

# Conservation Connections

News and Events from the Missouri Department of Conservation • December 2014



## Busch Range Renovation

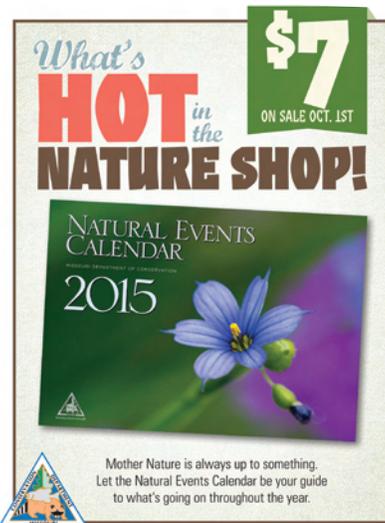
Missouri offers diverse opportunities to enjoy nature and conservation by hunting. In 1975, the Missouri Department of Conservation built the August A. Busch Shooting Range to provide visitors a staffed facility to sight-in their firearms, target practice, and work on their shotgun shooting proficiency in a safe, helpful environment. When the range was built as part of the Busch Conservation Area, the area was rural, but close enough to the metropolitan St. Louis area that shooters could visit without having to drive too far. The range provided shooting opportunities for approximately 16,000 visitors per year, but offered no programs. Over the years, the area population has grown; during peak times shooters may wait up to three hours to sight in their firearms. The Range now hosts approximately 40,000 visitors and offers over 120 programs. These programs include Hunters Education, managed hunts for deer, turkey, rabbit, quail, pheasants, and programs in traditional shooting sports of trap and skeet, as well as archery.



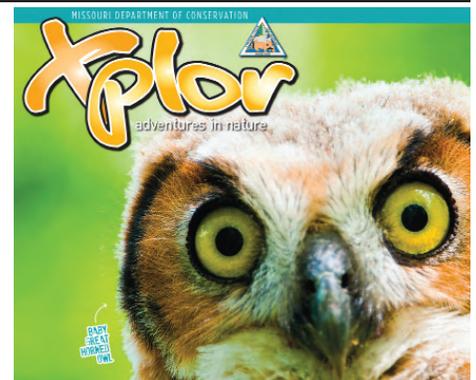
With the growth in population, age of the facility, and the popularity of hunting and shooting sports, comes a need for a new range. December will be the last month the present range will be open. Gone will be the old structures, the privies, and the old trap machines. The range will shut down for approximately a 24-30 month period in order to construct a brand-new, state-of-the-art facility including five trap and skeet overlays, five-stand, 20-100 yard booths, 15-50 yard booths, two patterning ranges, two broadhead archery pits, two static line archery ranges, and an onsite education building. Staff will still be onsite overseeing safety and helping citizens with their shooting techniques while continuing to conduct programs.

During the shutdown period citizens will be able to enjoy one of the Department's unstaffed ranges or can visit the Jay Henges Range. To find information on these ranges please visit our website [mdc.mo.gov](http://mdc.mo.gov) or [wheretoshoot.com](http://wheretoshoot.com).

## 2015 Natural Events Calendar



Our ever-popular calendar keeps you in touch with the year's seasonal changes. Thanks to the splendid talents of our contributing nature photographers, you'll be able to enjoy wild Missouri indoors when you can't get outdoors. You'll find monthly reminders of the state's natural treasures. Daily notes keep you posted on what's blooming or nesting and myriad other natural phenomena.



- Kids will not receive a Dec/Jan issue. Instead, the next issue will be the Jan/Feb issue and will arrive in January.  
- Starting with the Jan/Feb issue, Xplor will have four additional pages. It will also have a few new sections too."

# Jay Henges Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center

1100 Antire Road, High Ridge, MO 63049 • [mdc.mo.gov/node/299](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/299)



From the east/St. Louis  
I-44 west to Beaumont Antire Road, exit 269. Left over I-44 to Antire Road. Right on Antire. One hundred feet to entrance. Left into driveway.

From the west/Eureka  
I-44 east to Beaumont Antire Road, exit 269. Follow exit lane around to top.

## **HOURS:**

May 1–August 31

Wednesday: 1–7:30 p.m.

Thursday–Sunday: 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

September 1–April 30

Wednesday–Sunday: 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Programs are free. Call **636-938-9548** or email [henges.range@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:henges.range@mdc.mo.gov) with your name and phone number to sign up for a program requiring registration. Up to two reservations are allowed per registration; groups should contact the range for more information. If you are unable to attend, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice.

## **Cold Weather Survival**

Dec 3 • Wednesday • 6:30–8:30 p.m.

*(Families ages 10 and up)*

Prepare yourself for cold weather activities. Our program provides information on selection of proper clothing, outdoor gear, fire-building, shelters, direction finding, avoiding weather-related hazards, and other outdoor tips to make your winter experiences safe and enjoyable. (Reservations begin November 3.)

## **Women's Beginning Handgun**

Dec 4 and 6 • Thursday 6–8 p.m. and Saturday • 7:30–9:30 a.m.

*(Women only, ages 16 and up)*

This two-part program includes classroom handgun operation, shooting fundamentals, safety, maintenance, and safe storage. Although we provide equipment and ammo, you may bring your own handgun and ammo to the Saturday morning live-fire session. An adult must accompany anyone under age 18. (Reservations begin November 4.)

## **Introduction to Air Rifle**

Dec 9 • Tuesday • 5:30–7:30 p.m.

*(Ages 9 and up)*

Here's a way to keep up your shooting skills without the high cost of ammunition, or the lack of hard-to-find ammunition. We will discuss the various types of air guns and their advantages and disadvantages. There is no range time for this program. (Reservations begin November 2.)

## **Introduction to Trapping**

Dec 13 • Saturday • 10 a.m.–noon

*(Ages 11 and up)*

This program explains and demonstrates the basic equipment and safe techniques for trapping furbearing animals in Missouri. Program instruction includes different types of traps for specific animals, use of scents, preparation and sale of furs, and discussion of trapping regulations. (Reservations begin November 13.)

## **Trigger Time – Handgun**

Dec 14 • Sunday • 8:30–9:30 a.m.

*(Ages 18 and up)*

Trigger Time is "hands-on" personal instruction designed to make you a better marksman. There is no classroom time, just expert one-on-one instruction from our staff. Participants must bring their own handguns and ammunition, at least 100 rounds. This program is not appropriate for beginners. (Reservations begin November 15.)

## **New Gun 101**

Dec 29 • Monday • 10 a.m.–noon

*(Ages 9 and up)*

Did you receive a new firearm for Christmas? Let's get started with safe instruction. Bring your firearm to the range to learn basic operation, safety, maintenance, and spend some time learning to shoot that new firearm. Be sure to bring your instruction manual if you have one. (Reservations begin November 29.)

**The range is closed Thursday, December 25, for Christmas.**

*Unless otherwise indicated, youth under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult.*

# Busch Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center

2360 Hwy D, St. Charles, MO 63304 • [mdc.mo.gov/node/270](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/270)

## Youth Hunter Education Challenge Kickoff Meeting

Dec 6 • Saturday • 3–5 p.m.

(Ages 11–18)

If you are interested in participating in the 2015 YHEC competition, you must attend this informational meeting at the August A. Busch Conservation Area Regional Office building. The competition includes .22 rifle, shotgun, archery, muzzleloader, orienteering, wildlife identification, a hunter safety trail, and a written exam. A parent or guardian must accompany interested youth. For more information contact Frank Scott, head coach, at 636-673-1283 or [fsyhec@yahoo.com](mailto:fsyhec@yahoo.com).

## Venison Cooking and Sausage Making

Dec 11 • Thursday • 6–9 p.m.

(Ages 11 and up)

All of your hard work is finally going to pay off. You have harvested a deer, processed the meat, and now it is time to cook so bring your appetite to this class. Our experienced hunters and cooks provide hands-on training on cooking venison and sausage making with recipes and how to prepare the venison for the table, complete with food to sample. Program meets at the Busch CA Regional Office classroom. (Reservations begin November 12.)



## Family Plinking

Dec 27 • Saturday • 7:30–9:30 a.m.

(Ages 8 and up)

Did you receive a new .22, bb gun, or air rifle for the holidays and want to learn how to shoot it safely? This program encourages the family to come out and learn how to safely shoot their new firearm on the rifle/pistol range. We will cover safety, stance, grip, aiming and more. Then we will help you shoot your firearm. Meet at the August A. Busch Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center. (Reservations begin December 1.)



From I-64/40 take Hwy 94 south to Hwy D; turn west on Hwy D for approximately 5 miles. The area entrance is on the south side of Hwy D.

### HOURS:

December 1–March 31

Monday, Tuesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday: 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

April 1–November 30

Monday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday: 10 a.m.–4 p.m. and Tuesday: 2–8 p.m.

Programs are free. Call **636-441-4554** to register Monday through Friday 8 a.m.–5 p.m. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice.

**The range is closed  
Thursday, December 25,  
for Christmas.**

## August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area Shooting Range Renovations

Renovation of the Missouri Department of Conservation's August A. Busch Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center in St. Charles begins January 2015, to an expanded state-of-the-art shooting range featuring more shooting stations and classroom facilities.

To expedite the renovations, the shooting range will close for public use starting in January 2015 and remained closed for the 24–30 month renovation project. The new range will incorporate the most current national shooting range design standards, an increased number of shooting stations, new classroom facility, and other building improvements for user convenience, safety, and reduced waiting times. For further information, visit [mdc.mo.gov](http://mdc.mo.gov)

*Unless otherwise indicated, youth under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult.*

# Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center

11715 Cragwold Road, Kirkwood, MO 63122 • [mdc.mo.gov/node/271](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/271)



From I-44 east take the Watson Road exit and turn left on Geyer. Cross over the bridge and turn left on Cragwold Road. Follow one mile to the entrance. Enjoy nature exhibits, attend programs, purchase hunting and fishing permits, browse through a nature-related gift shop, and pick up free conservation brochures. Outdoors, enjoy three miles of hiking trails through oak-hickory forest.

## HOURS:

Building: Tuesday–Saturday: 8 a.m.–5 p.m.  
Area: Daily: 8 a.m.–8 p.m. DST  
8 a.m.–6 p.m. CST

Programs are free. Call **314-301-1500** to register. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice.

## Greening Your Holidays

Dec 6 • Saturday • 10 a.m.–1 p.m.  
(Ages 14 and up)

During the holidays, people produce 25% more waste than any other time of the year. Learn some homemade, sustainable ways to save during the holidays by learning how to up-cycle items for decorations, gift wrapping, and gifts. We encourage you to bring your up-cycling successes to share with others. (Reservation begins November 21.)

## Feathers and Flurries

Dec 9 • Tuesday • 9:30–11 a.m.  
(Ages 7 and up)

How do birds survive in the wintertime? Learn how they stay warm, what they find to eat, and how they get water to drink. To help the birds survive, we will discuss the pros and cons of putting up feeders, heated bird baths, and shelters. We will also make three simple kinds of feeders to take home. If the weather is good enough, we will finish with an outdoor bird walk. (Reservations begin November 19.)

## Winter's Gifts

Dec 10 • Wednesday • 10–11 a.m.  
(Ages 3-6)

On the first day of winter nature gave to me... a cardinal in an oak tree! Come and celebrate nature's winter animals as we practice counting in our own "12 days of Winter" song. We'll also read a winter story and make a gift to give back to nature. (Reservations begin December 4.)

## Tree Pruning 101

Dec 11 • Thursday • 1–4 p.m.  
(Adults only)

Winter is the prime time to prune trees. That means now is a good time for homeowners and landowners to get helpful advice on tree work that will be done in coming months. Area homeowners can get information on tree pruning from Mark Grueber, Missouri Department of Conservation's Community Forester. He will share tips on selecting proper tools and the best methods that will help you avoid future problems. Dress for the weather, this will be an outdoor hands-on training. (Reservations begin December 1.)

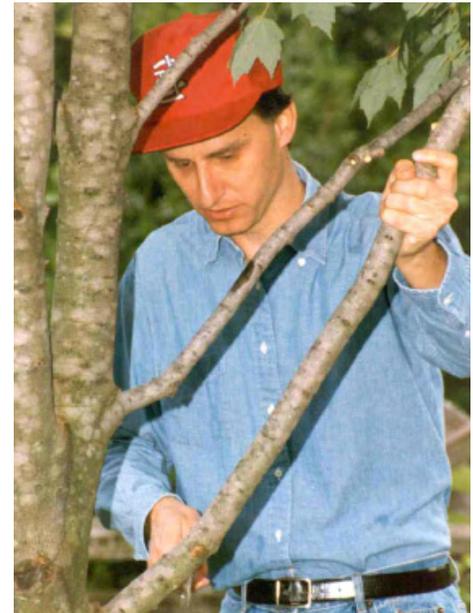


Red-headed woodpecker

## Knock, Knock, Knocking on Nature's Door

Dec 16 • Tuesday • 9:30 – 11 a.m.  
(Ages 6 and up)

Which bird has a chisel-like beak, a long sticky tongue, and never gets headaches? A woodpecker, of course. After discussing identification of Missouri's seven different woodpeckers species, their calls, and special adaptations in the classroom, we will hit the trail in search of these fascinating birds. Please dress for the weather. (Reservations begin December 3.)



**The nature center and area are closed Thursday, December 25, for Christmas.**

# Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center

11715 Cragwold Road, Kirkwood, MO 63122 • [mdc.mo.gov/node/271](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/271)

## Powder Valley Staff and Volunteer Photo Exhibit

### Discover Nature with Us

Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center volunteers and staff share their love of nature through photography.



Although we are not professional photographers, we share a common passion for our natural world. Please stop by during the month of December and discover nature through our eyes.

### Volunteer milestones

Dave Anderson	100 hours
Barb Cerutti	100 hours
Rich Guelker	2000 hours
Lee Halbeck	1500 hours
Glenn Koenig	100 hours
Phyllis Moehsmer	100 hours
Gus Ottinger	100 hours
Mary Piotraschke	2500 hours
Inge Ucinski	200 hours
Ray Zimmerman	3000 hours

## Forest Park Office

5595 Grand Drive, St. Louis, MO 63112 • [mdc.mo.gov/node/10254](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/10254)



From I-44 take Kingshighway north to West Pine Blvd, turn left. Follow West Pine to Lindell, turn left. Continue on Lindell past Union Drive to Cricket, turn left. Take first right onto Grand Ave. The visitor's center is on the right.

### HOURS:

Monday–Friday: 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

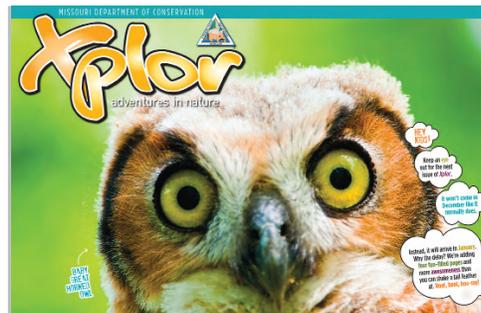
Programs are free. Call **314-877-1309** to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice.

### Discover Nature, Campfire Style

Dec 22 • Monday • 10 a.m.–noon

(Ages 9-16)

Winter has arrived and brought plenty of wildlife with it. The Canada goose population is at its peak now. Squirrels and foxes are mating. Woodpeckers and other songbirds grace Forest Park. Even eagles have been known to fly into the Park for respite. We'll have the campfire burning before choosing our wildlife discovery routes. We're hoping for snow, but no matter the weather, dress appropriately and meet at the Aquatic Education Lakes at the Forest Park Hatchery. We will have hot cocoa and a fire to warm us, but also bring a water bottle. (Reservations begin November 24.)



Hey kids! Keep an eye out for the next issue of Xplor. It won't come in December like it normally does. Instead, it will arrive in January. Why the delay? We're adding four fun-filled pages and more awesomeness than you can shake a tail feather at. Xplor will arrive every two months, starting with the Jan/Feb issue.

**The Forest Park office is closed Thursday, December 25, for Christmas.**

# Columbia Bottom Conservation Area

801 Strodtman Road, St. Louis, MO 63138 • [mdc.mo.gov/node/298](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/298)



From I-270 north, take the Riverview Drive exit (last Missouri exit); go north 2.8 miles. Riverview Drive becomes Columbia Bottom Road at its intersection with Larimore Road. The entrance is on the right-hand side.

## **HOURS:**

Building: Wednesday–Friday: 8 a.m.–5 p.m.  
Saturday–Sunday: 8 a.m.–4 p.m.

Area: One-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset except authorized activities.

Programs are free. Call **314-877-6014** to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice.

## **Pirates of Columbia Bottom: Intro to Geocaching**

Dec 6 • Saturday • 1-3 p.m.

*(Families)*

Bring the whole family to Columbia Bottom to be modern-day pirates through the outdoor sport of geocaching. This adventurous activity ties technology and nature together, which makes it great for all ages. Join us for an introduction to the basics of geocaching and then try your hand at hunting for hidden treasures on the area. GPS units are available to borrow if you don't have your own. (Reservations begin November 22.)

## **Long Night's Moon at the Confluence**

Dec. 6 • Saturday • 5–6:30 p.m.

*(Ages 7 and up)*

The days shorten and the nights lengthen as we near the winter solstice. After the sun sets, take a walk on a paved wooded path to watch the full moon come up over the Confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. While some of nature's creatures have migrated and some are hibernating during these long cold nights, others still move about. We look and listen for evidence of their presence. Dress for the weather. Meet at parking lot "L," about four miles from the main entrance. (Reservations begin November 22.)

## **Monarchs in Mid-December?**

Dec 18 • Thursday • noon–2 p.m.

*(All Ages)*

Thoughts of spring and summer may seem far away. But planning starts in the cold days of December when milkweed seeds need to be outside, because lower temperatures lead to plants worthy of the beautiful colors and monarch butterflies that accompany them. We discuss monarchs, their decline, the food they need to survive, and how to grow your own milkweed plant. We provide a paver and seed so you can paint your own marker to brighten up the dreary days of winter and use it to mark your milkweed seed spot. (Reservations begin December 4.)



Monarch butterfly

## **New Year's Eve Walk**

Dec 31 • Wednesday • 6:30–8 p.m.

*(Ages 10 and up)*

What better way to get refreshed for the New Year than a quiet stroll in the crisp winter night at Columbia Bottom? Be enlightened as we listen for our nighttime denizens and learn about the adaptations which enable them to conduct their activities in the dark at this cold time of the year. We spend a few minutes at the Confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers before we head back to our starting point. Dress warmly for the weather. Meet at parking lot "M" about four miles from the main entrance. (Reservations begin December 17.)

**The visitor center is closed Thursday, December 25, for Christmas.**

# August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area

2360 Hwy D, St. Charles, MO 63304 • [mdc.mo.gov/node/300](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/300)

## Clark Hike

### Winter Food for Wildlife

Dec 6 • Saturday • 9 a.m.–2 p.m.  
(Ages 12 and up)

Hike an invigorating 5.3 miles on the Clark Trail at the Weldon Spring Conservation Area to search for nuts, berries, and other winter wildlife food. Effort = Moderate, for natural surface hiking in forested hills. (Reservations begin November 21.)

### Beyond Basic Birding: Waterfowl ID

Dec 6 • Saturday • 9–11:30 a.m.  
(Adults)

Winter is a great time to see the ducks, geese, and swans that flock to Missouri. Learn identification tips and put them into practice. (Reservations begin November 21.)

### Elusive Whitetails

Dec 13 • Saturday • 9:30–11 a.m.  
(Ages 6–12)

Whether you want to hunt, photograph, or study white-tailed deer, it all starts with learning and exploring. Study white-tailed deer habits and then venture outdoors to search for signs of activity. (Reservations begin November 26.)

### Laser Night Hike 2.0

Dec 13 • Saturday • 5–9:30 p.m.  
(Families ages 10 and up)

Learn to determine a bearing from a map, and then tackle two miles in the woods searching for waypoints. You'll be armed with a flashlight, compass, map, and laser pointers. Prerequisite: Working knowledge of following a compass bearing. Effort = Moderate, for off-trail hiking in mostly flat, forested vegetation. (Reservations begin November 26.)

### Winter Wildlife Stories and Crafts for Kids

Dec 16 • Tuesday • 11 a.m.–noon  
(Ages 4–6)

Break out of cabin fever and celebrate the winter season by creating natural crafts and enjoying traditional winter animal folktales. (Reservations begin December 2.)

### Bird Watching and Pinecone Bird Feeders

Dec 18 • Thursday • 11 a.m.–noon  
(Ages 4–6)

Learn to use binoculars to “spy” on your backyard birds. Create and take home a pinecone bird feeder to hang near a backyard “spy spot.” **Special Note:** Peanut butter will be used. (Reservations begin December 4.)

### Night Hike Busch Hiking/Biking Trail

Dec 20 • Saturday • 6–9 p.m.  
(All ages)

Experience the sounds of the night on the Busch Hiking/Biking Trail. Listen for coyotes howling and owls hooting to their mates. Effort = Mild to Moderate, for gravel surface hiking for 3.5 miles in winter forests. (Reservations begin December 5.)

### Night Time Off-Trail Navigation with Accuracy

Dec 27 • Saturday • 5:30–9:30 p.m.  
(Families ages 10 and up)

Challenge and adventure await you on this nighttime navigation experience at Howell Island Conservation Area in Chesterfield, MO. Your resources will be: laser pointers, compass, map, GPS, and experienced naturalists. Effort = Moderate, for off-trail hiking, two to three miles, with fallen trees and brush to avoid. (Reservations begin December 12.)

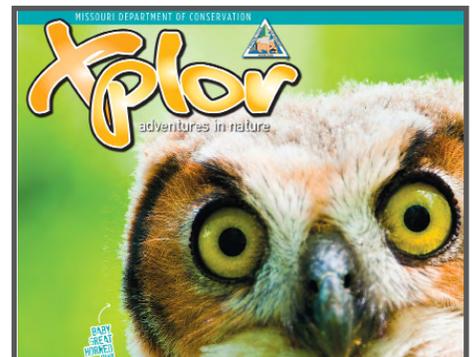


From I-64/40 take Hwy 94 south to Hwy D; turn west on D for approximately two miles. The area entrance is on the north side of Hwy D.

#### HOURS:

Building: Monday–Friday: 8 a.m.–5 p.m.  
Area: Daily: 4 a.m.–10 p.m.

Programs are free. Call **636-441-4554** to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice.



### Xplor magazine news

Kids will not receive a Dec/Jan issue. Instead, the next issue will arrive in January.

Why the delay? We're adding four fun-filled pages and more awesomeness than you can shake a tail feather at.

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# Rockwoods Reservation

2751 Glencoe Road, Wildwood, MO 63038 • [mdc.mo.gov/node/272](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/272)



From I-44 take Hwy 109 north 4 miles to Woods Avenue; left on Woods Avenue, then immediately right on Glencoe Road. From Manchester Road take Hwy 109 south 2 miles to Woods Avenue; right on Woods Avenue, then immediately right on Glencoe Road.

## HOURS:

Building: Monday–Friday: 8 a.m.–5 p.m.  
Area: Sunrise to one-half hour after sunset except authorized activities.

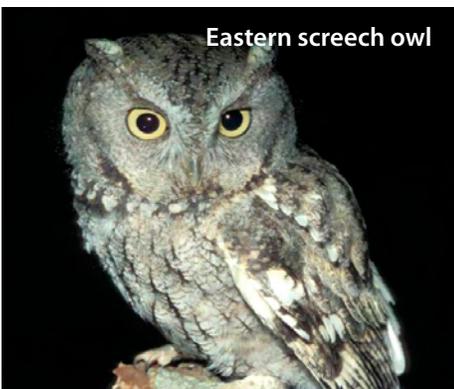
Programs are free. Call **636-458-2236** to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice.

## Owl Prowl

Dec 5 • Friday • 6:30-8 p.m.

*(Families)*

Who's that hooting it up each December evening? Owls, that's who. Learn what makes owls such effective nighttime hunters and why they hoot so much this time of year. Please dress for the weather to search for these nocturnal predators. (Reservations begin November 21.)



Eastern screech owl

## Crafting for Nature

Dec 10 • Wednesday • 1-2:30 p.m.

Or Dec 13 • Saturday • 1-2:30 p.m.

*(All Ages)*

Create outdoor decorations for the birds. Learn about different ornaments made from birdseed, dried fruit, and suet to help your backyard birds survive the cold winter months. Create a decorative bird feeder wreath that you may want to give as a gift. (Reservations begin November 26.)



White-tailed deer

## Elusive Whitetails

Dec 12 • Friday • 1-3 p.m.

*(Ages 6-12)*

Whether you want to hunt, photograph or study white-tailed deer, how do you go about it? Start with studying white-tailed deer habits, and then venture outdoors to search for signs of white-tailed deer activity. Discover amazing things about these beautiful animals to set up your next outdoor adventure. Please dress for the weather and off-trail walking. (Reservations begin November 26.)

## Xplor News

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## Winter Wildlife Stories and Crafts for Kids

Dec 17 • Wednesday • 11 a.m.-noon  
*(Ages 4-6)*

Break out of cabin fever and celebrate the winter season by creating natural crafts and enjoying traditional winter animal folktales. (Reservations begin December 3.)

## Enjoying Winter Outdoors

Dec 19 • Friday • 1-3 p.m.

*(Ages 10 and up)*

Don't let cold temperatures keep you indoors. Winter can be a great time to enjoy nature. Learn how to keep safe and warm while having fun during the coldest months. We'll spend some time outside, so please dress for the weather. (Reservations begin December 5.)

## Coming Soon - Maple Sugar Festival

**Feb 7 • Saturday • 10 a.m.-3 p.m.**

Maple Sugaring is just around the corner! Watch your January and February editions of Conservation Connections for more information. We'll have tree tapping programs, homeschool programming, landowner workshops, the Maple Sugar Festival, and more. Follow the 2015 Maple Sugaring Season on Twitter at: [#MDCMapleSugar](https://twitter.com/MDCMapleSugar).

**The office is closed Thursday, December 25, for Christmas.**