



FALL 2026 PROGRAM GUIDE

September - October - November



Visit the online calendar to register for programs, see full descriptions, locations, policies, and more!



**NORTH LAKE LAND
DISCOVERY CENTER**

inspire - discover - connect

Welcome to the Path of Discovery!

Whether you're a nature enthusiast, a gardening expert, interested in nature & wellness, or just wanting to explore more of the beautiful Northwoods, consider visiting us at North Lakeland Discovery Center!

Nestled in the heart of the Northwoods, North Lakeland Discovery Center is a non-profit nature center and lies within Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest, offering a tranquil escape for outdoor exploration, community events, and connection to the natural world.

Our self-guided exploration activities and recreation opportunities include:

- 🌲 Nature Center with live animal ambassadors
- 🌲 12-miles of multi-use trails
- 🌲 StoryWalk trail, a new book each month
- 🌲 Interpretive gardens to discover
- 🌲 Statehouse Lake access for fishing, swimming, and paddling

Connect with us and the natural world through our upcoming program opportunities.

Make a Difference With Membership

When you join our membership program, your contribution goes directly to impactful initiatives that promote lifelong learning, outdoor exploration, environmental stewardship, and scientific discovery. Your support helps us maintain our trails, offer community and school nature-based programs for little or no cost, provide self-guided educational resources at our Nature Center, sustain our Animal Ambassador Program for injured wildlife education, and more! Members receive discounts on most programs or attend for free!



Registering For Programs

Registration can be completed online, by phone, or in person. Visit www.discoverycenter.net for more information on registering or to register for a program. Most programs have a registration deadline. Programs may be canceled if the minimum number of participants has not been met by the registration deadline. Our cancellation policy can be found on our website. Most programs have a wait list available. Call (715) 543-2085 for availability.

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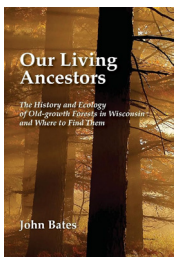
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NATURAL PAGES READING GROUP

Gain a new perspective on nature with our monthly reading group, Natural Pages, a partnership between the Discovery Center and Koller Library. We will focus on a different nature-based book each month, with discussions led by either Discovery Center or library staff. Free and open to the public. Books will be available for checkout at the library in the weeks prior to the meeting. *Preregistration is appreciated.*



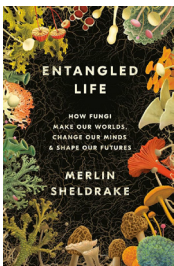
Our Living Ancestors

Author: John Bates

Our Living Ancestors is a remarkable blend of the beauty, history and ecology of Wisconsin's 16 million acres of forest. It is a captivating account of what our great forests were once like, and how they got where they are today.

Location: Koller Library

Tuesday, September 8 5 - 6 p.m.



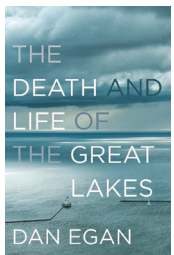
Entangled Life

Author: Merlin Sheldrake

Entangled Life is an exploration of the hidden and complex world of fungi. It reveals how these extraordinary organisms, from their underground networks connecting entire forests, to plastic eating fungi strains, can sustain life, shape ecosystems, and fundamentally transform our understanding of the natural world.

Location: North Lakeland Discovery Center

Tuesday, October 13 5 - 6 p.m.



The Death and Life of the Great Lakes

Author: Dan Egan

This non-fiction book chronicles the ecological history of the Great Lakes. It details how human intervention has devastated the ecosystem despite periods of recovery.

Location: Koller Library

Tuesday, November 10 5 - 6 p.m.



MINDFUL LIVING IN NATURE

Immerse yourself in nature while connecting with your mind, body, and spirit at the Discovery Center. Yoga classes will be held indoors. Learn more about these opportunities on our website.

Lakeside Yoga Stretch

Wherever you are in your yoga practice, this class is for you. Lakeside Yoga is a gently paced class that encourages deep release in the body's major muscle groups. Through mindful stretching, breathwork, and intentional movement, students can increase flexibility, ease chronic pain, and improve their overall range of motion. Bring a yoga mat and water.

Saturdays 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

No registration required.

\$12/session to be paid at the door

September 5, 12, 19, & 26

October 3, 10, 17, 24, & 31

November 7, 14, 21, & 28

Forest Bathing Experience

This three-hour forest bathing will be a slow, gentle, guided walk in nature at the Beaver Creek Hemlocks Conservation Area. It is an opportunity to unwind in a peaceful and beautiful setting with a series of invitations, or prompts, that are designed to help you settle your mind and body, awaken your senses, and deepen your connection to yourself and others. Conclude with snacks and tea made from local spruce or white pine spruce. Transportation will be provided. Kim Ainis is a certified Nature and Forest Therapy Guide.

Instructor: Kim Ainis

Tuesday, October 13 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Registration deadline: October 11

\$45/\$40 member



Beaver Creek Hemlocks



TRAIL EXPLORATIONS

Learn about wildlife, plants, landscape and natural world relationships from expert naturalists, historians, geologists, and ecologists as you hike down the trail. All ability levels welcome. Every trip is a new adventure!

Family Fall Hike

Join a Discovery Center Naturalist for a guided hike on the trails at the North Lakeland Discovery Center as we explore the forest during its transition from summer to fall. Discover how plants, wildlife, and the forest ecosystem change as the seasons shift. This hike will cover approximately 2 miles down the bog board walk loop.

Instructor: Liz McCloskey

Saturday, September 12

12 - 2 p.m.

Registration deadline: September 10

Free for members/\$10 non-member/\$5 youth

Black River Harbor Geology Expedition with Mike Porter

Geologist Mike Porter and Discovery Center staff will embark on a journey with participants to discover the geological significance of these unique waterfalls found along the Black River as the river flows toward Lake Superior.

Instructors: Jenna Richardson and Mike Porter

Tuesday, September 15

9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Registration deadline: September 12

\$75/\$65 member

Autumn's Hidden Wonders Hike at WinMan Trails

As we transition to the fall season, join Discovery Center Naturalists on a hike at WinMan trails exploring the hidden wonders and changes occurring during the fall months. Exploring topics like migration, hibernation preparation, and seasonal color change of both plants and animals. Discover all the wonders of autumn shifts on this easy 2 to 2.5 mile hike at WinMan Trails.

Instructors: Jenna Richardson & Liz McCloskey

Saturday, September 19

10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Registration deadline: September 17

\$10 non-members/\$5 member/\$5 youth



Discovering Wisconsin's Amazing Forestry Legacy: Driving Tour & Short Hikes

Travel from eastern Iron County to the old growth forest surrounding Star Lake to explore both historic and modern forestry sites surrounding the Northern Highland-American Legion Forest. During our travels, we will visit several early sites, including ranger stations, watch towers, Civilian Conservation Corps camps, state nurseries, a ranger cabin, forest fires, Youth Conservation Corps camps and more. Some historic logging sites will be viewed as well. We will also explore modern forest practices that illustrate the long-term commitment to sustainable forests in Wisconsin. This adventure includes short hikes on uneven ground. Some paths may have fallen logs to step over. Hiking will be light to moderate.

Instructors: Jim Bokern & Licia Johnson

Tuesday, September 22

10:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Registration deadline: September 19

\$45/\$30 member of MWHS/NLDC

Fall Hike at Van Vliet Hemlocks

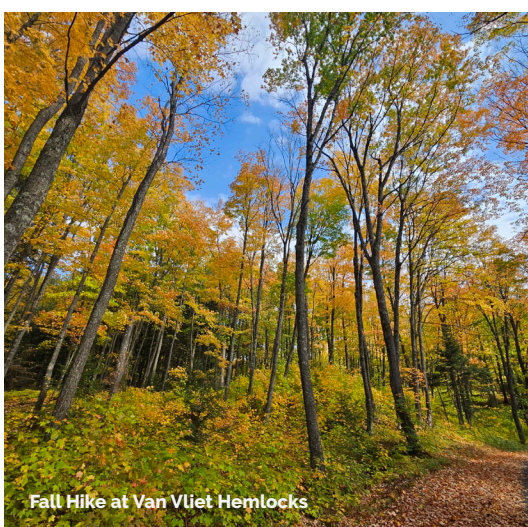
Go out and explore the trails at the beautiful Van Vliet Hemlock State Natural Area with a North Lakeland Discovery Center Naturalist. This is a pristine 400-acre reserve featuring one of the largest old-growth hemlock-hardwood forests in the Midwest. Fall is the perfect time to explore the beautiful colors this wonderful forest has to offer. Unique features of this site include old-growth tree species, nurse logs, and diverse wetlands. The hike will be approximately 2 miles long and is considered moderately strenuous due to hilly terrain.

Instructor: Liz McCloskey

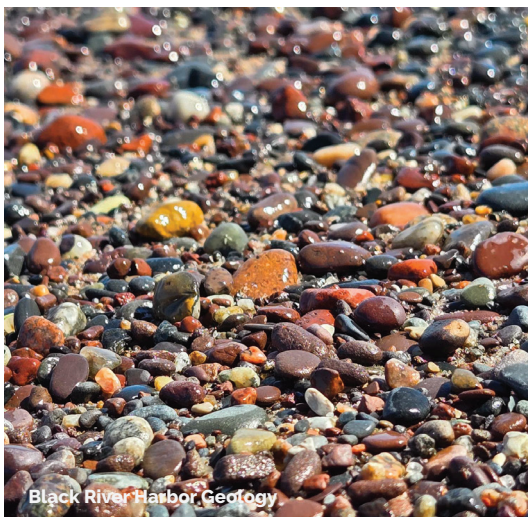
Saturday, October 3 1 - 4 p.m.

Registration deadline: October 1

Free program sponsored by the Friends of Van Vliet



Fall Hike at Van Vliet Hemlocks



Black River Harbor Geology



Family Fall Hike



EXPLORING OUR WATERS

These programs and experiences will get you on local lakes and rivers, educating you on their fascinating link to local history, lore, ecology, and importance. More details on trips can be found online.

Overnight Brule River Paddle

Join us on a wilderness paddle down the Brule River near Long Lake, WI! This is an exclusive outdoor experience featuring pristine river landscapes, an overnight stay on private property and camp-cooked meals! Paddling experience necessary.

Instructors: Jenna Richardson & Don Anderson

*Tuesday and Wednesday, Sept. 1-2
8 a.m. - 2 p.m.*

Registration deadline: August 25

Historic Statehouse Lake Family Canoe Exploration

Hear stories of the Youth Conservation Corps, the NLDC, and aquatic ecology on a canoe exploration of Statehouse Lake with the Northwoods Forest History Experience and a NLDC Naturalist.

Instructors: Hannah Menzia & Liz McCloskey

Saturday, Sept. 5 1-3 p.m.

Registration deadline: September 3

\$32/\$25 member (NFHE or NLDC)/\$15 ages 7-17

Historic Dillinger Pontoon

Learn what John Dillinger and his gang were really like and the "behind the scenes" story of their weekend in

Manitowish Waters as we travel to historic Dillinger sites. Enjoy a tour of the grounds of the famous Little Bohemia Lodge. Lunch included.

Instructor: Kay Krans, Manitowish Waters Historical Society

Tuesday, Sept. 8

9 a.m. - 12 p.m. or 1 - 4 p.m.

Registration deadline: September 6

\$75/\$65 member of MWHS/NLDC

Trout Lake Pontoon

This pontoon tour with the MWHS and NLDC will explore cultural and natural destinations on Trout Lake.

Instructors: Jenna Richardson & Jim Bokern, MW Historical Society

Wednesday, Sept. 9 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Registration deadline: September 7

Free program sponsored by Boulder Junction Community Foundation

Tillicum Conservation Area Paddle

Join us to enjoy this morning trip as we paddle and portage between Stone Lake and Ess Lake to view a variety of habitats.

Instructors: Hannah Thorpe & Northwoods Land Trust

Friday, Oct. 9

9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Registration deadline: October 7

\$15/\$12 member



ENVIRONMENTAL EVENINGS

Explore diverse environmental topics in a relaxed atmosphere during these exciting programs. Led by knowledgeable guest lecturers and Discovery Center staff, these sessions are perfect for winding down after a busy day. Whether you prefer a laid-back or interactive experience, each program offers informative and enjoyable content. Don't miss the chance to socialize and deepen your understanding of our planet!

Nibbles n Knowledge Series

Join us for our monthly adult lecture series. We will serve light appetizers and have a cash bar from 5 - 6 p.m. and the presentation will run from 6 - 7 p.m. These programs are held in our Historic YCC Main Lodge. For a full description on each program, visit our website. Please register two days prior to event date.

\$17/\$14 member/\$20 at the door

Paddling through History - The Lake Mendota Canoes

Instructor: Amy L. Rosebrough

Thursday, September 10 5 - 7 p.m

Illuminating the Web

Instructor: Emily Stone

Thursday, October 8 5 - 7 p.m.

Hidden Moose of Wisconsin

Instructor: Amanda Griggs

Thursday, November 12 5 - 7 p.m.

Wild Wisdom Game Night: Wild Canines

This fun and interactive Jeopardy-style program will be lead by NLDC Naturalists.. Test your knowledge on all things related to wild canines! We will serve light snacks and have a cash bar at 5:30 p.m., and the program will start at 6 p.m. Prizes will be awarded to the winning team!

Instructors: Hannah Thorpe & Liz McCloskey

Wednesday, October 21 5:30 - 7 p.m.

Registration deadline: October 19

\$10/\$5 member

Plant Swap & Potluck

Join us at the Minocqua Public Library to celebrate community, greenery, and good food at the Plant Swap and Potluck! Bring a houseplant or cutting to trade and go home with a fresh new addition to brighten your space and boost your indoor air as the colder months set in.

Instructor: Jenna Richardson

Tuesday, October 27 5:30 - 7 p.m.

Registration not required, but appreciated.

Free



Eco-Friendly Wool Dryer Balls

NATURALLY CREATIVE

Show us your creativity at workshops featuring natural materials, methods, and themes. Each class is an opportunity to learn new skills and techniques from expert instructors in a supportive and inspiring environment.

Soy Wax Batik and Dyeing Workshop

In this workshop, participants will learn the basics of batik. Soy wax will be used to batik a pattern onto fabric or cloth napkins. Each participant will Batik 4 fabric fat quarters or cloth napkins.

Instructor: Darcy Lanz-Sage

Thursday, September 17

9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Registration deadline: September 15

\$45/\$40 member

Naturally Painted Autumn Landscapes

Join the Northwoods Forest History Experience to create a beautiful autumn landscape from the natural world around you! Go out with a Naturalist and find pine needles, leaves, sticks, pinecones, and other items to use as your brush! Great for families!

Instructors: Hannah Menzia & Liz McCloskey

Saturday, October 3

10 - 11:30 a.m.

Registration deadline: October 1

\$15/\$10 member (NFHE or NLDC)/\$5 youth (4-12)

Naturally Made: Fall into Self-Care

Prioritize self-care this season with our exciting new workshop. Join our naturalists as we celebrate fall by creating a fall-scented candle, moisturizing lip balm, a personalized tea blend, pumpkin spice sugar body scrub, and harvest pumpkin lip coffee scrub. All materials will be provided.

Instructors: Licia Johnson & Jenna Richardson

Thursday, October 22

5-7 p.m.

Registration deadline: October 20

\$40/\$30 member

100% Wool Eco-Friendly Dryer Balls Workshop

Local artist Darcy Lanz-Sage will lead this fun workshop creating 100% wool, eco-friendly dryer balls. All materials provided. Participants will leave with 1 set (of 3) decorative dryer balls. These make wonderful gifts!

Instructor: Darcy Lanz-Sage

Tuesday, November 3 *5 - 8 p.m.*

Registration deadline: November 1

\$40/\$35 member



WILDLIFE INSIGHTS

Explore the fascinating realm of wildlife with captivating programs, workshops, and insightful encounters. Discover the beauty, uniqueness, and marvels of our native animals.

Bird Club Program - Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas Update with Nick Anich

It has been several years since field work finished, so what is happening with the Breeding Bird Atlas? Join Nick Anich, Breeding Bird Atlas Coordinator with the Wisconsin DNR, to hear about progress on the forthcoming atlas book and get a peek at some initial results. There will be a club business meeting at 6:30 p.m., followed by the presentation at 7 p.m.

Instructor: Nick Anich

Monday, September 14 6:30 - 8 p.m.

Free program sponsored by the Discovery Center Bird Club

Bird Club Program - Eagles, Ospreys, and Goshawks - Raptors of the Northwoods with Rich Staffen

Learn about 3 of the most charismatic birds of prey in the Northwoods. Rich Staffen, Terrestrial Zoologist and Conservation Biologist with the Wisconsin DNR, will talk about their natural history, conservation efforts, and how their populations are faring in the state. There will be a club business meeting at 6:30 p.m., followed by the presentation at 7 p.m.

Instructor: Rich Staffen

Monday, October 5 6:30 - 8 p.m.

Free program sponsored by the Discovery Center Bird Club

Animal Spotlight Hour

Drop in the Discovery Hall during the hour to explore animal artifacts, learn fun animal facts, and ask a Naturalist your wildlife questions.

10 - 11 a.m.

Free program sponsored by St. Matthias Thrift Shop

Macroinvertebrates

Saturday, September 26

Wolves

Saturday, October 24

Spiders

Saturday, November 21





FAMILY NATURE CONNECTIONS

Hit the road and visit the Discovery Center for fun and educational programs that the whole family can enjoy! Tailored for nature-appreciating kids of all ages, these engaging programs are designed to inspire the next generation while providing a memorable experience for everyone.

Nature Sprouts (ages 1-4)

Connecting families to nature, this family-oriented program consists of interactive, sensory activities centralized around a nature theme.

10 - 10:30 a.m.
\$5/\$3 member

Camping Adventures

Saturday, September 5
Registration deadline: September 3

Nocturnal Animals

Saturday, October 10
Registration deadline: October 8

Adventure Awaits: Family Compass & Survival Skills

Learn to use a compass for navigation, build your own shelters, make fires safely, and create survival bracelets. Perfect for families looking to explore outdoor skills and have fun together! This program is for ages 7 and up and all youth must be accompanied by an adult.

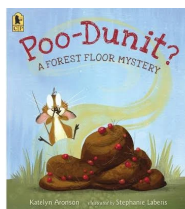
Instructor: Licia Johnson

Saturday, October 10 1 - 2:30 p.m.
Registration deadline: October 8
Free program sponsored by a generous donation in memory of Rod Bathke

StoryWalk (ages 4-8)

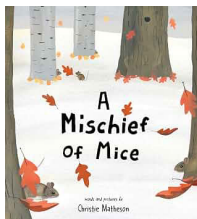
Join a Discovery Center Naturalist as we take a walk down the Discovery Nature Trail while reading a nature inspired book. This program combines literacy and outdoor activity and includes a fun craft. The first 8 families that register will receive a free copy of the book.

Free program and books sponsored by the Shepherd-Howells Fund



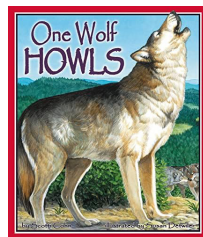
One Wolf Howls

Saturday, October 24
11 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Registration deadline: October 23



Poo-Dunit?

Saturday, September 19
11 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Registration deadline: September 18



A Mischief of Mice

Saturday, November 21
11 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Registration deadline: November 20



NATURALLY NOURISHED

The natural world offers an abundance of resources to explore. These engaging and educational programs will deepen your understanding and curiosity about the plants and animals we can consume from nature. These programs demonstrate how foraging and natural ingredients can complement local food initiatives and sustainable practices.

Plant-Powered Tea: Herbal Infusions from Your Garden

Join Naturalist Jenna to learn about herbal teas and their remedies that you can plant in your own garden landscapes! Explore native and cultivar species commonly found in and around the garden that can be steeped and drank as a tea. This class will include a tea tasting and a short walk around the Discovery Garden and rain gardens at the Discovery Center.

Instructor: Jenna Richardson

Friday, September 11 10 - 11 a.m.

Registration deadline: September 9

Free program sponsored by the Xcel Energy Foundation



Canning 101 with Marsha

Learn the ins and outs of canning food for preservation purposes! In this workshop, participants will learn how to preserve food by using both water bath and pressure canning processes.

Discussions will include which process to use and why, canning and food safety, and basic recipes to try at home.

Instructor: Marsha Fairfield

Thursday, October 29 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Registration deadline: October 27

\$75/\$65 member

Smokin' Meats: A Tasting Experience

Back by popular demand, join us for Smokin' Meats with Ryan, Don and Jenna, where we'll explore the art and science of smoking and curing meats in a fun, relaxed setting. Learn traditional methods, modern techniques, and simple recipes you can try at home. No experience needed. We'll wrap up on the porch to sample the results and enjoy some cold beverages.

Instructors: Ryan Wahlgren, Don Anderson & Jenna Richardson

Tuesday, November 10 5 - 7 p.m.

Registration deadline: November 8

\$60/\$48 member

Traveling Naturalist Program

Did you know that our Naturalists can come to you via our Traveling Naturalist program? Each year we visit community centers, libraries, and even private homes to teach a wide variety of nature-based programs. Ranging from turtle programs utilizing our live ambassador animals to programs on foraging, wolves, and salamanders, we have a program for everyone! Our program pricing is based on an hourly rate and mileage to the program and may include material fees. For more information on our Traveling Naturalist Program contact: Programs@discoverycenter.net



Residential Program

Residential Programs help people of all ages and abilities foster a deep connection to and appreciation of the natural world through engaging and interactive programming during overnight experiences. Our programs shape young adults and youth to become responsible land stewards and passionate conservationists while encouraging teamwork and life skill development. For more information on our Residential Programs contact: Residential@discoverycenter.net



Woods & Water Program

Our team of conservation specialists and emerging professionals are dedicated to protecting healthy lakes and preserving the Northwoods. Through hands-on work in conservation practices like invasive species prevention, shoreline restoration, and community outreach, we promote best stewardship practices and an ethic of care for our natural resources. For more information on our Woods & Water Program contact: Woodsandwater@discoverycenter.net



Facility & Wedding Rentals

Discover a tranquil retreat in Manitowish Waters, Vilas County, where nature creates the perfect backdrop for your gathering. Our lakeside location offers ample space and amenities for overnight stays.

Enjoy recreational activities like kayaking, hiking, or simply relaxing in the beautiful surroundings. Our historic main lodge, with its charming architecture, features comfortable gathering spaces and modern classrooms for workshops. For overnight lodging, our cozy bunkhouses foster connection among guests.

For a unique experience, consider hosting your wedding here, with scenic views and an outdoor ceremony option in our amphitheater. Let us help you create an unforgettable event in this serene lakeside paradise.



Contact Us

For information on reserving our facility spaces, registering for a program, or details about the North Lakeland Discovery Center contact us at:
Contact@discoverycenter.net or (715) 543-2085

Hours of Operation

Nature Center Hours:
Tuesday - Saturday: 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Closed Sunday & Monday

Grounds & trails are open year-round, daily from dawn until dusk.



SPECIAL EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

25-28

North Lakeland Discovery Retreat - Fall Colors

Join us for an exciting, multi-day overnight experience during peak fall color season. Stay in our historic bunkhouse cabins and explore the Northwoods through naturalist-led interpretive hikes and paddles focused on autumn ecology, wildlife, and seasonal change. Designed for adults, this experience balances learning, outdoor exploration, and time to slow down in one of northern Wisconsin's most beautiful seasons.

OCTOBER

17

Bat Fest

Join us for Bat Fest 2026, a celebration of bats and other nocturnal animals; featuring live bats, Raptor Education Group, Inc. avian ambassadors, nocturnal animal crafts, educational bat activities (including "Become a Bat Biologist"), and a walk-through bat cave!

Registration encouraged. Free event, sponsored by Steven and Nancy Russell



NOVEMBER

4

Fall Helping Hands Day

Come volunteer with us as we prepare NLDC for the busy season ahead! After a busy summer, grounds work will be plenty in preparation of winter and indoor tasks will ensure the Nature Center is ready for visitors. Lunch will be provided for all volunteers. Email emily@discoverycenter.net for more information.