
who left an indelible mark on Thorn Creek Woods.

\$ 5 donation for pack of 5

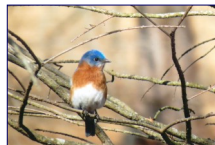
Cards in packs: *All the Same Bird* or *Mixed 5 birds*

Make checks out to Friends of Thorn Creek Woods
P.O. Box 32, Richton Park, IL 60471



GREAT BLUE HERON

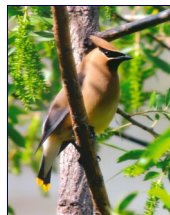
Photos by
Alice
McBride
and Emily
Howald



EASTERN
BLUEBIRD



AMERICAN
GOLDFINCH

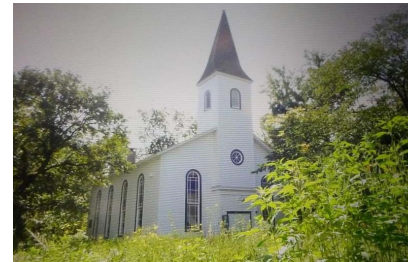


CEDAR
WAXWING



RUBY-THROATED
HUMMINGBIRD

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 Jim Marzuki Fund for Programming
- sponsors an annual meeting and Earth Day.
- members receive a usually quarterly newsletter

FRIENDS is the citizen activist group that helps preserve the Woods as an Illinois Nature Preserve.

*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, research, and on and on. Join us!

Come sit it on our Friends Board meetings

We meet every fourth Monday at 10 a.m. where we work with
our naturalist on all things Thorn Creek.

Call the nature center for info and come join us!

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