



The Volunteer Quarterly

January/ February/ March 2012

Macon County Conservation District
3939 Nearing Lane
Decatur, IL 62521
217-423-7708
www.maconcountyconservation.org

Mark Your Calendars



Rock Springs Dulcimer Club

*Rock Springs Nature Center
East Conference Room*

Saturdays, January 7 & 21, 10:00 a.m.
Saturdays, February 4 & 18, 10:00 a.m.
Saturdays, March 3, 17, & 31, 10:00 a.m.

Volunteer Quarterly Meeting

Rock Spring Nature Center, Harriet and Norman Greenberg Auditorium
January 19, 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Don't miss getting your quarterly update! The meeting starts at 11:00 a.m. followed by a delicious lunch at noon. Please RSVP by January 13th.

Prairie Heritage Volunteer Meeting



*Rock Springs Nature Center
East Conference Room*

Thursday, January 12, 7:00 p.m.
Thursday, February 9, 7:00 p.m.
Thursday, March 8, 7:00 p.m.

Annual Ground Squirrels Base Ball & Prairie Heritage Volunteer Dinner

Rock Springs Nature Center, Harriet and Norman Greenberg Auditorium
Saturday, January 14, 6:00 p.m.
RSVP to Lee Slider (217/423-1922)

For more information visit
www.maconcountyconservation.org or call
217-423-7708

Upcoming Events

Introduction to Point & Shoot Cameras

Rock Springs Nature Center
Saturday, January 28, 1-3 p.m.



Did you get a new camera during the holidays? Do you need to brush up on your photography skills? Jerry Sievers, photographer extraordinaire and volunteer, will teach photography basics for point & shoot cameras. Includes the functions of the camera and what photographic feats they can accomplish. Questions will be addressed during the second half of class. Please bring the instruction manual for your camera. Reservations required by January 23.

Eagle Viewing Trip

Saturday, February 4, 7 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Travel with fellow nature lovers and Macon County Conservation District naturalists as we venture to Alton, IL to view bald eagles at the Great River Road, have lunch at Pere Marquette Lodge then visit the Riverlands Audubon Center. Fee: \$65, current Macon County Conservation District volunteers \$55. Reservations required by January 18.



Birdhouse Building Workshop

Rock Springs Nature Center
Sunday, February 26, 2 p.m.

Bring a hammer and build a wren house for your feathered friends. Children under 12 must have an adult companion. Fee \$10. Reservations required by February 21.

Volunteer Opportunities

School Program Assistance

We have a variety of school programs that we offer during the winter and spring months. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer naturalist and would like to assist our staff with a school program or lead a school hike, let us know and we will provide you with training and a few dates to observe someone else in action. Please contact Jenny Garver (jgarver@maconcountyconservation.org or 217/423-7708) for more information.

Clean-Out Bluebird Houses

We are gearing up for bluebird monitoring season, but before bluebirds arrive we need to ready the houses. We are looking for volunteers to clean houses at Rock Springs Conservation Area, Sand Creek Conservation Area, Fort Daniel Conservation Area, and Friends Creek Conservation Area during February and early March. Please contact Melody Arnold (marnold@maconcountyconservation.org or 217/423-7708)



Build Bluebird Houses

Pull out your trusty tools and help a bluebird! Volunteers are needed during February and March to help build new bluebird houses to replace houses that are in need of retirement. The conservation district will provide the supplies. Please contact Melody Arnold (marnold@maconcountyconservation.org or 217/423-7708) for more information.

Welcome Our New Volunteers!

Information Desk: Jessica Davis, Doris Moore
Library: Susan Grabiell
Master Gardener: Heidi Marion
Natural Area Restoration Volunteer: Eric Bramer, John Redden, Darren Winchester
Vintage Base Ball: Natalie Cox-Click, Gary Nelsen
Volunteer Naturalist: Erin Moyer

Volunteer Trainings

Cross Country Ski Rental Training

Thursday, January 12, 1 - 2 p.m.

Rock Springs Nature Center

Cross-country skiing is a fun and exhilarating winter activity. When snow conditions are right, we rely on volunteers to help with the rental of the district's skis and snowshoes. If you are interested in helping, please join us for this training and maybe even learn to ski yourself! Added bonus -- every time you volunteer with ski rentals, you earn 2 hours of free ski or snowshoe rental for yourself. Please RSVP by January 11th.



Restoration at Macon County Conservation District Informational Training

Tuesday, January 24, 1 - 2 p.m.

Rock Springs Nature Center,

Harriet and Norman Greenberg Auditorium

Our Natural Resource Manager, Rich Crowe, has been very busy the past three years. Volunteers are invited to join him to learn about the changes that have been made and future plans for restoration and habitat management improvements. Please RSVP by January 23rd.

Introduction to Facebook

Wednesday, February 15, 1 - 2 p.m.

Rock Springs Nature Center

East Conference Room

Did you know that the Macon County Conservation District, Macon County Conservation Foundation, Oglesby Mansion, and the Rock Springs Ground Squirrels are on Facebook? If you are curious about Facebook, interested in joining Facebook, or would like to learn some Facebook basics please join us for this interactive volunteer training. Please RSVP by February 14th.



Illinois Mammals Informational Training

Tuesday, March 13, 1 - 2 p.m.

Rock Springs Nature Center

Did you know that bobcats, gray fox, and river otters live in Illinois? Volunteers are invited to learn facts about the life histories of Illinois mammals through examination of pelts, skulls, tracks, and scat. Please RSVP by March 12th.

Arts and Crafts

We are providing a variety of traveling exhibits in our north wing exhibit hall throughout the year. The current exhibit for January and February is entitled "Earth From Space". This Smithsonian Exhibit is combined with "Diversity Endangered", another Smithsonian exhibit. Tour the exhibit hall and you will learn about our fragile planet, the life it supports and what you can do to help preserve our only place to survive.



Remembering Our Volunteers

Margaret Deen

February 1929 - November 2011

John Dettman

July 1926 - October 2011

Trenna Lee Lotz

September 1921 - November 2011

Marian Woyna

August 1925 - November 2011

Volunteer Holiday Party

Macon County Conservation District extends a big thank you to everyone who came out for our volunteer holiday party. We had 68 volunteers in attendance who donated over 90 canned goods and non-perishable items which we took to the Northeast Community Fund. Among the volunteers in attendance we had quilters, newsletter folders, dulcimer club musicians, desk volunteers, master gardeners, prairie heritage volunteers, restoration volunteers, trustees, library attendants, volunteer naturalists, and trail monitors just to name a few. With great food, entertaining music and good company the party was a success and reminded us again of our blessings here at the conservation district. Thank you for all of your generosity. We hope everyone had happy holidays and we plan to see you at our next Volunteer Quarterly Meeting on January 19!

Tidbits and Facts

Stop! Don't throw away those old wall calendars! Instead bring them to the nature center. We are looking for outdated calendars that feature nature, history, plants, and animals to use for our programs. After we collect the pictures we need, we will recycle the rest for you. Any outdated wall calendars can be delivered to Jenny's office. Thank you!

Trying to figure out what to do with used holiday cards? Tear off and bundle up the front covers and bring them to the nature center. We have a top secret project for next year's holiday party and need all of the cards we can get. Any used holiday cards can be delivered to Jenny's office. Thank you!!!!



The University of Illinois Extension office still has a few seats available for the 2012 Master Gardener apprenticeship program. Successful applicants will be enrolled in the initial training program which meets Thursdays for eleven weeks beginning January 26, 2012. The training is presented by educators and specialists from the U of I Extension. For more information contact the Master Gardener Program Coordinator, Cheryl Brown, at 217-877-6042 or email cbrwn@illinois.edu.

If you would occasionally like a reminder email about upcoming volunteer events, trainings, and meeting dates, please send an email to jgarver@maconcountyconservation.org with the subject line "volunteer updates."



What's Going on at Rock Springs?

Operations Department Update- Paul Marien, Operations Manager

The Conservation District's pavilions and outside drinking fountains have been shutdown and winterized. Snow removal equipment has been gone over to make sure it is ready for whatever the winter will bring.

Reminder: Conservation area gates close earlier due to shorter daylight hours now.

A Big Thank You

We had a very busy fall at the Macon County Conservation District! Volunteers assisted with a variety of special events including Prairie Pedal, Fall Harvest, and Candlelight Tour. Our wonderful volunteer base makes events like these possible and we are truly grateful!

Wow our volunteers have been impressive in 2011! During the months of January through November, 286 volunteers have donated their time for a total of 10,800 hours. If you have forgotten to turn in some hours, it is not too late to turn them into Jenny. Thank you for all that you do!

Volunteer Spotlight

Dick and Nancy Torgerson have been volunteering with the Macon County Conservation District for over twenty years. This duo has helped teach history to all ages while both being volunteers at the Homestead Prairie Farm. Along with Dick teaching about woodshop techniques at the Homestead Prairie Farm, he also has a history program on sewing machines that he presents to the community during special events, and was one of the original Ground Squirrels. You might also see Dick portraying Governor Oglesby during special programs at the Oglesby Mansion.

Nancy began by volunteering her skills as a seamstress creating nineteenth century period clothing. She teaches the history of sewing and food preparation at the Homestead Prairie Farm. Nancy also has an informative and entertaining program on life in the nineteenth century, a book titled *Food Preservation before the Mason Jar*, and her reproduction clothing is in two museums. They both find volunteering rewarding because of the satisfaction they receive when teaching about the past and helping others have more appreciation for the present. "It expands horizons and opens doors to brand new ideas." Nancy said. "Volunteering will always be important to us."

Program Services Update- Jeff Tish, Program Services Manager



The window on wildlife at the Rock Springs Nature Center has been very busy this season. It provides the perfect spot to sit back relax and watch a wide variety of wildlife in action. Fox squirrels, eastern chipmunks, nuthatches, red-bellied woodpeckers, white-tail deer, cooper's hawks and a pileated woodpecker will make a rare appearance at the window. Photographers love to capture wildlife on film.

As the snows begin to arrive we will offer cross country ski and snow shoe rental plus workshops to teach people how to ski. Volunteers have a great deal of fun renting skis to visitors and then giving it a try on their own. Holiday visitors and college students discover cross-country skiing as a great change of pace and a good way to burn some calories.

Happy New Year to all of you and thanks a million for the hard work and dedication you so willingly give to the conservation district. We can give more to the public because of You.

