



The Art of Looking Closely

When it comes to seeing, I mean “REALLY SEEING,” most of us have our eyes half shut. Nature observation or any kind of observation is not easy. It is more than using our senses. It takes thinking and mindfulness. We need to be active participants as we stroll or move through nature in order to get the fullness of the experience.

I remember when I was around 10 years old walking in the fields and forests with my great

uncle, Joe. Joe could name every plant that ever existed (at least that’s what I thought). When I walked with him he would point out different plants and animals and tell me why each one was special. He would often sit for hours against an old oak tree that I could see from my house.

I didn’t understand how he could sit there doing “nothing.” Turns out he was doing a lot. Nature observation can be challenging but the rewards

could be seen in Joe’s face and body language. Nature centered him. Years later as I observe the wonders of nature, I am thankful for the lessons I learned from Joe. Now I understand.

Nature observation takes practice and energy but it is well worth it. Look for hints throughout this newsletter to become more skillful in the art of looking closely at nature. The more you practice the better you will get and good nature observation skills will enhance every facet of your life. Just give it a try.

—Kathy Cavender,
Manager

Volunteer News



NEW! This past year, a few volunteers banded together and decided to share their love of birding with you. With encouragement and leadership from one of the naturalists, they developed a monthly **Adventure Birding** program. This program is designed for the beginning birder, but all birders are welcomed and encouraged to participate and enjoy. Adventure Birding especially welcomes young birders beginning at age 11. Many youngsters are very interested in finding and identifying birds and we want to support them. They are our future – plus they have great eyesight and hearing!

Each outing is truly an adventure because you never know what you will find. The volunteers leading this program plan to add even more adventure into their outings. Look for opportunities this year to bird while enjoying a bike ride or while floating a Missouri river.

Adventure always awaits you when you get outside. Give birding a try. You just might like it!

Thank you, Runge Volunteers!

Volunteer Open House

If you have an interest in conservation and would like to share it with others, please come to our

Volunteer Open House
on Thursday, January 15
from 6 – 8 PM

If you are unable to attend the Open House, feel free to contact me, Robin Grumm, Volunteer Coordinator at 573/526-5544 or robin.grumm@mdc.mo.gov. I look forward to meeting you.

Exhibitors

Bald Eagle Photography Exhibit

by Dan Rackley and Marcia Owens

Dan Rackley and Marcia Owens have spent several years traveling Missouri and photographing the American Bald Eagle together. Their favorite sites are Grand Pass Conservation Area, Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area, Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge, and the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, Mark Twain Lake, and Annada—a village in Pike County. Sometimes they've even been surprised by being at the right place at the right time while exploring a country road. Dan and Marcia enjoy photographing the bald eagles as the eagles raise their families, build and clean their nests, and go about their everyday life.



3-Dimensional Art Exhibit

"The Art of Taxidermy" exhibit will be on display from mid-January to the end of February. Come view our new 3-dimensional artwork.



For the Little Ones...

Connect with nature through exciting and age-appropriate opportunities.

Little Acorns

Children 3 through 6 years of age are welcome to attend a Little Acorns program with their caregiver. This program is limited to 20 children, plus caregiver.

On Winter Break...

The **Babes In The Woods** program (children ages 0 through 2 years of age) and the **Little Acorns PLUS** program (families with toddlers and preschoolers) will take a break until spring. Please watch for the March/April issue of *Habitat Happenings* for a listing of these programs.



discover nature programs...

- Help Missourians discover and explore nature
- Provide expert instruction and hands-on activities
- Are available statewide

<http://mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature>



**National Squirrel
Appreciation Day
is January 21st.
Hooray for Squirrels!**

January

Registration begins January 2nd.
573-526-5544

Squirrels and Chipmunks: Backyard Cousins

Busy all the time, squirrels are fun to watch in our backyards. Sometimes their cousin the chipmunk, scurries about also. We will look for them in Runge's backyard, read a story about them, and play some squirrel-y games.

Little Acorns

January 9 • Friday • 10 AM
January 15 • Thursday • 10 AM
January 21 • Wednesday • 10 AM

Bundle Up Babes– Winter Stroll

January 30 • Friday • 10 AM

Registration required (Ages 0-6 years old)

Bundle up your babes to take a nature stroll into Missouri's wonderful winter world. We will explore, discover, and play.

"If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder without any such gift from the fairies, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in."
Rachel Carson (1907-1964) naturalist, writer, environmentalist

February

Registration begins February 2nd.
573-526-5544

King of Birds

Missouri is the winter home for hundreds of bald eagles. This month is a great time to see them and to learn more about them. What do they eat? How much do they weigh? How many feathers do they have? Where do they nest? Find the answers to these questions and more at our program this month.

Little Acorns

February 13 • Friday • 10 AM
February 18 • Wednesday • 10 AM
February 24 • Tuesday • 10 AM

Runge Calendar of Events - January

Get outdoors and experience what nature has provided for you.



January Events

Registration begins January 2nd. Programs are free. Call 573-526-5544 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.

Winter Day Adventure for KIDS

January 2 • Friday • 9 AM–3 PM
Registration required (ages 9-12 years)
Winter Day Adventure is for YOU! Celebrate the new year by exploring and discovering nature at Runge on and off the trails. Identify an animal track; learn to read a trail map; read animal signs; peer into a frozen pond; climb on a 150-year old log. Please dress for the weather. Bring a lunch and water bottle. We will come indoors for activities and to warm up with hot cocoa. *Early registration for this program. Reservations for this program are being accepted in December.*

Exploring the Mark Twain National Forest in Your Backyard: What the Cedar Creek Unit Has to Offer

January 8 • Thursday • 6:30–7:30 PM
No registration required (adults)
Go on a “tour” of the nearby Mark Twain National Forest with Carol Trokey from the Fulton office of the U.S. National Forest Service. There are 16,000 acres of National Forest near Jefferson City with many outstanding features. Learn more about what makes this part of the Mark Twain National Forest special so you can plan some winter outings soon. Sponsored by the River Bluffs Audubon Society.

Adventure Birding

January 10 • Saturday • 8–11 AM
Registration required (ages 11 and older)
“Who said that?” Bird songs can often be overwhelming. We can help make this valuable skill easier to learn. Have fun with us as we explore winter bird songs through an interactive program. Afterward, we will go birding on the Runge trails, so dress for the weather. Bring binoculars or borrow a pair of ours.

What’s Going On? The Art of Looking Closely

January 10 • Saturday • 10 AM–2 PM
No registration required (all ages)
You have to look closely to find designs hidden in nature. Today’s activities will include looking for nature’s images through crafts, “I spy” games, microscopes, and loupes.

Volunteer Open House

January 15 • Thursday • 6–8 PM
No registration required (ages 14 and older)
If you have an interest in conservation and would like to share it with others, please come to the Volunteer Open House. This is your opportunity to speak with current volunteers and view exhibits with the many opportunities available to you as a volunteer.

The Runge Conservation Nature Center is located one-third mile north of Hwy 50 on Hwy 179, Jefferson City. 330 Commerce Drive.

BUILDING HOURS:

Tuesday–Saturday: 8 AM–5 PM
Thursday: 8 AM–8 PM
Closed Sunday & Monday

TRAIL HOURS:

Open daily 6 AM–9 PM

<http://mdc.mo.gov/regions/central/runge-nature-center>

Story Tree!

January 17 • Saturday • 10–11 AM
No registration required (all ages)
Visit the nature center and meet a volunteer naturalist eager to share a nature story or two with you. You will be delighted with the stories and activities.

Nature’s Needlers

January 22 • Thursday • 10:30 AM–Noon OR 6–7:30 PM
Registration required (ages 18 and older)
Join us as we begin a new year creating a Woodland Tapestry using traditional quilt patterns. The first block will be Woodland Path. A Runge Naturalist will get us going with a program–“Wonders of a Woodland.”

Bundle Up Babes– Winter Stroll

January 30 • Friday • 10–11 AM
Registration required (ages 0-6 years)
Bundle up your babes to take a nature stroll into Missouri’s wonderful winter world. We will explore, discover, and play.

Nature’s Needlers for Kids!

January 31 • Saturday • 1–4 PM
Registration required (ages 10–14 years)
Kids, did you know that Missouri conservation connects people with wildlife, fish, and forests? If you like learning about conservation and also want to learn how to sew, we invite you to this new program. Starting in January, we will meet three times (February 28 and March 14) to make 3 different quilt blocks. Plan to sign up for all three programs this month.

Prepare now for the February Wintery Book Discussion. Read *Winter World: The Integrity of Animal Survival*.

February 7 • Saturday • 9:30–10:30 AM
Refer to the February Events for a description of this program.



February Events

Registration begins February 2nd.

Programs are free. Call 573-526-5544 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.

Wintery Book Discussion

February 7 • Saturday • 9:30–10:30 AM

Registration required (adults)

Enrich Missouri's naturally cold days by reading *Winter World: The Integrity of Animal Survival* by Bernd Heinrich. Armchair naturalists and outdoor explorers alike enjoy Heinrich's captivating account of how some birds, mammals, reptiles, and insects make it through this frigid season. Come share your impressions with other readers of the author's easily read prose. After discussing his insights, you will see beyond this season's barren landscape.

Toddler Time

February 10 • Tuesday • 10–11 AM

Registration required (ages 0-3 years)

Enjoy nature with your little one through stories, songs, and animals. Plan to get outside with us too!

Homeschool: An Owl's Lunch

February 12 • Thursday • 10–11:30 AM

Registration required (ages 7-18 years)

An owl's pellet is evidence of a successful hunt. In this program, we will explore the adaptations owls have to hunt their prey and dissect owl pellets to find out what they eat.

Early Lessons from the Missouri Ozark Forest Ecosystem Project Bird Study

February 12 • Thursday • 6:30–7:30 PM

No registration required (adults)

Be sure to attend this fascinating presentation that will focus on the past, present, and future for birds in Missouri. Dr. John Faaborg from the University of Missouri has been conducting studies of birds in the Missouri Ozarks for a number of years as part of the long-term Missouri Ozark Forest Ecosystem Project (MOFEP). Find out about the latest research. Sponsored by the River Bluffs Audubon Society.

Adventure Birding

February 14 • Saturday • 8–11 AM

Registration required (ages 11 and older)

Binder Lake is a winter birding hotspot. Unusual birds often show up on this scenic lake even on the coldest days. We will meet at the old bait shop parking lot near the dam at 8 AM. Dress for the weather and bring water and binoculars or borrow a pair of ours. Afterwards, we will make our way to the shelter house for some hot chocolate. Binder Lake is located off Rainbow Drive or Henwick Lane, west of Jefferson City.

What's Going On? I ♥ Nature's Unhuggables

February 14 • Saturday • 10 AM–2 PM

No registration required (all ages)

Celebrate Valentine's Day with a few of nature's misunderstood, or unhuggables; animals typically portrayed as "yucky" or "insignificant". Reveal the importance of each unhuggable through activities and displays. Create valentines for those that you appreciate most. Will it be the Striped Skunk? The Turkey Vulture? The Slug?

Nature's Needlers

February 19 • Thursday •

10:30 AM–Noon OR 6–7:30 PM

Registration required (ages 18 and older)

Of the many spring flowers found in a woodland, perhaps the Jack-in-the-Pulpit is one of the most intriguing. Through the use of color and design, we will create a block representing this elusive beauty.

Story Tree!

February 21 • Saturday • 10–11 AM

No registration required (all ages)

Visit the nature center and meet a volunteer naturalist eager to share a nature story or two with you. You will be delighted with the stories and activities.

Design with Nature in Mind: Felt Ornaments

February 21 • Saturday •

10 AM–Noon OR 1–3 PM

Registration required (Women, Ages 18 and older)

Winter is a great season for bird observation. If you feed the birds you have probably watched the Juncos hopping busily on the ground beneath the feeder. They are often called "snow birds." They have inspired much nature art. This program will introduce you to the busy junco and give you an opportunity to create one from felt to adorn the inside of your home. Please bring your favorite scissors and needle or borrow ours.



**Mark your
Calendar
for the
Annual Native
Plant Sale**

**March 28
10 AM–2 PM**



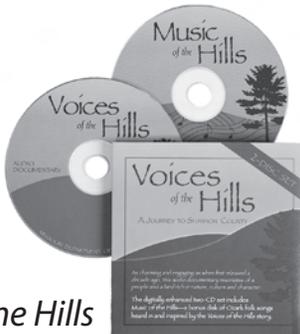
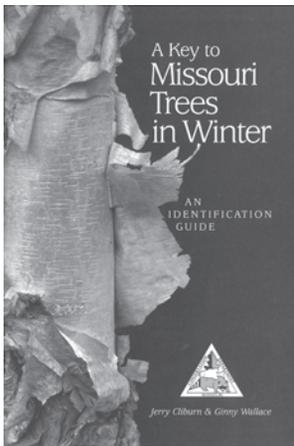
Runge Conservation Nature Center will be closed on **Christmas** and **New Years** day.

Gift Shop...

20% Featured items

Key to Missouri Trees in Winter

\$2.40
plus tax*



Voices of the Hills
\$7.20 plus tax*

*The Heritage Card does not apply.

What's Going On?

Every Saturday At Runge

10 AM–2 PM

No registration required (all ages)

Runge Conservation Nature Center offers exploratory tables, activities, and/or crafts every Saturday throughout the year. Stop in to see what adventure awaits you during our "What's Going On?" at the nature center.

Calling All Hikers

Exploring the great outdoors

Runge has three volunteer-led programs designed to provide opportunities for people of all ages to hike Missouri trails and learn about our plants, animals, and natural communities. Each month we'll meet at the nature center and drive to one of Missouri's choice hiking spots and hike one or two of the best trails. Some transportation is provided, but carpooling may be necessary. Bring water, wear comfortable hiking shoes, and come dressed for the weather.

Half-Day Discovery Hikes

Half-Day Discovery Hikes will resume in the spring of 2015. *Look for our schedule in the March/April issue.*

Midweek Trekkers

January 21 • Wednesday • 8 AM–5 PM Registration begins January 2nd.

Registration required (adults)

Location: Canaan Conservation Area. Located in Gasconade County, near Bland.
Trail Length: 8 miles Terrain: Significant inclines, obstructions, and/or loose rocks.

Notes: Bring lunch.

February 18 • Wednesday • 8 AM–5 PM Registration begins February 2nd.

Registration required (adults)

Location: Bennett Springs State Park. Located in Bennett Springs, Missouri, approximately 12 miles west of Lebanon on Highway 64.

Trail Length: 7 miles Terrain: Moderate inclines and/or occasional rocks/roots.

Notes: Bring lunch.

The Hiking Club

January 17 • Saturday • 8 AM–5 PM Registrations begin January 2nd.

Registration required (adults)

Location: Three Creeks Conservation Area. Located in Boone County, halfway between Columbia and Ashland.

Trail Length: 5 miles Terrain: Moderate inclines and/or occasional rocks/roots.

Notes: Bring lunch.

February 28 • Saturday • 8 AM–5 PM Registrations begin February 2nd.

Registration required (adults)

Location: Big Buffalo Creek Conservation Area. Located in Warsaw.

Trail Length: 6 miles Terrain: Significant inclines, obstructions, and/or loose rocks.

Notes: Bring lunch.



Conservation Kids' Club

A club created for kids 6–12 years who love to explore nature and learn about wildlife.

Conservation Kids' club is a club created for **kids 6-12 years** who love to explore nature. When you make your reservation 573-526-5544, please provide the name of each member, their age, and the number of siblings attending the Little Acorns program to help us better prepare. Thank you.

Woodpeckers

January 20 • Tuesday • 6:30–8 PM *Registration required (January 2 through January 16)*

Rat-a-tat-tat! Woodpeckers are tapping at your door. We will learn about these hard-headed avian friends, make a craft, and stir up some woodpecker food called SUET. Don't miss identifying Missouri's 7 woodpecker species. Rat-a-tat-tat!

Knee Deep in Winter Weeds

February 17 • Tuesday • 6:30–8 PM *Registration required (February 2 through February 13)*

Discover how winter weeds are beautiful wildflowers all year round.

- Create a snow bouquet.
- Take a winter weed walk using a loupe.
- Make a biodegradable newspaper pot.
- Dig in the dirt and plant your winter seed.

Parents/Guardians! While big brother/sister attends Conservation Kids' Club, your preschooler (3 through 6 years of age) can be involved in a program at the same time. A preschool program will be available for siblings of Conservation Kids' Club members. **Please limit your Little Acorn reservations to one program each month.**



Observation Ideas

Connecting with Nature



- Limit electronic devices while in nature.
- Stop thinking of nature as leisure time. We need it!
- Use all of your senses.
- Draw what you see.
- Get curious about everything you see.
- Think like an animal.
- Count how many natural sounds you can hear.
- Look for designs in nature.



2014

No registration required.

Holiday Happenings

Visit us over the holidays and enjoy simple and relaxing activities connected to nature.

December 27 • Saturday • 10 AM–3 PM

- Try a primitive skill–Cordage
- Enjoy a puppet show–The Christmas Spider
- Make a craft to take home
- Experience a winter walk

December 30 • Tuesday • 10 AM–3 PM

- Try a primitive skill–Atlatl
- Enjoy live music
- Take a walk and “track” some animals
- Make a craft to take home
- Listen to a story by the fire

December 31 • Wednesday • 10 AM–3 PM

- Try a primitive skill–Leatherworking
- Make a “possibles” bag to take home
- Fashion a nature necklace using deer antlers
- Take a winter walk

Eagle Adventure

- Activities in the Nature Center Lobby
- Live Eagle Presentations
10AM, 11AM, and 1PM
- Eagle Viewing Site with
High-powered scopes
at Marion Access

January 24, 2015
10 AM–2 PM

