



## A Screaming Good Time

It's hard to believe it's been almost a decade ago, but I remember it like it was yesterday. It was May 5, 2005 (05-05-05), and our son's babysitter had called the evening before telling us she was not going to be able to watch him the next day due to a family emergency. My wife, a school teacher, asked if I minded to stay home with him since she had a field trip planned with her students. I said, "No problem." After all it was turkey season and there's no sense in wasting a perfectly good opportunity to spend some time outdoors with your son. So at 4:15 the next morning, while sitting at the kitchen table drinking coffee and debating if I should really get him up so early, I heard the pitter-patter of little feet coming from his bedroom. Wiping the sleep from his eyes, Nicholas asked, "Dad, are we still going turkey hunting?" As my grin lit up the kitchen, I said, "You bet we are buddy."

As we scampered across the field that morning, I stopped to pick up and carry the three year old since the wet grass was almost as tall as he was. Just as we reached the timber's edge, a lone gobbler sounded off and my son tapped my shoulder and pointed saying, "There he is." It was then and there I knew we had a lifetime of great memories ahead of us. While I didn't bag a bird that day, we had a blast and saw some turkeys. That first day hunting together still ranks ahead of any day when I did get one.

A few years later and after spending many days in the woods with me each spring learning how to read the lay of the land, scouting, calling, and—most importantly—firearms safety, I decided it was time for Nicholas to try and harvest his first bird. I knew with turkey hunting being as difficult as it is, we would have some things against us. However, I have always taught him that if putting a tag on something is the only reason for going hunting, then you're going for all the wrong reasons.

Well, long story short, the planets aligned for us and I somehow managed to call in a huge tom that spring. He was kind enough to strut up to the exact position we needed him to and stand there while Nicholas pulled the trigger. I'm sure the stunned look on my face was priceless when I realized all the pieces had fallen in place and Nicholas had harvested his first tom. However, it was nothing compared to the frightened look my son gave me a few minutes later when he tried to pick up his prize and it began thrashing him with its wings and flopping around as turkeys often do when they expire. In fact, Nicholas came running



straight towards me while letting out a scream I'm surprised didn't wake the dead. If only I would have had a video camera.

A few days later, while visiting his grandfather and eating at the local café, one of my dad's buddies approached our table and asked Nicholas about the turkey he had shot. Now coming from a family of fishermen and hunters, Nicholas knows a thing or two about how to tell a story, so he spun around and for the next 15 minutes gave a play-by-play to everyone in the café about how he bamboozled the old gobbler. After finishing his tall tale, my dad's friend told Nicholas that he had heard there was more to the story and that Nicholas had screamed like a little girl when the bird started flopping around. Now if you know much about young boys, you know they don't like to be compared to girls. But without hesitation, Nicholas calmly stared back at him and as serious as could be replied, "I did not scream like a little girl, I screamed like a man!" as the café erupted with laughter.

If you'd like to have a screaming good time this spring, I'd encourage you to start it off by attending one of our Discover Nature turkey hunting programs. One will be held on Saturday, March 27, at the Andy Dalton Shooting Range. (See page 3 for details.) The other is set for Wednesday, April 1, at Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center in Joplin. (See page 2 for details.) Here you can begin your journey on learning what it takes to bamboozle your own gobbler. Please remember to be safe out there this spring and don't forget to sign up early for your Hunter Education course if you haven't already taken one. Gobble, Gobble!

—Warren Rose, Outreach and Education Regional Supervisor

# Joplin Office in the Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center

201 W. Riviera Drive, Suite B, Joplin, MO 64804 • [mdc.mo.gov/node/292](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/292)



## March and April Events



The Joplin Conservation Office, located in the Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center, is your local connection to Missouri's fish, forests, and wildlife. Stop by and purchase hunting and fishing permits, attend a nature program, go for a hike, enjoy a picnic, or access Shoal Creek. Within the 190 acres of Wildcat Park, you will find a diverse mix of wildlife habitats rich with flora and fauna. From I-44, take exit 6, and turn south on MO-86. Turn right on Riviera Drive to enter Wildcat Park.

### HOURS:

Monday–Friday: 8 AM–5 PM  
Closed all state holidays.  
Audubon Center hours vary.

### TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:

Programs are free. Call 417-629-3423 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.

### Spring Break

March 16–20 • Monday–Friday • 8 AM–4 PM  
Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center (Joplin)  
*No registration required (families)*  
Stop by anytime during the week to enjoy a scavenger hunt along the trail. Borrow a Discover Nature backpack filled with field guides, resources and binoculars to help you explore the creatures and plants that live at Wildcat Glades. We'll supply the materials, kids bring the energy, and parents provide the mentorship.

### Snakes Matter

March 17 • Tuesday • 2–3 PM  
Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center (Joplin)  
*Registration required (all ages)*  
Discover the important roles these slithery creatures play in nature. Here's your chance to find out why snakes aren't as scary as you thought they were as we dispel myths and reveal the truths of these often misunderstood reptiles.

### Beginning Turkey Hunting

April 1 • Wednesday • 6–9 PM  
Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center (Joplin)  
*Registration required (ages 16 and under must be accompanied by an adult)*  
Spring turkey hunting offers some of the most challenging, exciting, and rewarding hunts in Missouri! Join us if you would like to sharpen your skills, learn new techniques, or gain confidence so you can harvest a big spring gobbler. We will discuss the Eastern turkey's biology, habitat, hunt strategies, firearms and ammunition, and much more!

### Naturescaping

April 18 • Saturday • 10 AM–1 PM  
George Washington Carver (Diamond)  
*Registration required (ages 16 and up)*  
Adding native flowers and shrubs to your yard will help provide valuable habitat for birds, butterflies, and other wildlife. You'll learn why and how to include native plantings in your landscape, what plants to select, and how they benefit wildlife. Handouts and a limited number of shrubs and plants will be available.

### Introduction To Archery

April 18 • Saturday • 4–5:30 PM  
Walter Woods Conservation Area (Joplin)  
*Registration required (ages 8 and up)*  
Learn the fundamental skills and safety of archery shooting. Youth across the state are participating in school archery competitions as interest in archery continues to grow. Join in the fun as you discover the basics of archery, learn how to hone your shooting skills, and start to enjoy this lifelong activity.

### Family Fishing Night

April 24 • Friday • 6–8 PM  
Walter Woods Conservation Area (Joplin)  
*Registration required (families)*  
Have you been yearning to enjoy one of the Ozarks favorite outdoor activities and don't know where to start? Parents, grab the kids, or kids, grab your parents and come join us for an evening of fishing and family memories. We will start with the basics and then head to the ol' fishing hole and catch a few. Bring your own poles or borrow ours. Bait will be provided. A valid fishing permit is required for Missouri residents ages 16 to 64 and nonresidents ages 16 and older.

### Tree Selection And Planting Workshops

March 10 • Tuesday • 6:30–9 PM • Cassville Council Chambers–300 Main Street  
*No registration required* (enter through chamber door in back on north side of building)  
March 12 • Thursday • 6:30–9 PM • Greenfield Community Building in City Park  
*No registration required* (corner of Park Street and Toney Avenue)  
March 26 • Thursday • 6:30–9 PM • Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center, Joplin  
*Register by calling 417-629-3423 (Ages 10 and up)* Before you select and plant a tree, you need to ask several questions to evaluate your planting site and make sure you know how to properly plant your selection for optimal growth and survival. These decisions can last a lifetime or longer. Learn how to make informed decisions regarding trees for your yard by attending one of these workshops.

### Tree And Shrub Giveaway

April 25 • Saturday • 10 AM–2 PM (while quantities last)  
Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center (Joplin)  
*No registration required (all ages)* Trees provided through a partnership with the Arbor Day Foundation and the Community Foundation of SWMO; shrubs provided by the Conservation Department.  
Trees and shrubs provide many benefits to humans and wildlife! To enhance your yard and create habitat with more woody plants on your property, drive by the Audubon Center and pick up your free trees and shrubs! Staff and volunteers will provide description and proper planting information for each available species. All items will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. Plant a native tree or shrub and discover the benefits for your yard.

## SPRING BREAK PASSPORTS TO DISCOVERY! March 16–22



MONDAY TO SATURDAY: 9AM–5PM  
SUNDAY: NOON–4PM

Stop at any of the eight southwest Missouri or southeast Kansas nature centers or historic sites for "Your PEEP Passport to Discovery." Each site has a passport page with information and questions. Answer the questions and receive a stamp. Collect six stamps and earn a special PEEP (Partnership for Environment Education Program) patch! The hours above are for the Joplin Conservation Office and Audubon Center. Check with the other sites listed on the passport for their hours of operation. Passports are free and no registration is required.

# Andy Dalton Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center

4897 N. Farm Road 61, Ash Grove, MO 65604 • [mdc.mo.gov/node/288](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/288)



## March and April Events

### Turkey Hunting Basics

March 28 • Saturday • 8:30 AM–2 PM

Registration required (all ages)

Join us to discover the basics of turkey hunting in the spring. We will cover safety, scouting, calling, proper setup, shotgun ballistics, and much more.



### Up the Ante for Spring Turkey

Most all of us have heard the old adage, “The job is not finished until the paperwork is done,” and I have found this to be very true especially in the world of turkey hunting. There have been many studies conducted in

modern times about hunting and one of the public expectations from hunters is we must possess the knowledge, skill, and attitude necessary to cleanly and effectively harvest the wildlife resource being pursued. In order to do this with turkeys, we must first check our pattern density with the equipment and shotshells we will use for the hunt. You will need your shotgun, choke tubes, shells, 4-foot squares of paper, a backstop or target paper holder, markers, and the ability to draw a 30-inch circle around the densest portion of your pattern.

The proper method for testing your equipment is to determine the distance you intend to hunt and add 5 yards for error in distance estimation. You will then need to fire one shell from that distance on each of 3 sheets of paper. Using a string that is 15 inches long with a marker tied to the end, locate the center of the densest portion of the pattern. Place the non-marker end of the string there and proceed to draw a circle around the pattern. Once you have the circle drawn, take the paper to a counting table and count each pellet hole in the paper inside of the circle or any pellets touching the line of the circle and draw a mark through them so you don't lose count. Repeat this for all 3 sheets of paper and then add the totals from each sheet together and divide by 3. This gives you the average pattern density to the 67<sup>th</sup> percentile for that gun, choke, load, and distance combination. You should have a minimum of 210 to 230 pellets of number 4, 5, or 6 pellets inside the 30-inch circle in order to meet the expectations of a quick clean harvest.

So what if you don't reach the minimum? You need to change something in the equation so you can reach that goal. For example, you might try a tighter choke tube, longer shell with a heavier payload (if your gun is designed to handle the longer shell), or try a closer distance to the target than what you originally planned. All of these changes will result in a richer pattern that increases your chances of a clean harvest and lowers the risk of wounding and losing the bird. In order to raise the percentage of assurance you have in your equipment, you simply need to shoot and count more shells. By pattern testing 10 shells, the level of confidence in your equipment is raised into the mid to higher 90<sup>th</sup> percentile range. Any time you change the brand of shells, the payload, the length of shell, the shot size, the choke tube, or the distance, your results can vary. So before you step out this spring to hunt that boss gobbler, please remember to finish the job by doing your paperwork first.

—Michael Brooks, Outdoor Education Center Supervisor

### Shotgun Shooting Basics

April 11 • Saturday • 8:30–11:30 AM

Registration required (all ages)

Join us to discover the joys of shotgun shooting. We will discuss shotgun nomenclature, stance, dominant eye, mounting, moving the shotgun, and much more. You may use our shotguns or plan to use your own. Please make sure your shotgun is completely unloaded before arriving.

Spring Youth Turkey Season: April 11 and 12

Regular Spring Turkey Season: April 20 to May 10



To get to the Andy Dalton Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center, take US Highway 160 west of Willard, turn south on Farm Road 61, and go 2.5 miles, facility on the west side of road. Facilities include an outdoor education center and archery, rifle, pistol, and shotgun ranges, including skeet and trap.

### HOURS:

September 14–April 14

Monday and Thursday: 9 AM–4:30 PM

Friday–Sunday: 12 NOON–4:30 PM

April 15–September 13

Monday: 9 AM–4:30 PM

Thursday: 9 AM–7:30 PM

Friday–Sunday: 12 NOON–4:30 PM

Closed Tuesdays, Wednesdays and all state holidays. Hours are subject to change.

### FACILITIES AND FEES:

Available for individual and group use. Call for information and possible restrictions.

- Rifle/pistol range fee: \$3 per booth per hour
- Trap/skeet range fee: \$3 per person per round of 25 clay targets
- Shotgun patterning range: \$3 per person per hour
- Archery range: \$3 per person per hour
- Group use fee: \$20 per hour plus \$3 per round of 25 clay targets

### TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:

Programs are free. Call 417-742-4361 or email [DaltonRange@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:DaltonRange@mdc.mo.gov) 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.

# Springfield Conservation Nature Center

4601 S. Nature Center Way, Springfield, MO 65804 • [mdc.mo.gov/node/287](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/287)



The Springfield Conservation Nature Center is located in southeast Springfield just west of US-65 off the James River Freeway (US-60). Indoors, 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 a variety of natural communities. Call to schedule a naturalist-led program for your organized group.

## CURRENT HOURS:

March 1–October 31

Building: Tuesday–Saturday: 8 AM–5 PM

Sunday: 12 NOON–5 PM

Closed Monday

Trails: Sunday–Saturday: 8 AM–8 PM

## TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:

Programs are free. Call 417-888-4237 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.

## March Events

### Conservation TEEN Club–Hiking

March 7 • Saturday • 10 AM–4 PM

Registration begins February 17 (ages 12–17)

Join us to explore the Pleasant Hope Conservation Area. Dress for the weather. Lunch and transportation will be provided.

### Ghost Bird–Film At The Moxie Cinema

March 7 • Saturday • 1–2:30 PM

Registration begins February 17 (ages 18–adult)

We are teaming again with the Moxie Cinema for a special free showing of the birding film *Ghost Bird* at the Moxie located at 305 South Campbell. This film chronicles the reported sighting of an ivory-billed woodpecker in the swamps of Arkansas in 2004. The news created great excitement among the birding world and a short-lived economic boom for the small town of Brinkley. *The New York Times* described the film as “a multilayered story that will fascinate practically everybody.” (This film is not rated.)



We are inviting everyone—families and individuals of all ages—to participate in *Your Big Year* to identify and learn more about Missouri birds. Look for this symbol for bird-related programs.

## March Events

### The Art Of Woodcarving

March 7 • Saturday • 1–2 PM

Registration begins February 17 (ages 12–adult)

Try your hand at woodcarving with members of the Southern Missouri Woodcarving Artists as they teach carving techniques and show how to transform wood into works of art. **Stop by from 1–4 PM as they demonstrate carving techniques and share information with the “wood-be” carver.**

### Story Time With Ms. Ladybug

March 11 • Wednesday • 11–11:30 AM

No registration required (ages 2–6)

Join Volunteer Naturalist Joyce Tolliver as she reads a nature story and shares activities with your 2–6 year olds. Please, no organized groups.

### Discover Bluebirds



March 11 • Wednesday • 11 AM–12 NOON

No registration required (all ages)

While your younger kids are enjoying *Story Time With Ms. Ladybug*, older kids can learn about bluebirds. Afterwards, all ages can enjoy bluebird activities in the lobby.

### The Big-Mouthed Frog Puppet Show

March 12 • Thursday • 11–11:45 AM OR 1–1:45 PM

Registration begins March 3 (ages 3–adult)

Hop-A-Long, the big-mouthed frog, returns with all his friends to teach about the kinds of food wild animals eat. Enjoy the show and make a craft to take home with you.

### Spring Wildflower Hike

March 13 • Friday • 10–11:30 AM

Registration begins March 3 (ages 7–adult)

Take a stroll on the trails for a close look at wildflowers.

### Nature Art With A Chinese Brushstroke

March 13 • Friday • 1–2:30 PM OR 2:45–4:15 PM

Registration begins March 3 (ages 8–adult)

Art instructor and nature enthusiast Hing Wah Hatch will increase your powers of observation as she demonstrates, step-by-step, how to capture the essence of local plants and animals through Chinese-style painting. Participants will go home with more nature knowledge and their own artistic masterpiece. Observers are welcome to stop by anytime.

### Woodcock Watch

March 17 • Tuesday • 6–8 PM

Registration begins March 3 (ages 8–adult)

At dusk in early spring, the woodcock does its strange courtship dance which is one of the most interesting bird spectacles of spring. With luck, we'll be watching. Dress warmly and wear hiking shoes as Volunteer Naturalist Dan Liles leads you on this three-mile hike.

### Crappie Fishing For Beginners

March 19 • Thursday • 6:30–8 PM

Registration begins March 3 (ages 12–adult)

Whether you fish for crappie during winter or wait for them to spawn in the spring, crappie can be caught throughout the year. Join Table Rock Fisheries Biologist Shane Bush and Outdoor Skills Specialist Greg Collier as we explore when, where, and how to catch one of the Ozarks favorite panfish.

### Hiking Club

March 21 • Saturday • 8:15 AM–5 PM

Registration begins March 3 (ages 18–adult)

Volunteer Naturalist Mike Mihalik will lead this hike up and around the hilly terrain at Drury-Mincy Conservation Area. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Bring a sack lunch and water and wear comfortable hiking shoes. **Hike is five miles and rated moderate to difficult.**

### Treasure Hunting–Geocaching Basics

March 21 • Saturday • 10 AM–12 NOON

Registration begins March 3 (ages 18–adult)

### Family Treasure Hunting

March 21 • Saturday • 1–3 PM

Registration begins March 3 (ages 8 and up with an adult mentor)

Join Corps of Engineers GIS Specialist Tricia Tannehill to learn a new outdoor skill. Geocaching is an outdoor “treasure” hunt using GPS units. We'll go over basic GPS use and then hit the trails to find some “treasures.” GPS units provided. Dress for the weather.

### Conservation Kids' Club–Flower Power

March 26 • Thursday • 6:30–7:45 PM

Registration begins March 3 (ages 7–12)

Wildflowers are more than pretty things for us to enjoy. They have an important job to perform—making seeds! Come learn the secrets of Missouri's spring wildflowers at this month's meeting. Please, no younger siblings and only one adult per group of kids.

### Introduction to Missouri's Raptors

March 31 • Tuesday • 7–8 PM

Registration begins March 3 (ages 8–adult)

Raptors, also known as birds of prey, are a fascinating group of birds. Join expert birder and Missouri Prairie Foundation technical advisor Jeff Cantrell as he shares through photographs interesting life history information and helpful identification tips about these majestic Missouri birds.

March **Little Acorns** programs are listed on page 5.

## A Visit By Douglas Tallamy

Douglas Tallamy is author of the popular book *Bringing Nature Home* which explains the unbreakable relationship between wildlife and native plants. Tallamy will be presenting the programs listed below—cosponsored by the City of Springfield-Department of Environmental Services and Missouri Wildflowers Nursery. *Call today to register (ages 16–adult) for one or both programs or for a flier with more information.*

### Bringing Nature To Your Home

March 28 • Saturday • 10–11 AM

During this program, Tallamy explains how specialized relationships between wildlife and plants are the norm in nature rather than the exception. He also provides evidence that native plants provide for the needs of local animals better than nonnative plants that are traditionally used in landscapes.

### Creating Living Landscapes

March 28 • Saturday • 1–2 PM

In this program, Tallamy gives practical advice on how to share your property with other species. Learn how to reconstruct complex food webs in your yard without making your landscape look wild and messy or making it more prone to insect damage and vermin. You will leave with knowledge that will help you transform your yard into a more fascinating part of nature.

## April Events

### Native Plant Sale And Workshops

April 4 • Saturday • 9 AM–3 PM

*No registration required (all ages)*

Stop by anytime to purchase native plants from a variety of plant vendors. Exhibitors will also be available with nature-friendly information for your landscaping needs. Call for a flier of the day's activities.

### Story Time With Ms. Ladybug

April 8 • Wednesday • 11–11:30 AM

*No registration required (ages 2–6)*

Join Volunteer Naturalist Joyce Tolliver as she reads a story and shares activities with your 2–6 year olds. Please, no organized groups.

### Primitive Skills Series–Useful Plant Hike

April 12 • Sunday • 1–3 PM

*Registration begins April 1 (ages 15–adult)*

Plants have always been important for food, medicine, and other purposes. Volunteer Specialist Don Brink will explore the folklore and modern uses of several Missouri plants during this indoor program and hike.

## April Events

### Spring Wildflower Hike

April 15 • Wednesday • 1–2:30 PM

*Registration begins April 1 (ages 7–adult)*

Take a stroll on the trails for a close look at wildflowers.

### Spring Warblers

April 17 • Friday • 7–8 PM

*Registration begins April 1 (ages 8–adult)*

Ted Floyd, Editor of *Birding* magazine, is making a special trip to Missouri for a series of programs and bird walks cosponsored by the Greater Ozarks Audubon Society. Brush up on your warbler identification skills before their spring migration peaks and learn about the most recent research on warbler conservation, taxonomy, and population biology.

### Hiking Club

April 18 • Saturday • 8:15 AM–5 PM

*Registration begins April 1 (ages 18–adult)*

While known for trout fishing, Roaring River State Park also has an array of hiking trails. Volunteer Naturalist Doug Gilliam will help you become familiar with their trail system. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Bring a sack lunch and water and wear comfortable hiking shoes. **Hike is five miles and rated moderate to difficult.**

### Caving Trip For Women

April 18 • Saturday • 9:30 AM–12:30 PM

*Registration begins April 1 (women, ages 18–adult)*

### For Adults Only–Caving Trip

April 18 • Saturday • 1:30–4:30 PM

*Registration begins April 1 (ages 18–adult)*

Join us for a guided tour through one of Missouri's many caves. Work gloves, bottled water, and knee and elbow pads are recommended. A headlamp and helmet will be provided. Please dress appropriately for muddy conditions and bring a change of clothes. Carpooling may be necessary.

### Ozark Whittlers & Woodcarvers

April 18 • Saturday • 1–4 PM

*No registration required (all ages)*

Stop by to see members of the Ozark Whittlers & Woodcarvers transform wood into treasures.

### Conservation Kids' Club–April Foolery

April 23 • Thursday • 6:30–7:45 PM

*Registration begins April 1 (ages 7–12)*

Join us for an evening of fun as we solve wacky wildlife mysteries. Please, no younger siblings and only one adult per group of kids.

## Temporary Exhibits

**March • Mingo Swamp Flora And Fauna**

**Photography Contest–2014**

**April • Ozark Sketches–Wildlife Illustrations**

by Max Thompson

### Babes In The Woods

April 24 • Friday • 10–11 AM

April 25 • Saturday • 10–11 AM

*Registration begins April 1 (ages 0–2)*

Bring your children ages 0–2 for a guided walk with Volunteer Naturalist Dana Tideman. Bring a stroller and join the fun.

### Conservation TEEN Club–Fish And Hike

April 25 • Saturday • 9 AM–4:30 PM

*Registration begins April 1 (ages 12–17)*

Springtime in the Ozarks means fishing! Come and have a great time chasing lunkers. Fishing will be catch-and-release and participants 16 years of age and older must have a valid fishing permit. Dress for the weather. Lunch and transportation will be provided.

### Hike For Homeschoolers

April 29 • Wednesday • 1–3 PM

*Registration begins April 1 (ages 5–adult)*

Join us for a naturalist-guided hike to learn about plants and animals. Wear comfortable hiking shoes and feel free to bring journals, cameras, and binoculars.

## Little Acorns

Please limit to one per month.

Programs are 45 minutes in length.

## March Events

*Registration begins March 3 (ages 3–6)*

### Salamander Slide

March 19 • Thursday • 11 AM or 1:30 PM

March 21 • Saturday • 11 AM

Meet the salamander family as we investigate some of their special features.

### Spring Peepers

March 27 • Friday • 11 AM or 1:30 PM

March 28 • Saturday • 11 AM

It's time for some frog-frolicking fun exploring the life cycle and world of the tiny peepers.

## April Events

*Registration begins April 1 (ages 3–6)*

### Worm Squirm

April 9 • Thursday • 11 AM or 1:30 PM

Worms squiggle and wiggle and crawl in the dirt.

They eat dead plants and make soil for the earth.

Join Volunteer Naturalist Nancy Ryan to learn more.

### Tots And Toads

April 15 • Wednesday • 11 AM or 1:30 PM

April 18 • Saturday • 11 AM

*Registration begins April 1 (ages 3–6)*

Missouri toads are colorful, harmless, vocal, and valuable. We'll have fun learning about these "toad"-ally cool creatures.

# Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery and Conservation Center

483 Hatchery Road, Branson, MO 65616 • [mdc.mo.gov/node/290](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/290)



The Fish Hatchery and Conservation Center is located on 221 acres in Branson off Highway 165 next to Table Rock Dam. Outdoors, visitors will experience an active fish hatchery with 700,000 rainbow and brown trout in 30 pools with opportunities to feed the fish. Indoors, enjoy a 3,500 gallon aquarium and hands-on nature exhibits and purchase hunting and fishing permits. The area also features four hiking trails, a picnic area, a boat ramp, and access to Lake Taneycomo.

## FACILITY HOURS:

### Memorial Day–Labor Day

Sunday–Saturday: 9 AM–6 PM

### Remainder of Year

Sunday–Saturday: 9 AM–5 PM

## AREA AND TRAIL HOURS:

4 AM–10 PM

The area is open to fishing 24 hours daily, but special permits and regulations do apply. Check the current fishing regulations or call for details.

## TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:

Programs are free. Call 417-334-4865, Ext. 0, 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.

## FISHING

### LAKE TANEYCOMO:

Before fishing on Lake Taneycomo, become familiar with the regulations and restrictions. Come by for a free brochure of the entire lake including fishing accesses. For specific details about trout fishing here and across the state, visit [mdc.mo.gov/node/5603](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/5603).

## March and April Events

### Bluebird House Workshop

March 14 • Saturday • 1–2:30 PM

Registration required (families, ages 6 and up)

If you enjoy having bluebirds in your area, here is your chance to learn more about them and why they are the state bird of Missouri. Each family will make one house to take home and must make their own reservation. All you need to bring is a hammer and an interest in bluebirds.

### Worm Farming

March 28 • Saturday • 2–3:30 PM

Registration required (families)

With this year being the *International Year of Soils*, we will help you learn the importance of worms in our soil. In addition to learning how worms can help create new soil, each family will get information on how to create your own worm farm that you can keep in your home. Be prepared to get your hands dirty.

### Wildflower And Mushroom Hike

April 11 • Saturday • 10 AM–12 NOON

Registration required (ages 12 and up)

Join us as we take a hike along Lake Taneycomo to see what wildflowers are in bloom. Some of these flowers have unusual names such as toothwort and trout lily (a hatchery favorite). This will also be a great time to look for more mushrooms. We will not be collecting flowers; however, you can bring a mesh bag because you may take home any more mushrooms you find. Although the trail is easy to walk, we will be walking off the trail to see the flowers and mushrooms. Bring your camera and a bottle of water.

### Earth Day Special Event

April 18 • Saturday

9 AM–2 PM

No registration required (all ages)



Join us for our 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Earth Day celebration. There will be several learning stations to help you become a better ecological citizen. With 2015 being the *International Year of Soils*, several stations will involve animals that live underground, how soils shape habitats, and soil/water conservation. Other stations will include animals of concern, eco-games, nature art, hypermiling and alternative vehicles, local recycling opportunities, water critters, and much more. The first 500 visitors will receive a free tree seedling.

## Paddlefish Offer Unique Angling Opportunity

Paddlefish are a popular sportfish in Missouri and a representative of North America's prehistoric past. The state's paddlefish season runs from March 15 through April 30. The daily limit is two. The minimum length limit is 34 inches on the Lake of the Ozarks and its tributaries, Table Rock Lake and its tributaries, and Truman Lake and its tributaries. On all other waters, paddlefish less than 24 inches must be returned to the water immediately. Paddlefish are measured from the eye to the fork of the tail.

Paddlefish, also called spoonbills, have no comparable freshwater relatives in this hemisphere. The North American paddlefish is a remnant of an ancient family of freshwater fish. The main characteristic that sets paddlefish apart from other North American fish is its spoon-billed snout, known as a rostrum. The rostrum is covered by an elaborate system of sense organs and it's thought its purpose might be to locate concentrations of food organisms.

Because of the changes man-made impoundments have brought to Missouri's waterways, the state's reservoir paddlefish populations are no longer self-sustaining. Today, the state's reservoir spoonbill population is maintained with annual stockings of hatchery-raised fingerlings by the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC). Each spring, several male and female paddlefish are collected from the state's reservoirs. Adult paddlefish are taken to MDC's Blind Pony Hatchery where eggs are collected and fertilized. The fry (small fish) are reared at Blind Pony Hatchery and the young paddlefish are released into Lake of the Ozarks, Table Rock Lake, and Truman Lake in September. It's an example of how the Missouri Department of Conservation works with the state's citizens and for them to sustain healthy forests, fish, and wildlife.

More information about snagging for paddlefish in Missouri and how to catch other species of fish can be found at your nearest Missouri Department of Conservation office or at [mdc.mo.gov](http://mdc.mo.gov).

—Francis Skalicky, Media Specialist

# Southwest Regional Office

2630 N. Mayfair Avenue, Springfield, MO 65803 • [mdc.mo.gov/node/257](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/257)

## Celebrate Arbor Day!



Each year in the month of April, foresters at the Missouri Department of Conservation celebrate one special day—this day is known as Missouri’s Arbor Day. In fact it is so special some people in forestry say that they think it should be designated a national holiday. Arbor Day is a day set aside for the appreciation and planting of trees. Missouri first observed Arbor Day in 1886, but it actually began in 1872 in another state. A man from the state of Nebraska named J. Sterling Morton proposed a tree planting

day to be called “Arbor Day.” Morton settled in Nebraska in 1854 from Upper New York State in a small community presently known as Nebraska City, Nebraska. Morton missed the tree coverage that he and his family had enjoyed in New York State. Morton also realized that the homesteaders needed the trees for windbreaks, building materials, and food. He preached the importance of trees and asked people to plant trees. Morton proposed a day be set aside to plant trees. On April 10, 1872, Nebraska Governor Robert Furnas officially proclaimed Arbor Day. Over 1 million trees were planted across the state of Nebraska on that first Arbor Day.

Missouri enjoys Arbor Day always on the first Friday in the month of April but National Arbor Day is always the last Friday in April. Because of this time frame, Community Foresters with the Department of Conservation have the opportunity to celebrate Arbor Day almost every day during the month of April. We often refer to it as “Arbor month.” As the area coordinators for Tree City, Tree Line, and Tree Campus USA (all Arbor Day Foundation programs), we attend several tree planting ceremonies. Some celebrations are very small with just a few councilmen present, but others are very large and include a festive program of music, a proclamation read by the mayor, and always the planting of a tree. If you would like to attend an Arbor Day event this April, call your local office for a list of events in your area. If your city doesn’t celebrate the day, consider planning one for your community. Contact your local Community Forester with the Department of Conservation and they will assist you with the planning of your celebration. A great way for individuals to celebrate Arbor Day is to plant some tree seedlings around your home for future generations to enjoy. The Missouri Department of Conservation makes it easy to order seedlings from the state nursery in Licking. You can order your seedlings online until April 15 at [mdc.mo.gov/node/3328](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/3328) or pick up a seedling order form at your local conservation office.

—Cindy Garner, Community Forester



The Southwest Regional Office is conveniently located just west of the intersection of US-65 and Kearney in Springfield. The public may obtain information on land management, nuisance wildlife, educational opportunities, river and pond management, and more, as well as purchase hunting and fishing permits and obtain area brochures for Conservation Department areas.

**HOURS:** Monday–Friday: 8 AM–5 PM  
Closed all state holidays

**PHONE:** 417-895-6880

## Hunter Education Sessions

### Classroom (Knowledge) Sessions

Location	Date/Time
Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center .....	March 9 • Monday • 6–10 PM
Springfield Conservation Nature Center .....	March 13 • Friday • 6–10 PM April 10 • Friday • 6–10 PM

### Skills Sessions

Location	Date/Time
Andy Dalton Shooting Range .....	March 7 • Saturday • 8 AM–12 NOON April 4 • Saturday • 8 AM–12 NOON
Springfield Conservation Nature Center .....	March 14 • Saturday • 8 AM–12 NOON or 1–5 PM April 11 • Saturday • 8 AM–12 NOON or 1–5 PM
Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center .....	March 25 • Wednesday • 6–10 PM March 30 • Monday • 6–10 PM

### Reminder

Hunter Education certification has two parts: knowledge and skills. You must complete and pass **BOTH** sessions to earn your certificate. For more information on Hunter Education, contact your local Missouri Department of Conservation office or visit the Conservation Department website at [mdc.mo.gov/node/3095](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/3095).

Visit [mdc.mo.gov/node/3722](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/3722) to register for these sessions and to check for session changes and/or other locations.

## Want to fish but don't know how?



Discover Nature—Fishing is a four-lesson curriculum taught by Missouri Department of Conservation volunteer instructors, teachers, camp and youth group leaders, and other partners. Youth and families can learn the basics of fishing, progressively building on skills throughout each lesson in the program. Classes will be held on Saturdays beginning in May and run through September. You may find more information about the Discover Nature—Fishing program at [mdc.mo.gov/node/27175](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/27175).



**Follow**  
[twitter.com/mdc\\_online](https://twitter.com/mdc_online)

**Friend**  
[facebook.com/MDCOnline](https://facebook.com/MDCOnline)



**and Watch**  
[youtube.com/user/moconservation](https://youtube.com/user/moconservation)

Missouri Department of Conservation



## 20% off Specials

\$11.20



Featured Publications  
March and April

\$7.20

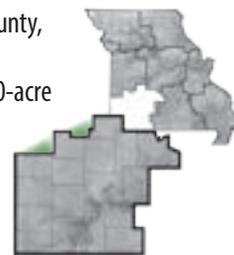


Available at the  
Springfield Conservation Nature Center  
and Southwest Regional Office.

## Conservation Showcase:

### Bear Creek Conservation Area

**LOCATION:** Bear Creek Conservation Area (CA) is located in Laclede County, east of Lebanon, near I-44. This area consists of four separate tracts of property totaling 720 acres. Access to the tracts are as follows. The 320-acre **Bear Creek Tract** and the 120-acre **Squatter Tract** are accessed by taking I-44 Exit 135, Highway F, east of Lebanon. Turn south on Highway F about 1/4 mile to Old Route 66. Take a left on Old Route 66 for another 1/4 mile to Rustic Drive. Take a right (south) on Rustic Drive. The Bear Creek Tract parking lot will be on your left. Continue past the Bear Creek Tract for another 3/4 mile to the Squatter Tract on the right (west side) of Rustic Drive. The 251-acre **Hermit Tract** is accessed by taking Exit 140 off I-44. Turn right on N Highway for a few hundred feet to a T intersection. Turn right onto the Old Route 66 and go about 1000 feet to Sassafras Road. Take Sassafras Road to the left (south) for approximately 1000 feet to the entrance to the Hermit Tract on the right. The fourth tract is the **Harrill Ford Tract**. This 40-acre tract is accessed off I-44 Exit 140. Follow N Highway south for 3 1/4 miles to Hutchison Road, turn left (east) on Hutchison Road then go approximately 3/10 mile to the Harrill Ford Tract.



**HISTORY:** The Missouri Department of Conservation purchased Bear Creek CA in 1965 from the University of Missouri. All land tracts have been purchased with Conservation Department funds or in cooperation with partners' funds, including Federal funds from the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act and the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act.

In 2005, the Conservation Department partnered with the local Bunt Cumbea Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation to install three mobility-impaired hunting blinds on the Bear Creek Tract. These blinds and a gravel entrance road allow persons with special mobility needs a place where they can access the area with an ATV or other vehicle with a Special Use Permit obtained from the area manager. These blinds are available to the public on a first-come, first-served basis throughout the hunting season.

Bear Creek CA contains many good examples of dolomite glade communities. These glades look like prairies with lots of exposed bedrock. This area also contains good examples of oak-hickory uplands. Deer, turkey, raccoon, squirrel, rabbit, coyote, and many other small animals and birds are commonly seen as one walks the interior trails on these tracts.

**HUNTING:** Bear Creek CA is open to statewide regulations for hunting. Wildlife habitat management includes the creation of watering ponds and manipulation of fields within the forest to provide added food sources. Selective timber harvesting is also an important element in habitat management. It produces forage and cover for forest wildlife. With its mainly forested areas which are surrounded by private lands (much of which are open pasture), the Bear Creek CA offers wild turkey flocks protection and hard mast and therefore provides good hunting opportunities for turkey hunters. Its small tract sizes also means that the birds will probably be pretty smart and a challenging adversary.

**CAMPING AND HIKING:** There are no opportunities for camping on the Bear Creek CA; however, local private campgrounds are available within 12 miles and hotels are available in Lebanon 6 miles away.

Several trails and roadways provide opportunities for the hiking enthusiasts and nature viewers to get out and enjoy the diverse wildlife and landscape.

For more information on Bear Creek CA, visit the Missouri Department of Conservation website at [mdc.mo.gov/a6523](http://mdc.mo.gov/a6523).

—Steven LaVal, Resource Forester