



SEVERSON DELLS
NATURE CENTER

NOTES FROM THE DELLS

Calendar & Newsletter

May - August 2023 | Volume 44 No. 2

Rockford, Illinois



MUSIC AT THE DELLS

2023

SATURDAY, MAY 6TH

SATURDAY, JUNE 24TH

FRIDAY, AUGUST 18TH



LONG MAMA



ARIELLE SILVER



SIGH, SWOON

DOORS AT 6. MUSIC STARTS AT 7 PM!

FIND TICKETS AT [SEVERSONDELLS.ORG/MUSIC-AT-THE-DELLS](https://seversondells.org/music-at-the-dells)

Check the website and follow us on social media as we add more shows throughout the summer and fall!

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EST. 2008
ARTALE & CO.
WINE - BEER - SPIRITS

First Friday Wine Tasting

FRIDAY, AUGUST 4TH
5:30PM - 8:00PM

Come sip to support!



SEVERSON DELLS
NATURE CENTER

Cash, check, or card will be accepted at the door.

NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Our mission is to link people to nature through education and research. This mission is alive and well through all of the programs we offer throughout the year. Our wide variety of programs- including guided hikes, summer camps, family programs, lectures, nature-themed art classes, canoeing, and so much more- help bring this mission to many.

In this newsletter you will find information about upcoming events including an annual favorite: the Wildflower Walkabout series, summer camps, canoe convoys, and more! We are also thrilled to announce that Music at the Dells is back with performances by Arielle Silver and Long Mama with more performances being added to the calendar regularly!

Speaking of summer fun, we are excited to announce that Golden Hour will be on Saturday, June 10! In moving it closer to the summer solstice, we will have more time to enjoy an evening in The Grove before it gets too dark. We hope you can join us for a celebration of nature education in our community with live music, delicious food and great conversations.

I also want to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to our supporters, volunteers, and partners who have helped bring our mission to life. Without your contributions, we would not be able to do the work we do, now and in the future. Thank you for the many ways that you contribute to our mission!

See you on the trails!

Ann Wasser
Director



Director Ann Wasser, Photographed by Asia M. Peters

*NEW

JEFFERSONIAN DINNER

Wednesday, May 10, 6pm - 8:30pm

@ The Norwegian

Join us and members of your community for an evening of delicious food and in depth conversation. What is a Jefferson dinner, you ask? It is a prompted round-table discussion around a specific topic. For this evening our discussion will be around the environmental impacts of food. Table discussions will be hosted by local experts in the community. Come prepared for a dynamic discussion and leave with a fresh perspective and full belly. The price of your ticket includes a sustainably-minded buffet dinner at The Norwegian; a cash bar will be available. Please note any dietary restrictions when you place your ticket order. \$30 members/ \$35 general admission. Limited to 45 people. Register now at seversondells.org/calendar/jeffersonian

the 3rd annual
GOLDEN HOUR
IN THE GROVE

June 10th, 2023

6:00 – 8:30 AT SEVERSON DELLS NATURE CENTER

Bask in the beauty of the golden hour at our annual down-to-earth fundraising soiree. Explore The Grove, our unique nature playscape, on this summer evening just for adults, featuring:

- * heavy hors d'oeuvres by The Norwegian**
- * a gourmet s'more station by the fire**
- * cocktails and mocktails**
- * live music**

Cost: \$60 until June 1st / \$75 June 2nd - June 10th

Tickets available at SeversonDells.org/GoldenHour

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

WITH SEVERSON DELLS

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

Nature Center Host Volunteers staff the front desk on Saturdays and Sundays in 4-hour shifts or for occasional weekdays, depending on the need. Duties include answering the telephone, greeting visitors, conducting gift shop sales, and assisting members in checking out library materials. Ability to use multi-line telephone and give directions to Severson Dells Forest Preserve from various locations in the area are a must. General awareness and appreciation of nature helpful. Warm and welcoming personality a definite plus. Apply online at www.seversondells.com/volunteer



Education Volunteers help lead programs for school groups at our onsite education programs. Group size ranges from 10 to 20 students, and are mostly preschool through 5th grade. **We currently have a great need for guides on our Discover Nature Hikes, which last about 90 minutes and focus on enthusiasm for nature! No background knowledge required.** We provide training and opportunities to shadow staff or other volunteers. School programs take place Tuesday through Friday from approximately 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., and are concentrated in the spring and fall. If you would like more information about becoming an education volunteer, please contact Andrea: Andrea@seversondells.org

AMERICORPS POSITIONS

Environmental Education Members will help with school and public education programs at Severson Dells Nature Center and at some off-site locations in Winnebago County. Members will be provided training on local ecosystems, native flora and fauna as well as best practices in environmental education and group management. We have 900 hour and 450 hour positions available for 2023.



Natural Resource Members at Severson Dells will have the opportunity to help with habitat restoration, seed collection, plant and wildlife monitoring. This member will also lead habitat restoration volunteer days. This position is great for people that want to learn more about habitat management, biological monitoring and working with primarily adult volunteers.

For more information on our AmeriCorps positions and to apply, please visit SeversonDells.org/AmeriCorps-Opportunities.



WILDFLOWER

Join Severson Dells and the Natural Land Institute staff and volunteers on an exploration of many of the local wildflower hotspots. Wildflower Walks showcase what is currently in bloom at various woodland and prairie preserves around Winnebago, Boone and Ogle Counties. **All walks will begin at 6:00 pm.** No fee for the walks, but membership in Severson Dells and/or the Natural Land Institute is encouraged.

Please register at www.seversondells.org/wildflower-walkabouts. Each walk has two leaders, and each group will allow reservations for 20 people. Please register for a maximum of five walks.

For more information, please call 815-335-2915 (SD) or 815-964-6666 (NLI).

Tuesday, April 25 – Howard D. Colman Dells Nature Preserve

Zach Grycan and Chris Reisetter will lead this hike on property owned and managed by NLI. This 96-acre Nature Preserve is located along Hall Creek, southwest of Rockford. One of the attractive features of this preserve is a series of cliffs known as the dells. Many unique plants restricted to limestone and dolomite outcrops are found here, as well as some northern relic plants. Located near the intersection of East Severson Road and North Weldon Road. From Meridian and Montague Road, drive south and turn west onto McGregor Road, turn north onto Weldon Road. Moderate-difficult hiking.

Wednesday, May 3 – Anna Page Park

Joni Denker of the Rockford Park District and Daniel Pohl of the Illinois Natural History Survey will lead this walk at Rockford Park District's Anna Page Park. We will travel through a variety of plant communities, from creek bottoms to maple forest to view marsh marigolds, trillium, blue-eyed marys and numerous other spring flowers. Moderate hiking, possibly with muddy areas. We will meet at the large parking lot at the westernmost point along the park loop road (not the parking area by the playground and bathrooms).

Tuesday, May 9 - Piskasaw Fen

Join Aaron Minson and Brian Hale on a hunt for spring wildflowers in the fen and oak savanna habitats of Piskasaw Fen. Guests will also see the habitat restoration at this Boone County Conservation District site. The Piskasaw Fen is located at 8605 Norris Ln., Capron. Easy hiking.

Wednesday, May 17 - Pecatonica River Forest Preserve

Connie McIntosh and Kathy Martinez will take us on a tour of the Pecatonica Wetlands Forest Preserve, which includes river edge floodplain forest, oxbow pond marshes and upland forest along the Pecatonica River. The site has outstanding spring flora and birdlife. Please meet on Blair Road on the north side of the forest preserve. Hiking will be easy to moderate.



WALKABOUTS

Tuesday, May 23 - Burr Oak Valley Nature Preserve

Zach Grycan and Tyler Pellegrini, Natural Land Institute staff, will lead us through this 99-acre property that is owned and managed by NLI. The natural communities we will visit include mesic upland forest, dolomite prairie, dolomite cliff and intermittent stream. Expect to see blue-eyed grass, Columbine, maidenhair fern, and the rare kittentails. Please park at the northern entrance of the preserve at Cross and Crown Lutheran Church, 7404 Elevator Rd. in Roscoe. Moderate hiking.

Wednesday, May 31 - Searls Prairie Nature Preserve

Joni Denker of the Rockford Park District and Sandra Vaughn-Pottorff will lead this hike through mesic and wet-mesic prairie where prairie dropseed, Indian grass, and big bluestem grow. This site is one of the highest quality wet prairies in the state. Meet at Searls Park on Central Avenue in Rockford across from the soccer fields. Easy hiking, but the area may be wet.

Wednesday, June 7 – Stephen and Deirdre Nardi Equine Prairie Preserve

Russell Brunner, Superintendent of Land Management, will lead this hike at the Byron Forest Preserve District's largest preserve at more than 550 acres. We will explore sand prairie restorations and remnant dolomite hill prairies. There are acres of Wild Lupine that should be in bloom as well as Golden Alexanders, Ohio Spiderwort, Foxglove Beardtongue, Indigo, and Pale Purple Coneflower. This preserve has more than 10 miles of trails and is open to horseback riding as well. The gravel parking lot is located at 6651 N River Road, about two miles south of the Byron Forest Preserve District's headquarters and Jarrett Prairie Preserve. Hiking will be easy.

Wednesday, June 14 – Sewell Conservation Area

Join Aaron Minson and Ben Davies of the Boone County Conservation District at Sewell Conservation Area, a recently restored 200-acre site that has been converted from conventional agriculture to high quality habitat. This is a unique opportunity to observe multiple phases of the three year process it has taken to convert this area to prairie. 10683 Fruit Farm Rd., Garden Prairie. Easy hiking.

Tuesday, June 20 – Wilson Prairie Nature Preserve

Zach Grycan and Laura Helmich of the Natural Land Institute will lead a tour of this privately-owned 20-acre dry prairie which provides habitat for at least nine species of grasses and more than 75 species of native flowers. The northwest corner of the preserve borders Sumner Creek. Moderate hiking. Please park on the north side of Hwy 20, two miles west of the intersection of Pecatonica Road and Hwy 20 and just before the Stephenson County line.

Wednesday, June 28 – Harlem Hills Prairie Nature Preserve

Don Miller and Jerry Paulson will offer their expertise on this visit to Harlem Hills Prairie. If we hit it just right, the hills should be bright with the pink and purple of the pale purple coneflowers. The always-beautiful sunset will be a bonus on this favorite of walks. Please meet on Flora Drive in Loves Park. Easy hiking.

NATURALIST NOTES:

THE POTENT POWER OF POLLINATORS

BY LIZ WIENER

When you think about your favorite parts of summer, what comes to mind? Warm hikes, sunshine, or trips to the river? For me, it is all of those things—but also, the food! One of my favorite summer treats is sun-warmed strawberries, bursting with sweet juice. Whenever I eat one of these tasty berries, I'm always struck by how much effort nature had to put in to producing it!

One of the most important participants in the production of these plants is the pollinator! Before we dive into these important specimens, let's first talk about what pollination is exactly.

Pollination occurs when pollen (a fine powder produced by seed plants) is moved within flowers or carried from flower to flower by birds, bees, bats, butterflies, moths, or the wind. The transfer of pollen in and between flowers of the same species leads to successful seed and fruit production for plants. Pollination ensures that a plant will produce a full-bodied fruit and viable seeds.

If we think of pollination on a worldwide scale, 75% of the world's flowering plants and 35% of the world's food crops depend on animal pollinators to reproduce. That's one out of every three bites of food you eat! In the United States, animal pollinators play a significant role in the production of over 150 food crops—including apples, almonds, pears, plums, squash, and blueberries. Native pollinators are estimated to contribute \$3 billion to the value of crop production nationwide. Global pollinators are also responsible for vanilla, coffee, and chocolate.

What pollinators call Illinois home? Illinois is home to anywhere between 400-500 species of native bees! We can also thank the ruby-throated hummingbird, a number of species of butterflies, many moths, flies, and beetles for helping our plants. Some of these bees include the American Bumblebee (*bombus*

pennsylvanicus), the eastern carpenter bee (*xylocopa virginica*), the green sweat bee (*augochloropsis metallica*), and the mason bee (*osmia georgica*). Butterfly species include the iconic monarch butterfly (*danaus plexippus*), the tiger swallowtail (*papilio glaucus*), and the cabbage butterfly (*pieris rapae*).



Eastern Carpenter Bee, Photographed by Ashlyn Rogers

Here at Severson Dells, we are one of the last remaining homes for the endangered Rusty Patched Bumblebee (*bombus affinis*). A Rusty Patch's favorite habitat is the oak savanna—an area similar to a prairie, with tall grasses and lots of flowers, but also containing trees to provide space for shade-loving plants as well. Until a few decades ago, the Rusty Patched Bumblebee was one of the most common

bees on our landscape. Their distinctive rusty-orange patch on their abdomen made them easy to identify, and they appeared to be so common, experts were not concerned with their population numbers. Around 2003, they began showing up less and less on annual bee surveys. Their range has shrunk to approximately .1% of where they were originally found. In 2017, the Rusty Patched was the first bee to be listed under the U.S. Endangered Species Act.

The monarch butterfly is one of the most easily identifiable pollinators, with its striking orange and black wings. The brilliant color of a monarch is a warning to those that might try to



Monarch Butterfly, Photographed by Ashlyn Rogers

eat it—that it is poisonous! Butterflies get their toxins from milkweed plants, which is their only food source in the caterpillar stage. One of the most incredible things about monarchs is the enormous migration that monarchs undertake each year. Every fall, as cold weather approaches, monarchs begin their 2,500-3,000-mile journey to Southern California and Central Mexico. Monarchs can travel between 50-100 miles a day! A group of monarchs is called a flutter, and these flutters can include thousands of butterflies.

What can you do to help these important species? One of the biggest threats to native pollinator species is habitat loss, so you can help by planting and cultivating native plants—especially those that provide nectar and food for larvae. Common milkweed, goldenrods, and bee balms are great examples of native plants that pollinators love to visit.

Reducing pesticide use and substituting flower beds for lawns are also great ways to create a more safe habitat for all living things. Joining a citizen science program like BeeSpotters, Mission Monarch, or the Great Sunflower Project is also a great way to get important information about pollinators to scientists studying their impacts. Volunteering with pollinator-friendly organizations and garden groups, and donating your time for habitat restoration is also a great way to support and protect pollinators.

Thank you to all that attended the annual Severson Dells Pollinator Palooza! This event featured local partners like Natural Land Institute, the Winnebago County Soil and Water Conservation District, 815 Outside, the Rock Valley Garden Center, and Wild Ones. Young and young-at-heart enjoyed learning about our local pollinators, going on a storybook walk, and getting a hands-on experience with the Michigan Native Butterfly Farm!




Liz at Yosemite Falls

ROCK RIVER VALLEY TEAM

organized by SEVERSON DELLS NATURE CENTER














+ Various school classes, clubs, and organizations






APRIL 28 - MAY 1

- ## 1. OBSERVE NATURE

Anything counts, from plants to animals to fungi!
- ## 2. TAKE PHOTOS

of nature in your backyard, local park, forest preserve, or natural area between April 29th and May 2nd
- ## 3. UPLOAD PHOTOS TO INATURALIST

to automatically add them to our project! Your observations will be shared with scientists around the world.

Questions? Contact Severson Dells at 815-335-2915 or visit www.seversondells.org/city-nature-challenge

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Register for programs at seversondells.org/events or call 815-335-2915

For the most up-to-date information on programs please visit our website at www.seversondells.org. Registration is required for all programs.

Birding Hike with Joel Neylon Saturday, May 13th | 7:30am

Join Joel Neylon, local birding extraordinaire, on a early-morning birding stroll. He'll point out migratory and resident birds while sharing his wisdom along the way! Feel free to bring your own binoculars and be ready to find some birds.

Golden Hour Mindfulness Walk Wednesday, May 24th | 6:30pm to 8:30pm

Slow down and rewild your senses to the natural world in this guided walk during the luminous golden hour with Jessie Crow Mermel. Mindfulness in nature lowers our stress levels and helps us appreciate our connection and reciprocity to the earth. Dress for the weather with proper footwear. These walks will be slow and we will take the opportunity to stop often. Cost: \$3/members, \$5 general admission.

Full Moon Hikes



Watching a full moon rise is magical. Join us for an evening of nocturnal natural history as we walk the trails in anticipation of moonrise.

Friday, May 5 | 6:30 to 8 pm
Saturday, June 3 | 7:30 to 9 pm
Wednesday, August 30 | 6:30 to 8 pm

Readings from the Rookery



This fun and engaging program introduces children and their parents to great nature books. After our story, everyone participates in outside activities that relate to the theme of the week. This program targets 5-to-9-year-olds and focuses on the importance of getting kids outside. Free event, registration required.

Friday, June 2 | 9:00 - 10:30 am

Friday, June 16 | 9:00 - 10:30 am

Friday, June 30 | 9:00 - 10:30 am

Friday, July 14 | 9:00 - 10:30 am

Friday, July 28 | 9:00 - 10:30 a.m.

World Environment Day Mindfulness Walk Monday, June 5th | 6:30pm to 8:30pm

Take a walk around the preserve as the sun sets to celebrate World Environment Day. Slow down and rewild your senses to the natural world in this guided walk with Jessie Crow Mermel. Mindfulness in nature lowers our stress levels and helps us appreciate our connection and reciprocity to the earth. Dress for the weather with proper footwear. These walks will be slow and we will take the opportunity to stop often. Cost: \$3/members, \$5/general admission.



Solstice Drum Circle

Wednesday, June 21 | 6:30 - 8:00 pm

Drum into Summer with Rockford artist and musician, David Stocker. Bring your own drum if you have one (there will be a few extras) and your own intention as we transition seasons. \$5/member; \$8/ general admission



Family Creek Walks

Thursday, June 8 | 1:00 - 3:00 pm

Saturday, July 8 | 1:00 - 3:00 pm

This camp classic is now available for the whole family! Get your feet wet as we walk through Hall Creek and along the towering

cliff faces of the Dells. Take a chance to explore parts of Severson that very few people get to encounter! This adventure is great for families with children 6 and up. We will be walking on uneven ground and in a moving current. Closed-toed shoes required. *Due to the fragile aquatic environment, we do not recommend taking a creek walk unless accompanied by a Severson guide. Ages 6 and up, anyone under 16 needs to be accompanied by an adult.

Kishwaukee Canoe Trip

Saturday, July 29 | 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Join Severson staff for a guided paddle down the Kishwaukee River! This trip is for beginners and experienced paddlers alike. Pack a sack lunch and be prepared to paddle for a majority of the time. We will stop at sandbars and other natural areas to enjoy all of the splendor this Class-A (high quality) stream has to offer. Participants must be comfortable around water and ready for an active day.

Paint Night

Friday, August 25th | 6:00 - 8:00 pm

Learn how to paint elegant, wall-worthy leaf prints with the cheerful guidance of Andrea Wallace Noble! Join us for a night of creativity and learn about local trees along the way. No experience necessary and all materials provided. This includes light snacks and drinks in addition to a casual, cozy atmosphere. For ages 10 and up. \$30.

Canoe Convoys



Join Severson staff and volunteers for a Monday sunset paddle and experience nature from one of our canoes! Our paddles will take place on the beautiful Kishwaukee River, but location will be confirmed the Friday before the paddle based on weather and other factors. Before each paddle, we offer an introductory canoeing lesson, our "Quickstart Program," for paddlers who have not done a Canoe Convoy before.

5:20 pm - Quickstart Sign-In

5:45 pm - Regular Sign-In

Monday, June 5 | 5:20 - 8:00 pm

Monday, June 12 | 5:20 - 8:00 pm

Monday, June 19 | 5:20 - 8:00 pm

Monday, June 26 | 5:20 - 8:00 pm

Monday, July 3 | 5:20 - 8:00 pm

Monday, July 10 | 5:20 - 8:00 pm

Monday, July 24 | 5:20 - 8:00 pm

Monday, July 31 | 5:20 - 8:00 pm

*A \$10 refundable deposit is required. Those who sign up must attend or cancel by the Thursday before the paddle to receive a refund.

SUMMER

Is there anything more quintessentially “summer” than the Summer Camp experience?

June 12 - 16

9:00 am to noon

Wild Things: Little Heroes *waitlist only

(ages 4-6)

Embrace your inner hero as we learn how to save nature, tackle fun challenges, and train to be the best versions of ourselves along the way!

\$90/member, \$105/non-member

June 19 - 23

9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Peek in the Creek

(ages 7-11)

Our daily creek adventures include boat races, getting muddy, and catching crayfish.

\$120/member, \$150/non-member

June 26 - 30

9:00 am to noon

Wild Things: Little Creators *waitlist only

(ages 4-6)

Paint, dance, sing, craft! Your little creator will learn more about nature through the arts and deepen their appreciation of the outdoors.

\$90/member, \$105/non-member

July 6

9:00 am to noon or
1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Grandparents Camp: Aquatic Habitats

(grandkids ages 4-10)

Make boats, catch crayfish, explore the creek, and spend time making priceless memories.

Cost varies based on number in your family group. See website for details.

July 7

9:00 am to noon
1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Grandparents Camp: Terrestrial Habitats

(grandkids ages 4-10)

Make crafts, catch insects, romp through the prairie, and spend time making priceless memories.

Cost varies based on number in your family group. See website for details.



CAMP AT THE DELLS

Register at SeversonDells.org/summer-camp

July 10 - 14

9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Amazing Adventures

(ages 7-11)

Each day is a new adventure. This year our adventures include Survivor Day, Cave Man Day, and Nature Hero Day.

\$120/member, \$150/non-member

July 17 - 21

9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Blazing Paddles

(ages 12-16)

Explore the rivers of Winnebago County by canoe, build teamwork and leadership skills, and partake in fun camp traditions.

\$180/member, \$210/non-member

July 24 - 28

9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Peek in the Creek

(ages 7-11)

Our daily creek adventures include boat races, getting muddy, and catching crayfish.

\$120/member, \$150/non-member

July 31 - August 4

9:00 am to noon

Wild Things: Little Pirates *waitlist only

(ages 4-6)

Our pirate crew will be “sailing the high seas” of Hall Creek as we catch critters, make boats, and search for lost treasure!

\$90/member, \$105/non-member

August 7 - 11

9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Call of the Wild

(ages 7-11)

Campers get in touch with their inner cave people, minus the cave. Each clan builds a home base from which they sally forth to explore.

\$120/member, \$150/non-member





Looking for new places to enjoy nature, a reason to be outside, or a little guidance trying bike paths?

Join 815 Outside on hikes around the greater Rockford area. Explore nature, get active, and meet new people.

Find your place to get outside today!

815Outside.com

BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR

Become an advocate for nature education in your community. Your donation will help support our ongoing nature education programs and the continuous growth of Severson Dells.

Your Monthly Contribution Goes a Long Way

To learn more and begin your monthly donation, contact us: (815) 335-2915
admin@seversondells.org

CONSERVATION CREW RESTORATION WORKDAYS

Saturday, May 13
Monday, May 22
Monday, June 26
Saturday, July 8
Monday, July 24
Saturday, August 12
Monday, August 28

9:00 am to noon



You are invited to participate in the restoration of our natural areas by joining our volunteer Conservation Crew! Our crew helps to restore and maintain balance in the ecosystem by removing invasive plants like Asian bush honeysuckle and garlic mustard and collecting native seeds for propagation. Working alongside fellow volunteers in the beauty of the outdoors is both gratifying and invigorating. No experience necessary; training and tools are supplied. Bring a water bottle to stay hydrated. Dress in layers and expect to get dirty! RSVP to Liz@seversondells.org.



Photos by Andrea Wallace Noble

INTRODUCING: LAURA SJOQUIST ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT



Hello, my name is Laura Sjoquist. I am the new Administrative Assistant at Severson Dells Nature Center. I am originally from Blaine, Minnesota but have lived with my family in Rockton for over 20 years now. I graduated from the University of Minnesota

a long time ago with a degree in studio arts. More recently I completed my Masters in Environmental Education through Hamline University in St. Paul. I worked and volunteered as an environmental and outdoor educator in the Rockford area for many years including at Atwood Education Center, Natural Land Institute, and Angelic Organics Learning Center.

I am excited to join the team at Severson Dells Nature Center! I was lucky to grow up in nature with easy access to creeks to wade in and trees to climb and to

have a mother who loved to camp and hike. My favorite childhood memories are hiking and biking with my sister and cousins exploring the trails of Minnesota's incredible state parks. I think it's important to give everyone the opportunity to explore and experience nature, and am so happy to be part of an organization that provides that chance to the community.

When I am not at work I enjoy traveling with my family. We've been fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to explore new places both in the United States and outside of it. Some of the amazing places we've hiked include Banff National Park in Canada, Mount Elbert in Colorado, and The Sandia Mountains in New Mexico. I also like to paint, read, watch my son Jack play hockey, and do volunteer restoration work.



Severson Dells is a proud member of
1% FOR THE PLANET

"1% FOR THE PLANET represents a global network of businesses, individuals and nonprofit organizations tackling our planet's most pressing environmental issues.

1% FOR THE PLANET approved nonprofit partners are carefully vetted environmental organizations that are eligible to receive funding from our members."

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FOR THE PLANET.

— MEMBER —

FOREST QUEST SCAVENGER HUNT

AUGUST 26, 2023



Gather your family or friends and head out to the forest on a digital-based scavenger hunt! Using the free app Scavos, teams have up to five hours to complete as many "missions" as possible. Missions will include hiking around Severson Dells and taking photos or answering riddles. Prizes will be awarded to teams in categories like: Most Missions Completed, Most Creative Submission, and more!

**COMPLETE MISSIONS ANY TIME BETWEEN 10AM-3PM
AFTERPARTY IN THE GROVE FROM 3PM-4PM
\$20/TEAM (UP TO FIVE PEOPLE ON ONE DEVICE)**

SEVERSONDELLS.ORG/SCAVENGER-HUNT

HERON HERITAGE SOCIETY

Severson Dells honors those extraordinary people who have included Severson Dells in their estate plans through our exclusive Heron Heritage Society. Legacy gifts ensure that we are able to serve the community for generations to come. Your gift will help us raise the next generation of Earth stewards. **THANK YOU.**



WHAT WILL YOUR LEGACY BE?

If a legacy gift to Severson Dells is part of your estate plan, we would love to discuss this with you to ensure that your wishes are fulfilled. Please visit seversondells.org/legacy-giving for more information or contact our Program Director, Ann Wasser: ann@seversondells.org | (815) 335-2915

We highly recommend that you contact your attorney or financial advisor to discuss the best way to achieve your goals and for all legal advice. Severson Dells is a non-profit organization and all donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law.

SEVERSON DELLS
NATURE CENTER



Book Nook:

THE BOATMAN BY ROBERT M. THORSON HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS

The Boatman
by Robert M. Thorson
Harvard University Press



The Boatman gives readers a Thoreau for the Anthropocene epoch. As a backyard naturalist and river enthusiast, Thoreau was keenly aware of the way humans had altered the waterways and meadows of his beloved Concord River Valley. And he recognized

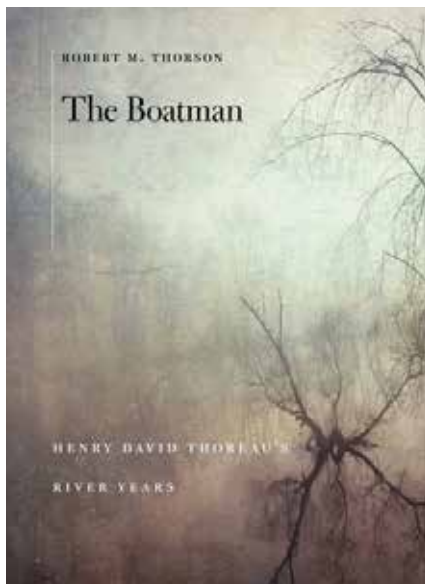
that he himself—a land surveyor by trade—was as complicit in these transformations as the bankers, lawyers, builders, landowners, and elected officials who were his clients. Robert Thorson tells a compelling story of intellectual growth, as Thoreau moved from anger, to lament, to acceptance of the way humans had changed the river he cherished more than Walden Pond.

In his twenties, Thoreau had contemplated industrial sabotage against a downstream factory dam. By the mid-1850s he realized that humans and an “imperfect” nature were inseparable. His beliefs and scientific

understanding of the river would be challenged again when he was hired in 1859 as a technical consultant for the River Meadow Association, in America’s first statewide case for dam removal—a veritable class-action suit of more than

500 petitioners that pitted local farmers against industrialists. Thorson offers the most complete account to date of this “flowage controversy,” including Thoreau’s behind-the-scenes investigations and the political corruption that eventually carried the day.

In the years after the publication of *Walden* (1854), the river boatman’s joy in the natural world was undiminished by the prospect of environmental change. Increasingly, he sought out for solace and pleasure those river sites most dramatically altered by human invention and intervention—for better and worse.



DRINKS FOR THE DELLS
A SEVERSON DELLS FUNDRAISER

SAVE THE DATE:
OCTOBER 14TH

JOIN US FOR A BEAUTIFUL EVENING
TASTING LOCAL BREWS AND GROOVING
TO MUSIC IN THE GROVE!

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT:

THE POTTER FAMILY

CHRIS, JESSICA, TALLULAH, AND CASTOR



The Potter Family

“Nature has always been a part of my life,” says Jess Potter. “I think growing up in the 80’s and 90’s was a huge factor. I was constantly playing outside. My parents didn’t deter me from getting dirty either. Each summer I spent a week at one of the Park District camps: Eagle Hill, Conestoga, and Lone Oak.

I loved everything about them, but especially the creek exploration and campouts. As I got older my interests changed, but when I was attending Rock Valley College I took an Environmental Science



Jessica Potter

class taught by Mr. Joe Haverly and my love for nature and the outdoors was rekindled.” It was around this time that Jess began visiting Severson Dells; she and her mom made a tradition of walking our path during Luminaria, our annual winter event featuring an illuminated night hike, live music, and hot chocolate.

Chris’ relationship with nature also began at a young age, when he would “spend the entire day in the woods” and was encouraged by his parents. He says “I camped frequently with my father and our extended family (I have 14 aunts and uncles, and we would have a giant Memorial

Weekend camping trip, full of cousins running everywhere).” He recounts his mom vocalizing, “Don’t be a litterbug.” I still think about that often, and I believe it helped me recognize that we need to care for the environment.” Now, he describes his time in nature as therapeutic.

“Going on a walk through Severson Dells or any of the other preserves in the area is a temporary relief from [the daily pressures of life]. It’s just you and the outdoors, no plans or time restraints, just a walk. It’s almost like a meditation, a reset.”

When Jess and Chris started dating, they attended Luminaria together and have since become familiar faces around the Dells, especially since the arrival of their two kids, Tallulah (7) and Castor (4) who are now familiar faces at our yearly Summer Camps! As a family, the Potters say the Severson Dells calendar is their go-to place for finding things to do. Some of their favorite events include Pollinator Palooza, Readings from the Rookery, Spook the Dells, and Science Saturdays. But, in their words, “Everything out here is good.” They’ve never left a Severson event disappointed.

When asked why connecting their kids with nature is important to them, Jess said, “Every parent wants the world



Chris and Jessica Potter at Golden Hour in the Grove



The Potter Family at Family Shelter Building at Severson Dells



The Potter Family hiking

for their children, I'm no different. I want to raise happy, healthy, confident people. I want to foster a positive relationship with my children so that they feel comfortable exploring their interests and pushing their limits, but knowing they always have a safe place with us. Nature is designed perfectly for this.

When we're venturing, it's not uncommon for our kids to run ahead, climb trees or boulders, and sometimes get too close to an edge. It's in these moments that they're learning about their comfort levels, knowing we are right there to help if help is needed. My hope is that these memories will foster a similar love for nature and in turn encourage them to make conscious choices later in life in support of the environment.

Ultimately, I hope that they find the same therapeutic qualities in spending time in nature that I do. I also hope to instill the value of being a custodian of our environment, and the importance of preserving and protecting it. Then maybe they too can pass that along, and the cycle can continue. As kids, I want them to have fun, and have that fun be linked with the outdoors!" said Chris.

We are so grateful for the Potter's generous and diverse support. Not only do they contribute personally through membership, event attendance, and our annual fundraiser, Golden Hour in the Grove; Chris has also graciously recruited his employer, International Flavors and Fragrances, to match his family's donations to Severson Dells. Chris and Tallulah also recently volunteered at one of our Conservation Crew Restoration Days



Tallulah Potter at Restoration Workday at Severson Dells

helping to remove invasive honeysuckle.

Many companies throughout the region offer matching gift programs for donations made by their employees, employee's spouses, and retirees. Check with your Human Resources Department to see if your company has a matching donation program.



Castor Potter at Little Pirates Summer Camp 2022

As a staff, it has been a joy to have the Potter's engaged in so many ways at Severson Dells. We have enjoyed watching the kids grow up through our programs and even watching them learn how to ride their bikes in the Severson Dells parking lot. Seeing the many individuals and families like the Potters take ownership of Severson Dells as their place to get outdoors and build a community like no other is the full embodiment of the mission of Severson Dells -- to link people to nature through education and research. A huge thank you to the Potters and the many others like them that bring our mission to life.

SEVERSON DELLS NATURE CENTER

Sunset n' S'mores
Join us for these warm and joyous
MEMBERS ONLY EVENTS!

FRIDAY, JULY 7TH | 7:00PM
FRIDAY, AUGUST 11TH | 7:00PM

These events will be capped at 30 people - first come, first serve. Register now:
www.seversondells.org/calendar/s'mores

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Dear Friends of the Severson Dells Nature Center,

Today is March 10 and our region awoke to a heavy blanket of snow. If I'm being honest, I'm ready for spring and warmer weather. That being said, it's hard to ignore the beauty and silence of our snow-covered landscape. On my drive into work the trees were breathtaking, and I was treated to Sandhill Cranes mining for food in a local cornfield. The changing seasons, wildlife, and natural beauty reminded me of how much I enjoy calling the Midwest home. More importantly, it's a reminder of the important role Severson Dells Nature plays in our region and its mission of:
...linking people to nature through education and research in the northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin region. We promote awareness of the natural world, fostering respect, enjoyment, and preservation now and in the future.

We are committed to connecting people of all ages with the natural world, and we believe that nature education is more important than ever. Northern Illinois is home to a rich diversity of plants and animals, and through our educational programs, we aim to inspire a sense of wonder and stewardship among our community members who will become the next generation of conservationists. The positive impact our organization has had in the region would not be possible without our supporters who have helped us continue this important work. Your support has allowed us to provide vital nature education experiences to thousands of people, inspiring a love of nature and promoting environmental conservation. For this support, we thank you.

Over the past year our organization emerged from the pandemic. Under Director Ann Wasser's leadership and her talented team, we have emerged stronger than ever, both from a financial and programming perspective. This is a testament to their tremendous resilience and adaptability to pivot and use their creativity to execute our mission. Unfortunately, we have faced another challenge with the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County recently electing to terminate Ann and the Severson staff effective March 2023. This decision was made unilaterally by the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County board and came as a surprise to the staff at the Nature Center and to the Severson Dells Education Foundation board of directors. With that being said, the Severson Dells staff and board of directors has worked tirelessly over the past three months to establish payroll, insurance, benefits, and HR support for Ann and her team.

We have nearly completed this process but will undoubtedly need your support to help us manage a significant monetary increase to our 2023 annual operating plan. Please consider a donation to Severson Dells Education Foundation. Your support will help guarantee that school field trips, guided hikes, camps, lectures, and all the other programs you have come to expect from us continue. Secondly, there is a small, but mighty staff operating the nature center and we are always looking for volunteers to support our education programs and help with habitat restoration.

Finally – thank you. None of our mission would have been possible without you. We are grateful for the generous donations, volunteer hours, and words of encouragement that have helped sustain us during these difficult times. Your support has enabled us to continue our mission of providing nature education to our community and we are deeply grateful.

Thank you for your continued support, and I hope to see you at Severson Dells Nature Center soon!

Always Moving Forward,
Chris Samuelson
Board President



Chris Samuelson, Board President



ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS:

\$	318,921	Cash
	37,388	Grants receivable
	-	Pledges receivable, current
	30,448	Inventory
	-	Prepaid expenses

\$ 386,757 Total current assets

NONCURRENT ASSETS:

\$	2,163,511	Investments
	-	Pledges receivable, longterm
	50,409	Furniture and Equipment
	(31,194)	Less: Accumulated depreciation
	19,215	Property and equipment, net
	71,211	Endowment investments

\$ 2,253,937 Total noncurrent assets

\$ 2,640,694 Total assets

CURRENT LIABILITIES

\$	-	Payroll liabilities
	32,000	Accounts payable
	5,409	Deferred revenue

\$ 37,409 Total current liabilities

NET ASSETS

\$	2,472,182	Without donor restrictions
	131,103	With donor restrictions

\$ 2,603,285 Total net assets

\$ 2,640,694 Total liabilities + net assets

2022 PROGRAM ATTENDANCE

3,320

@ Public Programs



2,559

Students on Field Trips



2,173

Students at Off-site Programs



641

Students in School Programs



2,548

Walk-In Visitors



And countless others that came out to enjoy the trails & play at The Grove.

MEMBERS & SUPPORTERS

Since its inception in 1976, donors have supported the programs at Severson Dells Nature Center through donations, both monetary and in-kind. As a result, our organization has helped teach more than a half-million people about the natural world. We have done our best to list the individuals and groups who have supported Severson Dells Nature Center through memberships, donations, sponsorships, memorials, and other gifts during 2022.

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BUSINESS MEMBERS & EVENT SPONSORS

Special thanks to our Business Members and Event Sponsors for supporting local nature education for the community. Their support allows us to deliver the wide range of high quality programming you have come to know and love from Severson Dells.



If your business is interested in supporting Severson Dells, please contact Ann Wasser at ann@seversondells.org or 815-335-2915.



TESTIMONIALS

FIELD TRIP TESTIMONIALS

“During this field trip, I learned that Honeysuckle is a bad BAD plant, and how to cut it down. I enjoyed shelter building, and the teamwork involved in it. I wonder when we will drive the Honeysuckle out of the forest.”

“Thank you for letting me have a field trip to Severson Dells. I really enjoyed cutting down the Honeysuckle, building shelters, and figuring out what soil we had. I learned that there are different soils for different plants and that some plants change soil.”

“I enjoyed learning about Honeysuckle. I had so much fun cutting it too. I wonder what is going to happen with the prairie seeds. I had so much fun with you guys.”

“Thank you for the amazing trip! Everything was great and very exciting. I will be back to this beautiful place so see you soon!”

“Thank you for letting us go on a field trip in your wonderful nature preserve. It was very fun and I learned a lot. Thank you!”

“Thank you so much for teaching us many things. One thing I learned was how many animals were dying because of honeysuckle. Something I enjoyed was cutting down the honeysuckle because it was a lot of fun. Lastly, something I wondered was how many live animals have you seen at Severson Dells? For example, wolves or coyotes.”

“Thank you very much for letting our class visit your Dells. It was a wonderful trip. I learned about different ecosystems and soil. I really enjoyed working as a team to build forts too. I always wondered what it would be like to help in the forest. I hope we can come back soon!”

SUMMER CAMP TESTIMONIALS

When asked what campers got out of Summer Camp at the Dells, campers’ parents said:

“My camper is extremely extroverted and thrives on being around people. It was nice for him to have some time with kids his own age outdoors.”

“Great social experience and learned about nature with a new lens”

“Increased knowledge of the natural world”

“I actually think you are “Sam’s people” and that he is fully “in his element” when he is at this camp.”

“Curiosity and confidence in nature.”



SPOOK THE DELLS

Save the Date

Saturday, October 21st, 2023

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm



Save the Date

LUMINARIA

DECEMBER 15TH AND 16TH 2023

6:00 - 9:00 PM

BECOME A MEMBER OF
"FRIENDS OF SEVERSON DELLS"
 OR GIVE AN ADDITIONAL GIFT

MEMBERS RECEIVE:

- Discount at Severson Dells' Gift Shop
- Reduced admission to Severson Dells' programs
- Members-only programs at Severson Dells
- Early Summer Camp registration
- Check-out privileges at Severson Dells' Library
- "Notes From the Dells" newsletter, with calendar of programs and special events mailed directly to your home
- Free admission to participating Association of Nature Center Administrators (ANCA) member nature centers around the country

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP:

- Individual \$40
- Family \$65
- Sponsor \$125
- Benefactor \$300
- Sustaining \$600
- Patron \$1000

Become a member online at
www.seversondells.org/become-a-member/

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

I would like to support the mission of SDNC
 with a gift of _____ at this time.

**Contributions are tax deductible
 as allowed by law.**

**Please consult your tax professional.
 Thank You For Your Support!**



SEVERSON DELLS ACTIVITIES

Please register at least two days in advance by phone 815-335-2915
or on our website: seversondells.org.

MAY

Wildflower Walk
Wednesday, May 3 | 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Full Moon Hike
Friday, May 5 | 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Music at the Dells: Long Mama
Saturday, May 6 | 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Wildflower Walk
Tuesday, May 9 | 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Jeffersonian Dinner @ The Norwegian
Wednesday, May 10 | 6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Conservation Crew Restoration Workday
Saturday, May 13 | 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Wildflower Walk
Wednesday, May 17 | 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Conservation Crew Restoration Workday
Monday, May 22 | 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Wildflower Walk
Tuesday, May 23 | 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Golden Hour Mindfulness Walk
Wednesday, May 24 | 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Wildflower Walk
Wednesday, May 31 | 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

JUNE

Readings from the Rookery
Friday, June 2 | 9:00 - 10:30 a.m.

Full Moon Hike
Saturday, June 3 | 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Canoe Convoy
Monday, June 5 | 5:20 - 8:00 p.m.

World Environment Day Mindfulness Walk
Monday, June 5 | 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Wildflower Walk
Wednesday, June 7 | 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Family Creek Walk
Thursday, June 8 | 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Golden Hour in the Grove
Saturday, June 10 | 6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Canoe Convoy
Monday, June 12 | 5:20 - 8:00 p.m.

Wildflower Walk
Wednesday, June 14 | 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Readings from the Rookery
Friday, June 16 | 9:00 - 10:30 a.m.

Canoe Convoy
Monday, June 19 | 5:20 - 8:00 p.m.

Wildflower Walk
Tuesday, June 20 | 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Sostice Drum Circle
Wednesday, June 21 | 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Music at the Dells: Arielle Silver
Saturday, June 24 | 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Canoe Convoy
Monday, June 26 | 5:20 - 8:00 p.m.

Conservation Crew Restoration Workday
Monday, June 26 | 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Wildflower Walk
Wednesday, June 28 | 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Readings from the Rookery
Friday, June 30 | 9:00 - 10:30 a.m.

JULY

Canoe Convoy
Monday, July 3 | 5:20 - 8:00 p.m.

Family Creek Walk
Saturday, July 8 | 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Conservation Crew Restoration Workday
Saturday, July 8 | 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Canoe Convoy
Monday, July 10 | 5:20 - 8:00 p.m.

Readings from the Rookery
Friday, July 14 | 9:00 - 10:30 a.m.

Paint Night
Friday, July 14 | 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Conservation Crew Restoration Workday
Monday, July 24 | 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Canoe Convoy
Monday, July 24 | 5:20 - 8:00 p.m.

Readings from the Rookery
Friday, July 28 | 9:00 - 10:30 a.m.

Kishwaukee Canoe Trip
Saturday, July 29 | 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Canoe Convoy
Monday, July 31 | 5:20 - 8:00 p.m.

AUGUST

Artale First Friday
Friday, August 4 | 5:30 to 8 p.m.

Conservation Crew Restoration Workday
Saturday, August 12 | 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Music at the Dells: Sigh, Swoon
Friday, August 18 | 7:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Forest Quest Scavenger Hunt
Saturday, August 26 | 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Conservation Crew Restoration Workday
Monday, August 28 | 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Full Moon Hike
Wednesday, August 30 | 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

NOTES FROM THE DELLS

Severson Dells Nature Center
8786 Montague Road
Rockford, IL 61102-9713

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

**NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Rockford, IL 61125
Permit No. 513**

CONTACT Us!

Telephone: 1-815-335-2915
web: www.seversondells.org
e-mail: info@seversondells.org

**Open Monday - Saturday:
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**
Open Sunday: 1 to 4:30 p.m.



Severson Dells Nature Center, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, will assist in providing for those individuals with special needs. (Please notify us in advance of your needs that may require special staffing.)

SEVERSON DELLS NATURE CENTER STAFF:

Ann Wasser - Director
Andrea Wallace Noble - Educator
Liz Wiener - Naturalist/Educator
Asia M. Peters - Community Engagement
Coordinator
Laura Sjoquist - Administrative Assistant

BOARD MEMBERS:

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