



Four Reasons to Try Maple Sugaring

A new year has arrived, and with it comes the maple sugar season. Here are four reasons to try maple sugaring this year:

1. **Maple syrup** – Need I say more? Once you try real maple syrup, you may never go back to store-bought corn syrup again! Besides syrup, the sap can also be used to make sugar, taffy, butter, hard candy, and more. It takes some work, but the reward is so sweet.
2. **Get outside** – Winter is a season where it's easy to stay in, but being cooped up inside is no fun. Sap flows when the temperatures dip below freezing at night and rise above freezing during the day. Collecting and cooking sap is a perfect reason to be outside on sunny, warm winter days. While you're out, look for animal tracks in fresh snow, or listen for the high-pitched honking of snow geese as they migrate north.
3. **Have fun with your family and friends** – Since Native Americans first learned to make sugar from sap, maple sugaring has been a community activity involving all ages. Kids can help collect the sap, older adults can enjoy socializing around the outdoor stove as they boil the sap down, and everyone gets to enjoy the finished product. Maple sugaring can be your new tradition!
4. **It's good for you** – It's not just the exercise you get from hauling sap around or the physical and mental benefits of being in nature. Maple syrup contains nutrients important for our bodies, including manganese, vitamin B2, zinc, magnesium, calcium, and potassium. Pure maple syrup is 100% natural, contains no coloring or additives, and you'll have the satisfaction of knowing exactly where it came from.

If you're interested in learning more, come to one of the maple sugaring programs at Rockwoods Reservation this month, or the Maple Sugar Festival on February 6. You can also check out the Backyard Guide to Maple Sugaring on MDC's website. We hope you'll discover the rewards of maple sugaring for yourself!

By SARAH PITZER, naturalist

Eagle Days at the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge

Jan 16 and 17 • Saturday and Sunday • 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
(All ages)

Have you ever had the chance to stand in the middle of the Mississippi River and watch an eagle soar overhead? We'd love for you to join us on the historic Old Chain of Rocks Bridge this January, where viewing scopes will be stationed to see close-ups of eagles, nests, and other wildlife. Each fun day will include an educational program presented by The World Bird Sanctuary featuring a live eagle, a hands-on exhibit of local birds, a full-size replica of an eagle's nest, and warming tent activities, including children's crafts. Visitors will also enjoy living history demonstrations of Lewis and Clark at both Missouri and Illinois bridge entrances. Please dress warmly and wear comfortable shoes. No registration required. (For more information call 314-877-1309.)



Jay Henges Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center

1100 Antire Road, High Ridge, MO 63049 • 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.

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

HOURS:

April 1 – November 30
Wednesday: 11 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Thursday and Saturday: 10 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Friday and Sunday: 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

December 1 – March 31
Wednesday – Sunday: 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Programs are free. Call **636-938-9548** or email 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.

Beginning Handgun

Jan 7 • Thursday • 6 – 9 p.m.

(Ages 16 and up)

Looking to start hunting or target shooting with a handgun? This program will include basic handgun operation, shooting fundamentals, safety, maintenance, and safe storage. We start with a classroom session then move to a live-fire session on the range. Although equipment and ammunition will be provided, you may bring your own handgun and ammunition to the live-fire session. Anyone under age 18 must be accompanied by an adult. (Reservations begin Dec 7.)

Predator Calling with the Pro

Jan 12 • Tuesday • 6 – 9 p.m.

(Ages 6 and up)

Join us for a free night with; Knight & Hale, Pro Staff & Champion Caller Keith Wahlig as he discusses and demonstrates calls and sounds used for bringing in these cunning animals. Predator hunting is a great past time and can be done at times of the year when other hunting seasons are not open. Learn more about how to use calls and techniques to prepare for your hunt. (Reservations begin Dec 12.)



Basic Metallic Cartridge Reloading

Jan 14 • Thursday • 5 – 9 p.m.

(Ages 11 and up)

Reloading is a hobby that can bring lots of personal and family satisfaction and enjoyment. It may also save you money on hunting and target ammunition! This class exposes students to the basic fundamentals of metallic cartridge reloading. The class includes discussion and hands-on instruction on safety, case preparation, selection of primers, powder, bullets, and equipment. The class also covers the use of manuals, ballistic tables, and component assembly. Equipment, components, tools, etc. are supplied. (Reservations begin on Dec 14.)

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



Predator Hunting

Jan 13 • Wednesday • 6 – 8 p.m.

(Ages 8 and up)

Join us as we cover all aspects of predator hunting in Missouri, including coyote and bobcats. This class covers the tactics and techniques for hunting these illusive predators. Class will be held at the August A. Busch Conservation Area Regional Office classrooms. (Reservations begin Dec 14.)

Metallic Reloading

Jan 14 • Thursday • 6 – 9 p.m.

(Ages 11 and up)

This class will introduce you to the equipment, materials, and techniques of reloading metallic cartridges, hands-on experience reloading rifle and/or handgun ammunition. This class will be held at the August A. Busch Conservation Area Regional Office classrooms. (Reservations begin Dec 14.)

Shotshell Reloading

Jan 20 • Thursday • 6 – 9 p.m.

(Ages 11 and up)

Here is your opportunity to learn the inexpensive process of reloading shotgun shells using simple equipment. The technique is easy and will save you money over the cost of factory ammunition. This is a hands-on learning class. We will produce quality shotshells with low-cost equipment. You will learn equipment, materials, and techniques used to reload shot shell. This class will be held at the August A. Busch Conservation Area Regional Office classrooms. (Reservations begin Dec 21.)

Intro to Firearms and Firearm Safety

Jan 21 • Thursday • 6 – 9 p.m.

(Ages 8 and up)

This is a basic course on different firearms, actions, and rules for safe gun handling. We will become familiar identifying various types of firearms and ammunition and how they function. Instruction on cleaning and safe storage is also emphasized in this course. This is a good place to start if you are a new gun owner, or just interested in learning about firearms and firearm safety. Class will be held in the Busch Conservation Area Regional Office classrooms. (Reservations begin Dec 21.)



Participants must be accompanied by an adult, or mentor, and be Hunter Education certified. Orange is required. (Reservations begin Dec 30.)



Due to the range closure, all Busch Range programs will be held at the Busch Conservation Area classrooms in the St. Louis Regional Office unless otherwise noted.

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.

Firearm Care and Cleaning

Jan 27 • Wednesday • 6 – 9 p.m.

(Ages 11 and up)

After the hunt, or a day at the range, do you know how to properly clean your firearm? Join our experienced staff as they go over cleaning the different firearm actions, equipment needed, materials, and techniques to keep your firearm in top condition. (Reservations begin Dec 28.)

Youth Rabbit Hunt

Jan 30 • Saturday • 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.

(Ages 11 – 15)

Join us for a rabbit hunt on August A. Busch Conservation Area. We will start in the Regional Office classrooms where we will discuss biology, safety, clothing, firearms, shot size, hunting techniques, and more. The class will head out to the field for an actual rabbit hunt.

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



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.

Wildlife Detectives

Jan 7 • Thursday • 10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
(Ages 7 – 12)

Are you a Sherlock Holmes fan? Do you usually solve the crime before the television detective does? Many of the techniques used by forensic scientists to crack human crimes are also applied by wildlife biologists to solve animal-related incidents. Join us as we explore a few tools that the experts use, such as DNA extraction and various identification techniques. We will also take a hike to see if we can spot some evidence of wildlife ourselves. (Reservations begin Dec 24.)

Owl Prowl

Jan 15 • Friday • 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

(Families, ages 7 and up)

Step into the nocturnal world of owls. Discover what owls eat, and the unique adaptations that owls possess for life at night. Learn about the different species of owls that frequent Missouri, and what makes them special. Explore the night forest as we search for these amazing creatures during an evening of owling. Please come prepared for the weather. (Reservations begin Dec 31.)

Nature's Nook Book Club for Adults

Jan 22 • Friday • 10 – 11:30 a.m.

(Adults)

Join us for our first official adult book club! We will meet monthly to discuss an important work of fiction or non-fiction that is related to our natural world. The title for January is Sue Hubbell's *A Country Year: Living the Questions*. We might make an instant connection with the author, because her book takes place in the Ozarks. So, start reading, and we will see you in January! Light refreshments will be provided. (Reservations begin Jan 8.)

Skeleton Keys

Jan 26 • Tuesday • 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

(Ages 7 and up)

Looking at a skeleton can give you a key to what the animal is and how it lived. See some real skulls and skeletons. Did the animal swim, fly, walk, or slither? Did it eat plants, meat or both? Take a mystery mammal skull through our special question-and-answer maze and "key it out" to find what animal it is. (Reservations begin on Dec 14.)

An Evening with Raptors

Jan 29 • Friday • 7 – 9 p.m.

(All ages)



This is a fun evening for all ages. Join us as we welcome back the Missouri falconers and their hunting partners! Falconry, a sport reported as early as 700 B.C.E., is still practiced today. Learn what falconry is and how to become a falconer. The evening will begin in the auditorium with a presentation on raptors and the art of falconry. Following the presentation you will have an opportunity to "meet and greet" the birds and their hunting partners, and see some of the equipment used in the sport of falconry. Be sure to bring your cameras. (Reservations begin immediately.)

Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center

11715 Cragwold Road, Kirkwood, MO 63122 • mdc.mo.gov/node/271

Volunteer Milestones

Thank You Art!

Art Paule, one of the first volunteers at Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center, has devoted 6500 hours of volunteer service to the Department. Art received a Certificate of our appreciation for his hours and dedication.



Claire Anderson	300 hours
Steve Krchma	750 hours
Catherine Murphy	100 hours
Art Paule	6500 hours
John Sanders	1500 hours
Sandy Stevenson	100 hours
Jean Marie Themes	100 hours

Forest Park Office

5595 Grand Drive, St. Louis, MO 63112 • mdc.mo.gov/node/10254

Eagles and Owls

Jan 10 • Sunday • 3 – 5 p.m.

(Ages 8 and up)

At the top of the food chain are eagles and owls. Discover what makes these predators so successful. Both raptors are master flyers, exuding stealth and grace, yet can be as different as night and day. In addition to learning about our national symbol, the bald eagle, we'll hike to nearby resident owl habitat. This program will be both in and outdoors. Please dress for the weather. Meet at the Dennis & Judith Jones Visitor and Education Center. (Reservations begin Dec 7.)



Eagle Days at the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge

Jan 16 and 17 • Saturday and Sunday • 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

(All ages)

Have you ever had the chance to stand in the middle of the Mississippi River and watch an eagle soar overhead? We'd love for you to join us on the historic Old Chain of Rocks Bridge this January, where viewing scopes will be stationed

to see close-ups of eagles, nests, and other wildlife. Each fun day will include an educational program presented by The World Bird Sanctuary featuring a live eagle, a hands-on exhibit of local birds, a full-size replica of an eagle's nest, and warming tent activities, including children's crafts. Visitors will also enjoy living history demonstrations of Lewis and Clark at both MO and IL bridge entrances. Please dress warmly and wear comfortable shoes. No reservations required.



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.

Columbia Bottom Conservation Area

801 Strodtman Road, St. Louis, MO 63138 • 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.



Eagle Days/Winter Wonders

Jan 16 and 17 • Saturday and Sunday • 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

(All ages)

Eagles Days are here and with the phenomenal flyers comes a host of sights and sounds to make you wonder. How many will we see today? What brings them here? How do they stay warm? Join us at our scopes overlooking the Confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. We are just three miles north of the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge. So, visit us too for another perspective on these Winter Wonders. Make a right onto Columbia Bottom Conservation Area. Follow our main road for 4 ½ miles to parking lot N. We are 200 yards from the parking area. ADA accessible. (No reservations required.)

Frosty Photos

Jan 20 • Wednesday • 10 a.m. – noon

(All ages)

Winter brings cold weather and snowy days, but it also offers sites best captured in a picture. From ice crystals on a sycamore tree to majestic trumpeter swans, there is no shortage of inspiration. We will start our session indoors to go over some beginner tips and tricks of photography. We will then venture out on the area to find some winter muses. Bring any camera you would like, and come dressed for the weather. (Reservations begin Jan 6.)



Volunteer Milestones

Pat Behle

4,000 hours

August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area

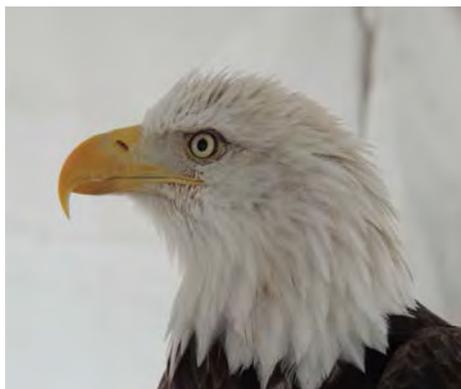
2360 Hwy D, St. Charles, MO 63304 • mdc.mo.gov/node/300

Regal Eagles

Jan 5 • Tuesday • 9:30 – 11 a.m.

(Ages 6 – 12)

Eagles are some of the most majestic of all birds. In Missouri the bald eagle is becoming more common and golden eagles are sometimes seen. The return of nesting bald eagles to Missouri is an amazing story of conservation in action. January is a prime month to see bald eagles with nearly 3,000 of them spending the winter in our state. Learn about these awesome birds and where you might be able to see them in the wild. (Reservations begin Dec 21.)



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.

Hike Dresser Island

Jan 9 • Saturday • 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

(Adults)

Where is a place in winter you can hike along a big river and see pelicans, ducks, geese, eagles, hawks, gulls, herons, muskrat houses, beaver lodges, many small birds, and possibly trumpeter swans? It's Dresser Island, located near West Alton in St. Charles County. Join us for a 6 ½ mile hike to look for wildlife along the Mississippi River and enjoy the seasonal scenery our big rivers offer. The level of difficulty varies. When dry, the trail offers a moderate hike. With ice, snow, or wet conditions the hike can be strenuous. There is also an option for a 3 mile hike. For video go to <http://mdc.mo.gov/media/video/dresser-island-hike> (Reservations begin Dec 23.)



Sketch, Doodle, Paint, and More at Riverlands!

Jan 13 • Wednesday • 9 a.m. – noon

(Adults)

Sketch, paint, and explore your way at Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary with the Nature Journaling Group! First stop is the Audubon Visitor Center where the indoor displays and outdoor inhabitants of Ellis Bay inspire your journaling. Next, visit various locations within the sanctuary such as Teal Pond and Lock and Dam 26. With some luck, we'll see bald eagles, trumpeter swans, white pelicans and more! Audubon of Missouri will provide scopes for viewing in the Ellis Bay area. This program is led by Missouri Department of Conservation Volunteers from August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area. For directions go to [Audubon at Riverlands](#). (Reservations begin Dec 16.)

Rockwoods Reservation

2751 Glencoe Road, Wildwood, MO 63038 • 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.

Regal Eagles

Jan 7 • Thursday • 9:30 – 11 a.m.
(Ages 6 – 12)

Eagles are some of the most majestic of all birds. In Missouri the bald eagle is becoming more common and golden eagles are sometimes seen. The return of nesting bald eagles to Missouri is an amazing story of conservation in action. January is a prime month to see bald eagles, with nearly 3,000 of them spending the winter in our state. Come learn about these awesome birds and where you might be able to see them in the wild. (Reservations begin Dec 23.)

Backyard Maple Sugaring – Landowner Workshop

Jan 28 • Thursday • 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
or
Jan 30 • Saturday • 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
(Adults)

Do you have maple trees? Do you love maple syrup? This workshop will teach you how to develop your own backyard maple syrup operation. We cover everything from tree identification to cooking. Portions of the program are outside, so please dress for the weather. (Reservations begin Jan 14.)

Backyard Maple Sugaring – Homeschool Families

Jan 29 • Friday • 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
(Families)

Maple sugaring is here and it's time to tap the trees! Make maple syrup fun for your family, even with just one or two trees at home. Learn about sugar maple trees, how to tap trees, and turn sap into syrup. (Reservations begin Jan 15.)



Save the Date

Maple Sugar Festival

Feb 6 • Saturday • 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
(All Ages)

It's maple sugar time! Venture outdoors to Rockwoods Reservation and experience conservation success and forest resources at their finest - and sweetest! Visit the Sugar Bush to see trees tapped and collect the precious sap. Boil the sap down like Colonial Americans at the Three Kettle Station, and see a more modern method at the Sugar Shed. Taste delicious syrup, sugar on snow taffy, and pure maple sugar. More importantly, learn to do all of this right in your own backyard. It's a day your whole family will enjoy. (No reservations necessary. Parking will be available at Rockwoods Reservation and off-site via a shuttle bus.)