



SEVERSON DELLS
NATURE CENTER

NOTES FROM THE DELLS

Calendar & Newsletter

September - December 2022 | Volume 43 No. 3

Rockford, Illinois





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IN MEMORY OF DR. CARL HARTMAN

Photo by Paige Griffin

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On the cover: Garden Orb Weaver Spider by Andrea Wallace Noble

MEET ASIA: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR



Photo by Trisha Wilks

Hi there! My name is Asia Peters. I am the new Community Engagement Coordinator here at Severson Dells. Born and raised in Winnebago County, I feel at home amongst the trees and the prairies of the Forest Preserves.

I graduated from the University of Colorado Boulder in 2018 with a Bachelor of Environmental Design. Since then, I have pursued experience in Public Art, Marketing, and Community Building. In my new role, I aim to help mend the fence between city and nature by sharing the wisdom and beauty of our natural ecosystems with the greater Rockford population.

Off the clock, you might spot me hiking on a trail, grooving at a local concert, or painting a mural!

NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Happy Fall to All!

'Tis the season for stunning color changes as we slide into the chillier months. This season's change seems so much more dramatic than any other and captures our attention with its colorful beauty.

For the last few years we have all been dealing with seemingly neverending change and it has affected us all differently. The one constant has been nature. It is the safe place we can all come back to and get reconnected with our thoughts, our family or our friends.

In this month's Book Nook from Chuck Wemstrom, you will find another perspective on change in the natural world and humans' tireless efforts towards restoration and conservation. This book is a fascinating look at land preservation and restoration and what our ultimate goals and roles should be. Reading this article got me thinking about how we, at Severson Dells, have navigated change because of COVID and what changes will stick long term because they work so much better than how we did things before.

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus said, "The only constant in life is change." While this may be true, we want you and the rest of the community to know that Severson Dells will remain a constant, too. You can count on us to continue to provide high-quality programs, whether it is our decades-long favorite, Luminaria event, or the new lectures this fall about Smart Wetlands and Climate Change Effects in Illinois.

Enjoy the beauty of the season and embrace all the changes that come with it!



Ann
Director

Photo by Jessie Crow Mermel

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"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 —

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT: DIANE AND ED KUEHL

BY JESSIE CROW MERMEL

Love for the natural world draws most people to Severson Dells Nature Center. For Diane and Ed Kuehl, however, their passion for supporting community education inspired their initial connection to the Nature Center. Through their involvement, they developed their own love of the natural world. Both Ed and Diane grew up exploring the outdoors on food-producing farms, but they did not consider themselves “nature people” until spending time at Severson Dells and becoming immersed in nature education.



Photo by Jessie Crow Mermel

The Kuehls first became involved in Severson Dells when Diane was asked to join the Board of Directors by a former student while she was at a Mendelssohn concert. Diane joined the Board in 2008 when the Nature Center was feeling the pinch of the recession. Diane brought her administrative experience to the Board and soon took the reins as president. Jack and Colleen Holmbeck (see Supporter Spotlight, Jan-April 2022) mentored Diane in ways of guiding the Nature Center through a self-sustaining balanced budget. It was during this time that the Severson Dells Nature Center staff became employees of the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County, under the direction of Tom Kalousek. Ed later joined the Board 2014 and helped with the strategic plan process.

Diane and Ed have also offered their time and talents as educators through the school program lessons they taught at the Nature Center. They especially are delighted to see the freedom and joy of children running outdoors, much like they used to on their family farms as children. They both enjoy learning new things about the natural world and sharing it with children. They challenge each other in identifying wildflowers on their

walks in Illinois and cacti on their hikes in Arizona, where they spend their winters. “Identifying leads to really seeing a plant. It has made us much more aware of our surroundings,” Diane explained. They have seen their connection to the natural world develop through what they have learned through a wide variety of programs at Severson Dells.

After working on farms through high school, Ed joined the Navy to serve on a nuclear submarine as a Reactor

Operator. It was in the Navy that he was introduced to the world of computers, and he dedicated the rest of his career working in IT management. He attended university on the GI Bill and was the first of his family to attend college. Diane started off as a teacher and then moved into community college administration, first at Highland College and next at Rock Valley College. She developed programs for student access and retention through reading, writing, math centers and other student outreach programs. Making higher education accessible to more people is important to Diane. The Kuehls also raised two beloved daughters, Susie and Jenny who have become successful professionals in their own lives.

Beyond their dedication to Severson Dells Nature Center, Diane and Ed have lived full lives that have centered around supporting their community in a multitude of ways. Diane is on two committees for providing scholarships to young women. She volunteered for Boone County CASA for 9 years as an advocate for children in the courtroom. They are both active in their Unitarian Universalist Church, which is particularly committed to social justice awareness. They enjoy supporting performing arts in Rockford as well. Diane currently serves on the Rockford Dance Company



Board of Directors. In 2017, this meant helping organize the 75th celebration of the Rockford Peaches. Ed even coached a celebrity softball game! Simply put, they love Rockford and want to help in any way they can.

Photo by James Hogan

When Diane and Ed are not busy serving their community, they enjoy hiking, golf for Ed, exploring local forest preserves, travel, and visiting Presidential Libraries—they have visited all that have been built and are eagerly awaiting completion of the Barack Obama Presidential Library.

Continued learning is yet another passion of the Kuehls, which is why Diane joined the Shelter in a Sense of Place reading and discussion group that Severson Dells Nature Center offered starting at the beginning of the pandemic. Diane expressed, “The reading group helped me through the pandemic to be more joyful, thoughtful, and hopeful. Also, it raised my evaluation of what I normally read and what I should be reading.” Diane’s contribution to



Photo by Ed Kuehl

the group was inspiring and Ed chipped in with Zoom IT support when needed!

The Shelter in a Sense of Place reading group focused on exploring diverse perspectives in nature writing to help inform and educate us as humans to how we need to live on this planet at this critical moment in an interconnected and conscious way. The nuanced facets of the climate crisis were a common theme in the discussions. Action on climate change is top priority for both Diane and Ed. “As a starting place, we have solar panels and drive an electric car, but Severson Dells is a key place to have these conversations that can inform how we address action on climate as a community.” Because of the era of climate change, Diane and Ed feel that it is as important as ever to support Severson Dells Nature Center as a local hub of climate change awareness and action.



Photo by Diane Kuehl

“Diane and Ed’s support of Severson Dells over the years is immeasurable. They have helped with so many things big and small over the years. Whether it was their board service during difficult times, small IT fixes, or helping with field trips, the Kuehls have been so generous in helping the nature center thrive,” said Ann Wasser, Director at Severson Dells. We are deeply grateful to Diane and Ed for their dedication to Severson Dells, helping to both lead the organization strategically and by being engaged on a hands-on level helping people of all ages explore the wonders and joy of the natural world.

“Teaching children about the natural world should be treated as one of the most important events in their lives.”

Thomas Berry

NATURALIST NOTES: THE "GOOD" HONEYSUCKLE

BY ELLEN RATHBONE

With all our work on landscape restoration and removal of introduced species, you have no doubt heard us talk about the bane known as honeysuckle - how it's an introduced species (in fact, several introduced species), a vigorous grower (gardener-speak for "it takes over the landscape"), provides little in the way of nutritional value for native birds and other wildlife, and is taking over our landscapes.

However, not all honeysuckles are "bad" characters. Indeed, there are native honeysuckles, and today I'd like to introduce you to one that we have growing here at Severson Dells: Grape Honeysuckle (*Lonicera reticulata*). For the record, Illinois is also home to two other native honeysuckle vines, Yellow Honeysuckle (*L. flava*) and Limber Honeysuckle (*L. dioica*), as well as a native bush honeysuckle (*Diervilla lonicera*). As far as I know, none of these have been spotted at SDNC.

Off the top of my head, I can name two locations at SDNC where this vine-form honeysuckle grows: one is along the paved loop, and the other is out along the perimeter trail, near the turn-off to the L-shaped prairie trail.

One of the most distinctive characteristics of this plant is the nearly circular leaves that arise just below the flowering tips. The rest of the leaves are not fused around the stem as these are (a condition known as perfoliate, just in case you want to build your vocabulary), but the ones that are sure do stand out. It helps that the flowers are prominently situated right above them.

Another fun fact about this plant is that the leaves are coated on both sides with a waxy substance (a condition known as glaucous - vocab word #2), which give the leaves a bit of

a blue-green hue. This "wax" can easily be rubbed off with your fingers, and while I cannot find any specifics, I suspect it serves to reduce water loss through the leaves - at least that's what waxy surfaces on other leaves are purported to do.

With those long tube-shaped flowers, you won't be surprised to learn that this plant is pollinated by such critters as hummingbirds, clearwing moths (as in the hummingbird clearwing moth), and bees with long tongues. I admit I am a little surprised by the hummingbirds, though, because they are famous for preferring red flowers. However, I've also seen them nectaring on jewelweed blooms, and those are yellow and orange. Perhaps orange is close enough to red if



Photo by Ellen Rathbone

one's a hummer, but that still doesn't explain the yellow. Who knows - perhaps they live by the philosophy of any port in a storm, or in this case, any long-tubed flower in the forest.

Additionally, there are a whole slew of moths whose caterpillars feed on the leaves, species with delightfully groovy names like the six-plume moth, the gray scoopwing, and yes, the hummingbird and snowberry clearwings. A number of aphids belly up to the bar on this plant, too, sucking the juices from its leaves and stems.

And when those yellow flowers eventually ripen into a cluster of bright red berries, thrushes, thrashers, catbirds, finches, cedar waxwings and more are happy to swoop in and make a meal of them.

Yes, one would do well to encourage this native vine in one's garden, even though it is not (currently) a popular garden pick. But just look at all those insects and birds that it feeds! Plus, it's just a lovely looking plant - one that would stand out in a garden or creeping over a trellis.

This piece was originally published on June 14, 2022 on our Field Notes blog. Visit www.seversondells.org/blog to read more articles on the natural world.

About Ellen Rathbone, Nature Educator

Ellen received her BS in Resource Management and Environmental & Forest Biology, and her MS in Environmental & Forest Biology (concentrating in Environmental Interpretation) at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (aka: ESF). That's right - she's from New York State! Ellen's worked in NY, NJ, VT, MI, and is now here in Illinois. She considers herself a "jack of all trades and master of none" when it comes to nature expertise. "I love it all, and I dabble in everything." She is a champion of the unloved: spiders, snakes, opossums, raccoons, coyotes, bugs, soil microorganisms, etc.



Photo by Jessie Crow Mermel

Conservation Crew Restoration Workdays

Saturday, September 10; Monday, September 26;
Saturday, October 8; Monday, October 24; Saturday,
November 12; Monday, November 28; and Saturday,
December 10
9 a.m. to noon



Because invasive species pose one of the most significant threats to nature in our time, vegetation management is a crucial step in the conservation of our natural areas. And you can help! Spend an invigorating morning (or several) as a member of the Severson Dells Conservation Crew, working alongside fellow volunteers to remove invasive species from the woods. Weather permitting, we may make a cheerful fire of the brush that we cut. We work from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on the second Saturday and fourth Monday of each month. 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 Ellen, ellen@seversondells.org.



Photos by Andrea Wallace Noble

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 www.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



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



THANK YOU

for a beautiful evening tasting local brews and grooving to the music in the Grove.
Stay tuned for next year's Drinks for the Dells event details!



THANK YOU TO THE BREWERIES!



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Register for programs at seversondells.org/events or call 1-815-335-2915

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

Adult Creek Walk

Friday, September 2 | 5:30 to 7 p.m.

Dive into the aquatic world with us as we explore the creek around Severson Dells. We'll be hiking in the creek looking for aquatic life and exploring the ways it is connected to the land around it. Come prepared for the weather and wear sturdy, closed toed shoes. We also recommend bringing a change of clothes in case you get wet! Cost: \$3/member; \$5/general admission.



Photo by Andrea Wallace Noble

Adult Invertebrate Investigation

Saturday, September 3 | 1 p.m to 2:30 p.m.

Join us as we sweep our way through the grassland in search of the insects of late summer. We'll be adding to our inventory of Severson Dells species of insects and spiders. Come dressed for the weather, with pant legs tucked into your socks. Cost: \$5/member; \$8/general admission.

Golden Hour in The Grove

Saturday, September 10 | 5 to 7:30 p.m.

Bask in the beauty of the Golden Hour at this exclusive down-to-earth fundraising soiree. Explore The Grove, our unique Nature Playscape, on this late-summer evening just for adults. With your ticket, enjoy heavy hors d'oeuvres by The Norwegian, a signature cocktail or mocktail by Vee Dubs Mobile Cocktail Bar, a gourmet s'more station by the fire, and live music by Trillium. Tickets: Advance tickets (until 8/31): \$55/person; general admission (9/1 to event): \$70.

Conservation Crew Restoration Workdays

Saturday, September 10; Monday, September 26; Saturday, October 8; Monday, October 24; Saturday, November 12; Monday, November 28; and Saturday, December 10

9 a.m. to noon

Our volunteer crew helps to restore and maintain balance in the ecosystem by removing invasive plants like Asian bush honeysuckle and garlic mustard, and by 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 Ellen, ellen@seversondells.org.

Sedimentary at Sunset Geology Hike

Wednesday, September 14 | 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Experience Seward Bluffs' stunning sedimentary rock in the golden light of sunset. We'll stroll through the woodlands, cross an old stone bridge, and witness the dells from above and below. Cost: \$3/members; \$5/general admission.

Icky Nature

Saturday, September 17 | 1 to 2:30 p.m.

There are many species that make humans say "ewww!" Today we are going to go out in search of those very animals: snakes, spiders and bugs. This is a perfect way for those with curious minds to spend a late summer afternoon. Open to anyone ages 5 and up. Cost: \$5/members; \$8/general admission.



Photo by Ellen Rathbone



**Rock River Clean-up with The Norwegian
Monday, September 19 | 1 to 4 p.m.**

Join us and the staff of The Norwegian for an afternoon river clean-up along the Rock River. After a busy summer of folks using the river for recreation, there is sure to be garbage that has washed downstream. Here is an opportunity to help give back to the river that provides so much to our area. Please bring a full water bottle. We will provide bags, gloves and snacks. Free!

**Fall Color Hike at Kishwaukee Gorge North
Wednesday, September 28 | 6:30 to 8 p.m.**

This hidden gem of Winnebago County boasts a dramatic dolomite gorge, vibrant fall colors, and tranquil views of the Kishwaukee River. This evening stroll includes hills and an option to descend a steep wooden staircase with railings to see the gorge and river from the bottom of a slope. We will learn about the science of fall along the way!

Cost: \$3/members; \$5/general admission.



Full Moon Hike

Saturday, October 8 | 6:30 to 8 p.m.

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. Ages 8+.

Cost: \$3/members; \$5/general admission.

**Off the Beaten Path
Homeschool Program**

Ages 5-8 from 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Ages 9-12 from 1 to 2:30 p.m.

Cost: \$10/member; \$15/general admission



Spectacular Soils

Thursday, September 15

Soils are the foundation of our incredible ecosystems! We'll learn about the components of soil and what our local soils look like.

Log investigations

Thursday, October 20

Decomposition is nature's way of recycling materials and energy. We'll get up close and personal with rotting logs and hopefully witness some creepy crawlies as we go.

Hanging on a String

Thursday, November 17

Knots are some of the handiest tools to have out in nature! We'll work on our knot tying skills and put them to the test with fun challenges outdoors.

Solstices & Equinoxes

Thursday, December 15

The Winter Solstice approaches. What makes this time of year so special that people around the world have gone to great lengths to learn how to measure and mark it?

Photos by Jessie Crow Mermel

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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Evening Fall Colors at Funderburg Hike Wednesday, October 12 | 5:30 to 7 p.m.

Come out for a leisurely stroll at Funderburg Forest Preserve. We'll enjoy the crisp, autumn evening while also learning the science behind the colors of fall. Cost: \$3/members; \$5/general admission.

Smart Wetlands with Dr. Jill Kostel Thursday, October 20 | 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Join us for an evening with Jill Kostel, Ph.D., Senior Environmental Engineer at the Wetlands Initiative, as she discusses their Smart Wetlands program. This program works with farmers and other partners to provide an effective, long-term solution for addressing excess nutrients in our waterways by locating wetlands to intercept agricultural tile drainage and use natural wetland processes to remove nutrients. Cost: \$3/members; \$5/general admission.



Spook the Dells Saturday, October 22 | 6 to 8 p.m.



There is no reason to be afraid of the woods! This Halloween season, come out to Severson Dells to learn more about nocturnal animals at this family-friendly event. Join us along our paved path for an interactive theater experience that highlights the amazing nocturnal animals that call Severson Dells home. Cost: \$5/members; \$8/general admission.

Climate Change Effects in Illinois with State Climatologist Trent Ford

Tuesday, October 25 | 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Climate change has had significant impacts on natural ecosystems in Illinois, including on both native and invasive species of flora and fauna. Impacts are projected to intensify with future warming, but solutions exist to both mitigate and adapt to climate change and its impacts. Join us for an evening with State Climatologist, Trent Ford as he discusses climate change, its impacts, and the important role of conservation to improve ecosystem resilience to these changes. Cost: \$3/members; \$5/general admission.

Drum-Making Workshop

Saturday, November 5 | 10 a.m to 1 p.m.

Frame drums have been used in many cultures around the world throughout human history. Drumming has made a strong comeback in recent years, with science backing up the many benefits



of the activity. Research indicates that drumming speeds healing, boosts the immune system, reduces tension, anxiety and stress. It can even help control chronic pain. In this class, each participant completes a 15" drum made with a bent wood frame and bison rawhide, as well as a beater. Class length depends on participants' skill, but expect to be here at least two hours. Bring a lunch or snack. **Registration and payment must be received by Oct. 1 so that we can order supplies.** Limited to 8 participants; ages 16 years and up.

Cost: \$130/ Members; \$150/general admission. *Due to material investment, we cannot refund fees in the event of your cancellation after Oct. 1.*

Photos by Jessie Crow Mermel

the 2nd annual

GOLDEN HOUR

IN THE GROVE

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10TH, 2022
SEVERSON DELLS NATURE CENTER

Saturday, September 10th, 2022 | 5 to 7:30 p.m.
Severson Dells Nature Center
8786 Montague Road | Rockford, IL

Bask in the beauty of the Golden Hour at this exclusive down-to-earth fundraising soiree. Explore The Grove, our unique Nature Playscape, on this late-summer evening just for adults. With your ticket, enjoy heavy hors d'oeuvres by The Norwegian, a signature cocktail or mocktail by Vee Dubs, a gourmet s'more station by the fire, and live music by Trillium.

Tickets

Early Bird (until 8/31): \$55/person
General Admission (9/1-9/10): \$70/person
seversondells.org/goldenhour or call 815-335-2915

Photo by Alize Jireh

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Full Moon Hike

Tuesday, November 8 | 5:30 to 7 p.m.

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. Ages 8+.

Cost: \$3/members; \$5/general admission.

Community Science Celebration

Tuesday, November 15 | 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Celebrate the incredible accomplishments of the 2022 field monitoring season! Learn about what our volunteers have discovered when monitoring our local bats, bumblebees, bluebirds, frogs, plants, and more. You will be amazed by exciting data, stunning pictures, and big-picture trends. **The celebration will be held at Forest Preserve Headquarters, 5500 Northrock Dr.** Free.

Turkey Twist Yoga

Friday, November 25 | 9 to 10:30 a.m.



Stay away from the hustle and bustle of Black Friday with a yoga class at Severson Dells! Come do the Turkey Twist with local certified yoga instructor, Amanda Stivers. This yoga practice will be full of yoga twists and some tea, to help digest all that delicious Thanksgiving food. It will leave you feeling refreshed, calm and centered. All levels of yoga practice

are welcome and encouraged to attend. Cost: \$12/members; \$15/general admission.

Opt Outside Hike

Friday, November 25 | 10:30 a.m. to noon

Join Rocktown Adventures and SDNC for a morning wander in the woods and celebrate the 7th anniversary of Opt Outside. This event is an alternative to the shopping frenzy of Black Friday and the only thing you'll be consuming is the beauty of nature and some good conversation with your fellow hikers. Free, but registration is required.



Luminaria

Friday and Saturday, December 9 and 10 | 6 to 9 p.m.

This holiday favorite returns with the candlelit trail, make-your-own-s'mores, winter nature activities, live music and more. This event is free thanks to sponsorship by Kathleen Helge in honor of Barbara Whitsitt, Specialty Screw, Workplace, Comcast and Arc Design. *This event is free, but donations are always appreciated. No registration is required.*



Owl Prowl

Saturday, December 17 | 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Join us for an evening of owl education. We start off indoors learning about the common owl species of our area, then we hit the trail in hopes of hearing, or even seeing, one of our resident owls in person! Appropriate for ages 10 and up. Cost: \$3/members; \$5/general admission.

Winter Wonder Day Out - Chickadees

Wednesday, December 28, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

(foul weather date 12/29)

Ages 5-7 years

Chickadees continue to thrive in even the toughest of temperatures, just like a little cold weather won't stop us from exploring nature. Experience winter animal adaptations for yourself with hands-on activities, exciting games, and outdoor adventures. Cost: \$30/members; \$35/general admission.

Photos by Jessie Crow Mermel



Winter Wonder Day Out - Snow Science

Wednesday, December 28 | 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

(foul weather date 12/29)

Ages 8-12 years

Campers are invited to spend the day with us investigating some of the cool science associated with the winter season and snow. And if we have no snow, we will still have an awesome time checking out what's happening outside at this time of year.

Cost: \$30/members; \$35/general admission.

First Day Hike

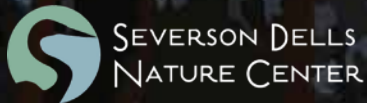
Sunday, January 1 | 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Start your 2023 off on the right foot with a hike in the snow (hopefully!) and a cup of coffee, tea or hot chocolate by the fireplace to warm up afterward.

Cost: \$3/members; \$5/general admission.



Photos by Jessie Crow Mermel



LUMINARIA

DECEMBER 9 + 10, 2022

6PM - 9PM

SPONSORED BY



Kathleen Helge
in memory of
Barbara Whitsitt

Book Nook

NATURAL HISTORY BOOKS WORTH A READ

BY CHUCK WEMSTROM

Emma Marris, in her book *Rambunctious Garden*, challenges many of our basic ideas about wilderness, prairie restoration, non-native invasive plants, and how we can care for the Earth in the future.

She starts out disagreeing with many of our assumptions. She says there is no untouched, pristine area left anywhere and no place that can really be restored. We have already changed everything on the earth. Her most telling example is that the earth has 26 percent more molecules of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere than in 1750.

What she advocates is a global, half-wild “rambunctious garden,” tended by us. And we should think of this rambunctious garden as being everywhere. Forget about baselines. Forget about what it was like before European settlement, and forget about the differences between natives and transplants. She wants us to appreciate the beauty in our own backyards.

Many of us in the Prairie Enthusiasts, Northwest Illinois Audubon, the Natural Land Institute and Severson Dells have learned how much hard work, time and money is involved in doing a prairie restoration, even on a small scale. Although Marris would agree that fighting to control or eradicate Asian bush honeysuckle is hard but necessary work, she doesn't think prairie restoration is worth it, if restoring is our main focus.

Marris claims that the idea of trying to preserve and reclaim the past is a relatively new idea. She says we can enjoy the diversity of life wherever it shows up. She wants us to find new ways to preserve land, to focus on what we want for the future and not try to

bring back the past.

She devotes a whole chapter to the history of Yellowstone National Park and the attempts to keep it from changing. The rains of early June showed once and for all that nature is not stationary. It is always changing. And she believes that we should work with those changes. Later she talks about how the park needs to be enlarged and connected to corridors.

She is enthusiastic about the proposed Y2Y Corridor, Yellowstone to the Yukon, which would protect plants and yet allow the presence of people. She also loves the idea of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, which would expand the park by a factor of ten.

She agrees with E. O. Wilson that humanity should set aside huge parcels of land and water, half the world's surface, and protect it from development. But that doesn't mean trying to restore any of it to an imagined past.

As Marris traveled from Australia to Hawaii and other parts of the world, she studied and observed major, well-funded attempts at restoration.

All of them have failed or could never be reproduced on a larger scale. She ends with suggestions of her ideals of a “rambunctious garden” – and just in time, because this reader was sinking into a pit of despair. She suggests that we start with the ideas of Richard Nash and René Dubos. Nash wants to move everybody into cities and “let the rest of the planet run wild.” Many of us love living in the country. But perhaps as a compromise we could move to towns or small cities.

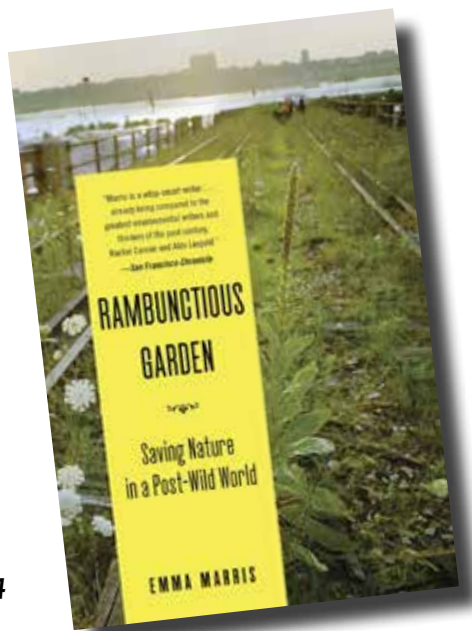
She likes Dubos' idea: “New environments that are ecologically sound, aesthetically satisfying, economically rewarding, and favorable to the



continued growth of civilization,” and that provide for people.

I like one of her main ideas, which is sprinkled throughout the book: re-wild everything you can. Put in a vegetable garden in the back and a pollinator garden in the front. Plant another tree on the parkway; stop mowing the shoulders of roads; plant wildflowers in the highway median strip; let nature grow along the railroad right-of-ways; and plant trees in the middle of parking lots. Make some rivers linear parks, or at least try and protect the part of the river that moves through a city. Pay farmers to help clean up rivers and to plant conservation areas in their fields. Bring back hedgerows. Pay farmers to take some of their land out of production.

Emma Marris takes the reader on a wonderful trip around the world. She claims that we have a lot to learn from Europe, whose governments support agricultural environmentalism. About halfway through the book she begins to report on what works. You'll want to read every word. My sense of despair turned to optimistic joy.



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8 x 6 inches
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Images are from the author's website,
www.emmamarris.com
Her latest book is *Wild Souls*.

Summer of STEM Reading Program



This summer, we were fortunate to be a part of the United Way of the Rock River Valley's Summer of STEM Reading Program. This program provided thousands of STEM children's books to kids across our community through childcare providers, camps, in-home visit programs and public programs.

As part of this effort, we developed lessons and activities that went along with the theme of each book. Child care and in-home visitors were then able to engage kids in hands-on nature and science lessons while incorporating what they learned from each book.

In celebration of the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County's 100th anniversary, we also gave away copies of *Treasure Among the Trees*, by Sheryl Pitts Wolff and photographs by David Livingston Burdick, which was written about Severson Dells Forest Preserve.

At the nature center, we were able to give campers, RPS 205 summer retreat students and Readings from the Rookery families books to take home to continue their connection with nature beyond their experience with us.

MEMORIALS & HONORARIUMS

MEMORIALS

Leona I Frey
Gloria L Meden
Merle Schandelmeier
Barbara Whitsitt

HONORARIUMS

Karen Diamond
Jim O'Brien



BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR

Become an advocate for nature education in your community.

Your donation will help to support our ongoing nature education programs and the future growth of Severson Dells.

*Your Monthly Contribution
Goes a Long Way*

To learn more and begin your monthly donation, contact Ann Wasser
ann@seversondells.org | (815) 335-2915.

BECOME A MEMBER OF

"FRIENDS OF SEVERSON DELLS"

OR GIVE AN ADDITIONAL GIFT

MEMBERS RECEIVE:

- Discount at Severson Dells' Gift Shop
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- 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
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www.seversondells.org/become-a-member/

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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.

SEPTEMBER

Adult Creek Walk
September 2 | 5:30 to 7 p.m.

Adult Invertebrate Investigation
September 3 | 1 to 2:30 p.m.

Golden Hour in The Grove Fundraiser
September 10 | 5 to 7:30 p.m.

Restoration Workday
September 10 | 9 a.m. to noon

Sedimentary at Sunset Geology Hike
September 14 | 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Homeschool: Spectacular Soils
September 15 | Ages 5-8 from 10 to 11:30 a.m.,
Ages 9-12 from 1 to 2:30 p.m.

Icky Nature
September 17 | 1 to 2:30 p.m.

Rock River Clean-up with The Norwegian
September 19 | 1 to 4 p.m.

Restoration Workday
September 26 | 9 a.m. to noon

Fall Color Hike at Kishwaukee Gorge North
September 28 | 6:30 to 8 p.m.

OCTOBER

Restoration Workday
October 8 | 9 a.m. to noon

Full Moon Hike
October 8 | 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Evening Fall Colors at Funderburg Hike
October 12 | 5:30 to 7 p.m.

Homeschool: Rotting Log investigations
October 20 | Ages 5-8 from 10 to 11:30 a.m.,
Ages 9-12 from 1 to 2:30 p.m.

Smart Wetlands with Dr. Jill Kostel
October 20 | 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Spook the Dells
October 22 | 6 to 8 p.m.

Restoration Workday
October 24 | 9 a.m. to noon

Climate Change Effects in Illinois with State Climatologist
Trent Ford
October 25 | 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

NOVEMBER

Drum-Making Workshop
November 5 | 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Full Moon Hike
November 8 | 5:30 to 7 p.m.

Restoration Workday
November 12 | 9 a.m. to noon

Community Science Celebration
November 15 | 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Homeschool: Hanging on a String
November 17 | Ages 5-8 from 10 to 11:30 a.m.,
Ages 9-12 from 1 to 2:30 p.m.

Turkey Twist Yoga
November 25 | 9 to 10:30 a.m.

Opt Outside Hike
Friday, November 25 | 10:30 a.m. to noon

Restoration Workday
November 28 | 9 a.m. to noon

DECEMBER

Luminaria
December 9 and 10 | 6 to 9 p.m.

Restoration Workday
December 10 | 9 a.m. to noon

Homeschool: Solstices & Equinoxes
December 15 | Ages 5-8 from 10 to 11:30 a.m.,
Ages 9-12 from 1 to 2:30 p.m.

Owl Prowl
December 17 | 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Winter Wonder Day Out - Chickadees
December 28, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Winter Wonder Day Out - Snow Science
December 28 | 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

First Day Hike
January 1 | 10 to 11:30 a.m.



NOTES FROM THE DELLS

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

CONTACT INFO

Telephone: 1-815-335-2915

www.seversondells.org

e-mail: info@seversondells.org

Hours:

Monday - Saturday: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Sunday: 1 to 4:30 p.m.

Severson Dells Nature Center is a cooperative effort with the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County.



Severson Dells Nature Center and the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County, 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

Nancy Bleile - Administrative Assistant

Ellen Rathbone - Nature Educator

Andrea Wallace Noble - Naturalist/Educator

Asia Peters - Community Engagement Coordinator

AMERICORPS MEMBERS:

Megan Bertucci - Education

Ashlyn Rogers - Community Science and Volunteer Support

BOARD MEMBERS:

Chris Samuelson - President

Catherine Povalitis - Vice President

Jessie Madl - Treasurer

Jack Armstrong

Katie Eickman

Jake Loescher

Jarrod Hennis

Daniel Huntley

Patty Oliveri

Cathy Ott

Hans Rupert

Daniel Zeigler



Photo by Jessie Crow Mermel