



Secrets of a **SWAMP**

I'll let you in on a little secret, swamps are miraculous wetlands, saturated with irreplaceable plants and animals. How can you not be curious as to what can thrive and survive in this mysterious, watery world? I know I am.

To write this article, I had the urge to be in the swamp; to experience it. It had to be tangible and real. So off to the Bootheel I went.

The weather was perfect. It was rain with isolated thunderstorms. As the saying goes, "There is no bad weather, just bad clothes." I pulled into K-Mart

and purchased a poncho before driving to Allred Lake Natural Area. The lake itself is a seven acre swamp remnant surrounded by a bottomland forest. The scene was a glimpse into our Bootheel past. A time when this natural community covered hundreds of acres.

Upon arrival, I walked down a pebbled path into the bottomland forest. Then it happened. The secrets were whispered with every step taken, every view captured, and every breath inhaled. The

rain only enhanced the earthy smell of this swampy realm and heightened all of my senses.

I felt the leathery, smooth-green leaves of the **swamp tupelo tree**. My fingers touched the underside of the leaf to feel the fine hairs.



My eyes peered into the dark water and pondered what it would be like to swim with the endangered **taillight shiner** and **swamp darter fishes** beneath the surface. Then I spotted the most vibrant, lime-green amphibian. It was a **green treefrog** clinging to a rotting log, spattered with foliose lichen, waiting for a meal, and guarding against becoming one. I stared at the giants around me – **bald cypress trees** – with swollen bases and protruding knees. It was hard to fathom that they could live to be 500 years old.

As the raindrops continued to dapple the lake and slide down my cheeks, I gently turned around and strolled back, walking silently out of the swamp. The secrets of the swamp had brought a type of calmness and serenity to me. Secrets completely revealed? Not by a long shot.

Now it's your turn to unlock some swamp secrets by voyaging to a Missouri swamp. Serenity and discovery await you. In the meantime, look for the swamp bubbles throughout the newsletter; a swamp secret is written inside.

—Trana Madsen,
Naturalist

Volunteer News

Milestones

Congratulations to the following volunteers for their hours of service:

500 hours – Kristen Hirst

1500 hours – Claudia Arnold and Carol Young



The 2015 graduating volunteer class eager to share their interest of the outdoors with you.

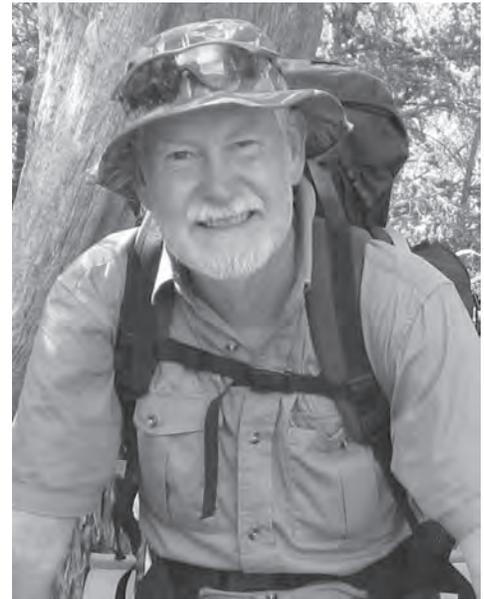
New Volunteer Graduates

On April 9, 2015, 18 new volunteers joined the Runge team. Please welcome the 2015 volunteer class to Runge: Jessica Bell, Dan Bernskoetter, Rachel Campbell, Lauri Carr, Amy Cook, Jim Cunningham, Sydney Gregory, Cameron Haake, Hope Kirk, David Litfin, Rose Mehmert, Michael Morgart, Jason Presley, Glenn Reynolds, Laura Richardson, Ethan Stevenson, Sophia Syrigos, and Paul Winn.

A swamp is . . . a nearly continuously flooded wetland dominated by trees.

Exhibitors

Lobby Exhibit



Face to Face with Insects

by Tom Riley

The photography exhibit features insects and other small creatures native to Missouri.

"I am an entomologist, and have enjoyed finding and photographing insects most of my life. Using the techniques of portrait, bird, and large-wildlife photographers, I try to create artfully-designed photos that appeal to a wide range of viewers. The photographs will bring you face to face with the beauty and intricate detail of many of Missouri's insect residents." –Tom Riley



For the Little Ones...

Connect with nature through exciting and age-appropriate opportunities.

Babes In The Woods

Children 0 through 2 years of age are welcome to attend a Babes program with their caregiver. This program is limited to 15 children, plus caregiver.

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.

Little Acorns PLUS

If you have a child that fits into our Babes program AND one that fits into our Little Acorns program this is for you. This program is limited to 20 children, plus caregiver. Please provide the ages of your children when making your reservation.



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>



Ruby-throated Hummingbird

July

Registration begins July 1st.
573-526-5544

Sensory Safari

Let's go outside! We will take a "safari" at the nature center this month and let the wonders of summer touch us through our senses.

Babes In The Woods

July 10 • Friday • 10 AM
July 22 • Wednesday • 10 AM

Little Acorns

July 17 • Friday • 10 AM

Little Acorns PLUS

July 15 • Wednesday • 10 AM
July 28 • Tuesday • 10 AM

August

Registration begins August 1st.
573-526-5544

The Hungry Hummingbird

Young birds have much to learn about finding food – what it looks like and where to find it! Using shapes and colors, we will figure out what hummingbirds like to eat and where to find it.

Babes In The Woods

August 7 • Friday • 10 AM
August 25 • Tuesday • 10 AM

Little Acorns

August 12 • Wednesday • 10 AM
August 19 • Wednesday • 10 AM

Little Acorns PLUS

August 11 • Tuesday • 10 AM
August 20 • Thursday • 10 AM

"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

Runge Calendar of Events - July

Get outdoors and experience what nature has provided for you.



Registration begins July 1st.

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.

Aquarium Feeding

July 10 • Friday • 3 PM

No registration required (all ages)

The fish and snapping turtles are hungry. Join us by the aquariums and watch them eat.

What's Going On?

True/False Snake Fest

July 11 • Saturday • 10 AM–2 PM

No registration required (all ages)

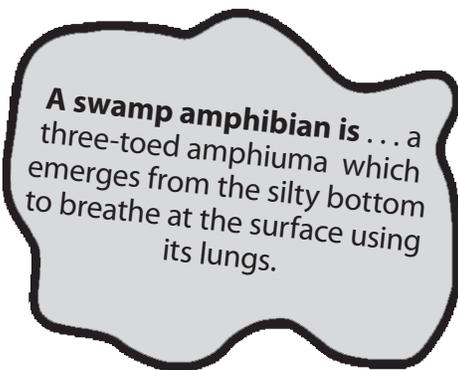
Stop by and learn, understand, and appreciate the truth about Missouri snakes while eliminating falsehoods. The festivities will include live snakes, activities, and crafts.

Teen Club: Primitive Skills

July 14 • Tuesday • 1–4 PM

Registration required (ages 12–18 years)

Get back to the basics and try your hand at flint knapping and Atlatl throwing. Activities will take place at Runge.



A swamp amphibian is . . . a three-toed amphiuma which emerges from the silty bottom to breathe at the surface using its lungs.

Nature's Needlers

July 16 • Thursday •

10:30 AM–Noon **OR** 6–7:30 PM

Registration required (ages 18 and older)

The lacy fronds of ferns decorating the forest floor will be the subject of our seventh block in the "Woodland Tapestry" series.

Puppet Show:

The Big-Mouthed Frog

July 18 • Saturday • 1–1:30 PM

No registration required (all ages)

Skunk, Mole, and Snake are hungry after winter. Like all real animals, these puppets are finding many different things to eat. Join Runge's puppeteers to see if any of Missouri's animals can help the hungry big-mouthed frog find something to eat.

Down and Dirty

July 23 • Thursday • 5:30–7:30 PM

Registration required (ages 3-6 years)

Remember the old days of mud pits and mud pies? How many times do you find yourself asking your child not to get dirty? Here is the chance to relive some of the joys of your childhood with your own children. We'll provide the dirt; you bring the clean clothes for the ride home!

Adults, separate from the children, will learn about the importance of unstructured play and nature exploration for the healthy development of young children. At the same time, children will be supervised by our naturalists as they use their imaginations to get down and dirty in our big pile of dirt!

Down and Dirty

July 24 • Friday • 10 AM–Noon

Registration required (ages 3-6 years)

Refer to July 23 for program description.

What's Going On?

Dirt Day Fun

July 25 • Saturday • 10 AM–2 PM

No registration required (all ages)

Dirt sure is dirty...but "WOW" is it fun! Outside, our giant dirt pile is awaiting you. Come and create, slide, build, dig, and PLAY! Inside, explore tabletop displays featuring animals that use dirt in other ways.

Aquarium and Snake Feeding

July 31 • Friday • 1:30 PM

No registration required (all ages)

The animals are hungry. Join us and watch as we feed the aquarium fish, snapping turtles, and snakes.

Runge Would Like Your Input...

It's time for Runge Conservation Nature Center to update our area management plan and we are interested in your thoughts. We are seeking comments during the month of July and welcome you to submit comments at mdc.mo.gov/areaplans or by picking up a comment form at the nature center. All comments will be reviewed and considered as staff draft the plan. The draft plan (focusing on land management and public use) will be available for public comment in coming months.

Thank you for your support of Runge Conservation Nature Center.

Registration begins August 1st.

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.

What's Going On? Missing Naturalist

August 1 • Saturday • 10 AM–2 PM

No registration required (all)

A naturalist has swiped an item from our nature center and was last seen on one of our trails with it. Come to the front desk for the clues to find our Missing Naturalist and discover what item was taken.

Teen Club: Kayaking 101

August 4 • Tuesday • 9 AM–4 PM

Registration required (ages 12-18 years)

Meet at Runge and carpool to Finger Lakes State Park. A crew from the state park will teach us kayaking basics and we will spend time on the water. Bring a lunch, water bottle, and your own lifejacket, if you have one. We will have some as well. Dress for getting wet and don't forget your sunscreen. Permission slips needed and can be located at <http://mdc.mo.gov/regions/central/runge-nature-center/permission-forms> or filled out that morning.

Worm Bin Basics

August 8 • Saturday • 10:30 AM–Noon

Registration required (all ages)

Learn to make your own worm bin for little, red worms. Feed your garbage to the worms, enrich your garden with the compost they make, and use the worms for fish bait. It's a win-win!

A swamp shrub is . . . a swamp privet. The seeds provide an excellent food source for wood ducks.

Adventure Birding: At Sunset

August 8 • Saturday • 8–10 PM

Registration required (ages 11 and older)

This month's adventure will begin in the moments before sunset and conclude afterwards. During these times, we will walk at Runge and the Commission Headquarters with eyes peeled for chimney swifts, nighthawks, and even bats! What will we see and what will we hear? Plan to bird with us at this unique time of day. Bring your water bottle, insect spray, and binoculars or borrow a pair of ours.

Discover Nature Women: Canoeing

August 13 • Thursday • 6–8:30 PM and

August 14 • Friday • 9 AM–5 PM

Registration required (Women, 18+ years)

Thursday evening's program is an introduction to the sport of canoeing, techniques, and safety. We will practice and get comfortable with canoes on a nearby pond. Meet at Runge to carpool. Dress appropriately and bring a water bottle.

Friday, we head to the Gasconade River to put our skills to the test! You must attend the Thursday portion to canoe on Friday. Bring a water bottle, lunch, and wear appropriate clothing and shoes. Canoes on Thursday are provided; Friday's canoes are rented from an outfitter and will cost \$20 per person.

Aquarium and Snake Feeding

August 14 • Friday • 1:30 PM

No registration required (all ages)

The animals are hungry. Join us and watch as we feed the aquarium fish, snapping turtles, and snakes.

Puppet Show:

The Big-Mouthed Frog

August 15 • Saturday • 1–1:30 PM

No registration required (all ages)

Skunk, Mole, and Snake are hungry after winter. Like all real animals, these puppets are finding many different things to eat. Join Runge's puppeteers to see if any of Missouri's animals can help the hungry big-mouthed frog find something to eat.

Nature's Needlers

August 20 • Thursday •

10:30 AM–Noon **OR** 6–7:30 PM

Registration required (ages 18 and older)

The black walnut is one of the best known and most valuable trees in our state. Learn about the many products derived from this native tree and create the eighth quilt block in the "Woodland Tapestry" series.

Design with Nature in Mind: Jewelry Making

August 22 • Saturday •

9 AM–Noon **OR** 1–4 PM

Registration required (women, ages 18 and older)

Come create with us! This month we find our inspiration from nature just outside the walls of Runge. After a short walk, (from one door to the next) taking notice of shapes and color combinations from nature, we will gather patterns to design a unique necklace made with nature in mind. Come explore the techniques, materials, and fun of jewelry making with polymer clay. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Nature Poetry

August 29 • Saturday • 9:30–10:30 AM

Registration required (adults)

Do you find poetry in pollywogs and prairies? Missouri's bright summer sun is shining on nature poems, and we are talking about some of them. From sentimental sonnets to vivacious verses, written by yourself or someone else, you are invited to bring poetry to share.

What's Going On? Darting Dragons

August 29 • Saturday • 10 AM–2 PM

No registration required (all ages)

Dragonflies dart around the summer skies hunting for their next meal. Explore the life cycle of these fascinating creatures and discover what these flying dragons are hunting for through hands-on activities and displays.

Backpacks

Get outside and explore

Scout Packs

Runge Conservation Nature Center is happy to offer assistance in meeting requirements for some nature-related scout badges. We have a variety of scout packs available with activities and information to assist you in your efforts. Please contact Becky at 573-526-5544 ext. 3408 for more information or to reserve one of the following packs.

Wolf Cub: Elective #13-Birds

Bear Cub: Achievement #5-Sharing Your World with Wildlife

Webelos: Naturalist and Forester Pack(s). Your choice of packs or a combination pack that has both badge requirements.

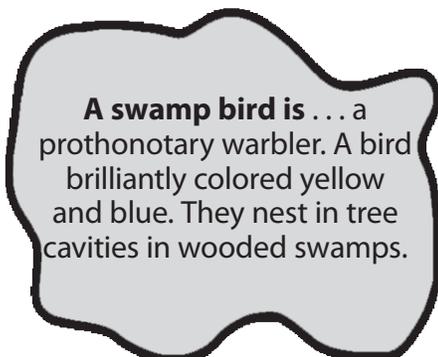
What's Going On?

Saturdays 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.



A swamp bird is . . . a prothonotary warbler. A bird brilliantly colored yellow and blue. They nest in tree cavities in wooded swamps.

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

July 18 • Saturday • 8 AM–Noon

Registration begins July 1st.

Registration required (ages 8 and older - children must be accompanied by an adult)

Location: Moreau River, near Jefferson City

Trail Length: approximately 2 miles

Terrain: Steep hillside plus gravel road.

Focus: Explore water critters and stream ecology with Joe Bachant. Wading shoes or old tennies are recommended for this cool stream ecology experience.

August 15 • Saturday • 8 AM–Noon

Registration begins August 1st.

Registration required (ages 8 and older - children must be accompanied by an adult)

Location: Bear Creek Trail, located in Columbia.

Trail Length: 2 miles

Terrain: Moderate inclines, obstructions, and/or loose rocks.

Focus: Fun as usual.

Midweek Trekkers

July 15 • Wednesday • 8 AM–5 PM

Registration begins July 1st.

Registration required (adults)

Location: Weldon Springs Conservation Area, located in St. Charles County.

Trail Length: 6 miles

Terrain: Moderate inclines and/or occasional rocks/roots.

Notes: Bring lunch.

August 19 • Wednesday • 8 AM–5 PM

Registration begins August 1st.

Registration required (adults)

Location: Mark Twain National Forest, Smith Loop, located in Callaway County.

Trail Length: 5 miles

Terrain: Moderate inclines and/or occasional rocks/roots.

Notes: Bring lunch.

The Hiking Club

July 25 • Saturday • 8 AM–5 PM

Registration begins July 1st.

Registration required (adults)

Location: Mark Twain National Forest, Lane Springs Recreational Area, located in Phelps County.

Trail Length: 3 miles

Terrain: Moderate inclines and/or occasional rocks/roots.

Notes: Bring lunch.

August 22 • Saturday • 8 AM–5 PM

Registration begins August 1st.

Registration required (adults)

Location: Lake Ozark State Park, located in Camden County.

Trail Length: 3 miles

Terrain: Moderate inclines and/or occasional rocks/roots.

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 at 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.

"Letters from a Swamp Rabbit"

July 21 • Tuesday • 6:30–8 PM *Registration required (July 1 through July 17)*

Hi! My name is Swamper. I'm a swamp rabbit. I live in the Bootheel swamps of Missouri. I've carefully placed letters from me to you on the Runge trails. Go on an adventure by finding and reading each letter with a swamp challenge for you to conquer for my survival. Good Luck.

Sincerely,
Swamper, the swamp rabbit

Forest Fun

August 18 • Tuesday • 6:30–8 PM *Registration required (August 1 through August 14)*

Let the fun begin as we explore and discover a Missouri forest through games and activities. Be prepared to get off the beaten path as we follow our "Leave No Trace" ethics. To the woods we go....

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 Acorns reservation to one program each month.**



MDC Free Regional Workshops

Cable Restraint Class

This course includes cable restraint rules and regulations, length of season, and other important information. It is a requirement to trap with the cable restraint technique and certification will appear on your Resident Trapping permit.

August 22 • Saturday • 9 AM–12 PM

Location: Missouri Department of Conservation Regional Office,
3500 East Gans Road, Columbia, Missouri.
Required Registration: Contact 573-815-7900. Limit 50 students.

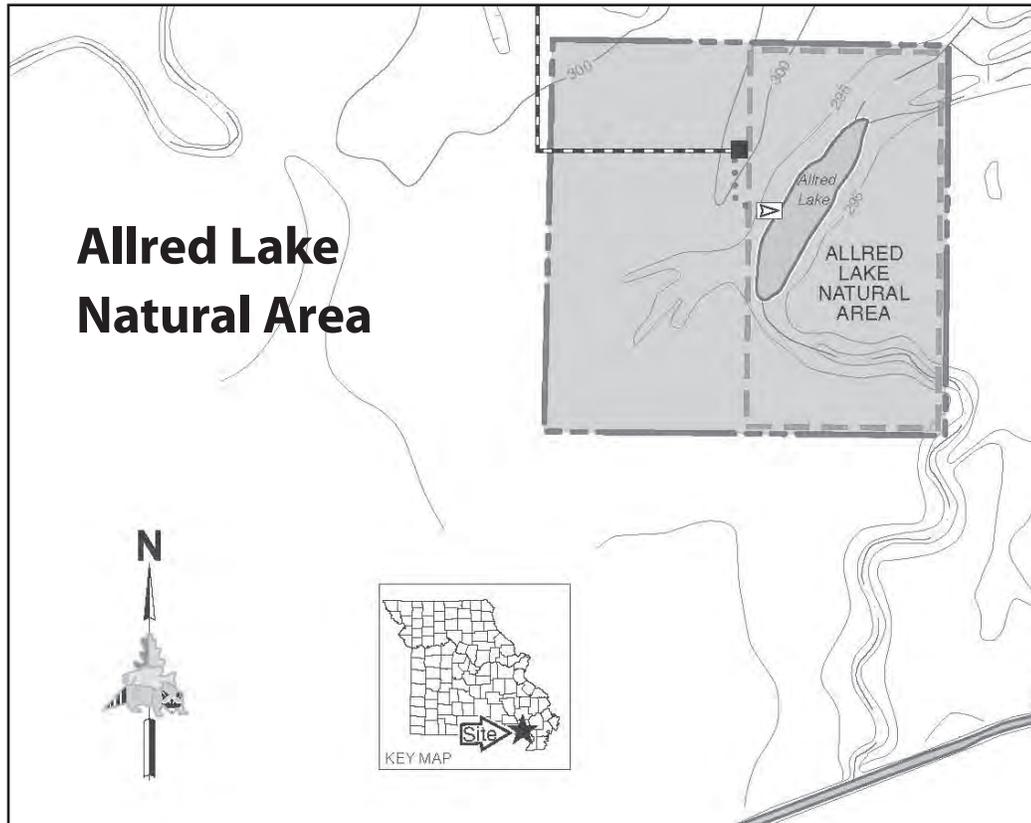
September 12 • Saturday • 9 AM–12 PM

Location: Missouri Department of Conservation Camdenton Office,
783 Thunder Mountain Road, Camdenton, Missouri.
Required Registration: Contact 573-774-3490. Limit 50 students.

A swamp reptile is . . . the western mudsnake which eats amphiumas. It uses its sharp tail tip to prod them, causing them to uncoil for easier swallowing.

SWAMPS

in Missouri



From Neelyville, travel east on Highway 142 about 5 miles. Then turn right (south) onto Highway H. Travel south on Highway H for 2.5 miles. At this point Highway H ends and a gravel county road begins. Follow this gravel county road for a half mile. Then turn left (south) onto another gravel road and follow this less than a half mile to the entrance of the area on your left (east) side. From the area parking lot a short trail leads to a boardwalk and overlook above the slough waters.

Other swamps to visit...

Big Oak Tree Natural Area, Mississippi County

Big Swamp, Cape Girardeau County

Bradyville Natural Area, Stoddard County

Dark Cypress Swamp State Wildlife Area, Bollinger County

Mingo National Wildlife Refuge, Wayne County

Otter Slough Natural Areas, Stoddard County

Tupelo Gum Pond, Mark Twain National Forest, Shannon County