

Nature Connections

News and Events from the Missouri Department of Conservation • November/December 2015



As 2015 draws toward an end, so does the way we have come to know the Shepherd of the Hills Conservation Center in Branson. Ahead in 2016, the beginning of a new, exciting chapter filled with wonder and anticipation will begin as we break ground on a new nature center. Earlier this year, the Conservation Commission voted to approve the design of a new nature center at the Missouri Department of Conservation's (MDC) largest trout hatchery. Work on this project is already underway and as the architects wrap up the design phase, we draw closer to breaking ground in 2016. Construction is expected to last 18 months with good weather and the new nature center could open in late 2017.

The new *Shepherd of the Hills Conservation Nature Center* will be approximately 11,000 square feet and include two classrooms, an auditorium, and new exhibits, as well as offices and work stations to house staff from the Outreach and Education, Forestry, and Fisheries divisions. It will be located at the east end of the current visitor parking lot. In addition, the more than 20 volunteers—who truly are the backbone of the current facility and help deliver countless programs, greet visitors, and give hatchery tours—will also call this new nature center home.

Each year, more than 300,000 visitors come to the hatchery to see where more than 1.2 million trout are raised annually, making Missouri a great place to fish. Now visitors will have a new Discover Nature experience to enhance their learning at the hatchery and no one is happier to see this happen than Interpretive Center Manager John Miller.

"I have been here since 1999 and this is by far the most exciting thing to happen during my tenure," says Miller. "For years, our staff and volunteers have been hoping this day would come and now that it's here, we are ecstatic about the opportunities it will offer to the public and how it will help them connect with nature."

Designed with MDC's Discover Nature Schools program in mind, the new nature center will provide a portal to allow students to connect with nature not only throughout the building, but also in a way that encourages learning by having students get out on the trails, fish the newly constructed Belladonna Aquatic Education Pond, and tour the hatchery itself. According to John Miller, students and teachers alike will greatly benefit from the new nature center. "With the design of the new building, exhibits, and the learning opportunities outside, students will be able to put to use the hands-on training they have received at school by conducting student-led activities which help them gain a better understanding of nature and the role it plays in forming the Ozarks landscape."



If you're a teacher and would like to learn more about Discover Nature Schools including great educational materials and transportation grant opportunities, go to mdc.mo.gov/node/9019 for more information. The Conservation Department has something to offer students of all ages to get them immersed in nature.

In the months ahead, there will be many changes taking place at the hatchery. Right now, it's too early to tell how construction will impact operations as well as visitation and the delivery of programs at the current facility. So we're asking you to have patience during our growing pains and to stay connected with us through this newsletter and online so you can see firsthand as the changes are taking place. Once construction is underway, you will be able to follow this project as it unfolds by going to our website at mdc.mo.gov/node/290.

—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



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.

JOPLIN OFFICE HOURS:

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

AUDUBON CENTER HOURS:

Tuesday–Saturday: 9 AM–5 PM
Sunday: 1–5 PM (March–October)

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.

January Events

Kids' Christmas Bird Count

January 2 • Saturday • 9 AM–1 PM

Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center (Joplin)

Registration required, call 417-782-6287 (ages 7–17)

Kids, enjoy a morning just for you and the birds. Discover the excitement of bird watching in the tradition of the annual *Christmas Bird Count*. Participants will learn birding and binocular basics in the classroom before heading outside for the bird count. Experienced birders from the Ozark Gateway Audubon Society Chapter, Missouri Audubon, and staff will lead mentored birding experiences with the participants. The morning will end with a tally of total birds observed and a special thanks to the Ozark Gateway Audubon Society for providing awards and lunch for all. Remember to dress for the weather and be prepared for a hike rated moderate in difficulty.



November and December Events

Trapping Basics

November 2 • Monday • 6:30–8:30 PM
Walter Woods Conservation Area (Joplin)
Registration required (ages 8–adult)

Learn the basic methods of trapping on land and in water. Participants will have the opportunity to learn how equipment is used and the best methods for making a quick, clean catch. Discover how you can start creating your own family trapping traditions!

Basic Handgun For Women

November 18 • Wednesday • 6–9 PM AND
November 21 • Saturday • 1–3 PM
Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center (Joplin)

Registration required (women ages 18–adult)

This is a two-part introduction to handgun safety course designed for women to get a hands-on outdoor skills lesson in handgun shooting. In the classroom, participants will learn basic handgun safety, shooting techniques, equipment, and more. A mentored shooting practice session at an area range will complete the lesson. All firearms and ammunition will be provided.

Tree Pruning Workshop

November 23 • Monday • 6:30–8 PM
Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center (Joplin)
Registration is not required but is requested (ages 16–adult)

Properly guiding a young tree with pruning will help it develop a desirable shape and improve long-term health. Classes will cover basic tree biology, why to prune trees, and proper pruning techniques. Older trees often only need light pruning to remove dead branches and poor structure. Learn the difference by attending one of the *Tree Pruning Workshops* listed below near you.

Short-eared Owl Hike

December 11 • Friday • 4:30–6 PM
Shawnee Trail Conservation Area (near Mindenmines)
Registration required (ages 8–adult)

It's winter in Missouri and short-eared owls may be seen flying low over native grasslands in search of mice, rabbits, and other small mammals. Come join us to discover more about these uncommon winter residents! Bring the family and dress for the weather for this hike rated moderate in difficulty.

Area Tree Pruning Workshops

No registration required (ages 16–adult)

November 9 • Monday • 6:30–8:30 PM
Cedar County Family Clinic, 807 Owen Mill Road (Stockton)

November 12 • Thursday • 9–11 AM
Cassville Council Chambers, 300 Main Street, enter through Council Chambers' door on the north side of building (Cassville)

November 14 • Saturday • 9–11 AM
Hosted by the Missouri Community Forestry Council in Parr Hill Park, 1640 E. 15th Street (Joplin)

November 21 • Saturday • 10 AM–12 NOON
Hosted by the Carthage Tree Board in Central Park, South Garrison Ave (Carthage)

December 5 • Saturday • 10 AM–12 NOON
Neosho Forestry Office, 1510 South Business Highway 49 (Neosho)

Master Naturalist Training–Public Interest Meeting

January 4 • Monday • 6:30–8:30 PM

Walter Woods Conservation Area (Joplin)

Registration required (ages 18–adult)

Come discover how Missouri Master Naturalists mix science with service. This orientation meeting is for individuals interested in joining the local conservation service chapter. Master Naturalists are given special training regarding nature in the region where chapters are based. Members volunteer at public events, conduct education demonstrations, participate in field trips, and hold social events tied to a shared love of nature. To become a certified Master Naturalist, participants must complete an initial training course and complete eight hours of advanced training. They must also contribute 40 hours of natural resource-related volunteer service through the local chapter.

Andy Dalton Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center

4897 N. Farm Road 61, Ash Grove, MO 65604 • mdc.mo.gov/node/288



Fantastic Furbearers

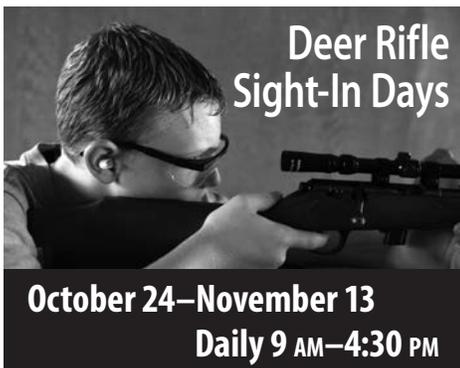
The base of the big oak tree would do. I sat down, steadied my rifle with one hand and grasped the worn call with my other. A few distress sounds from the call and I slowly let it rest at the end of the lanyard. The creature moved quickly, seemingly outpacing the sound it made running through the leaves. It closed the distance from the cedar gap to the open timber quickly. Now only a dozen yards separated us. My mind caught up and I was able to identify the predator. It was a coyote! Smashing my cheek on the stock and pulling the rifle firmly into my shoulder, I caught the coyote's attention. It stopped and I squeezed the trigger. BOOM! My heart raced and the adrenaline of the moment kept me from standing.

Hunting and trapping for furbearers can be exciting. From calling wildlife to scraping hides, pursuing furbearers takes skill, knowledge, and even some grit. For me, pursuing furbearers in January after many of the "major" seasons are over is when I enjoy going. While there's nothing like being in the outdoors in deep winter when conditions can be tough, the trade-offs are worth it. And, like the furbearers, those pursuing them must also brave the elements. Even the harvest is a little different. While the fact is many furbearers—when properly prepared—make delicious table fare, it is the animal's pelt that should not be wasted. Always utilizing the natural resources, the prized pelt in the story above was tanned and the story of the hunt lives on. Biologically speaking, removing excess predators from an area can help other wildlife populations and even benefit humans. Healthy furbearer populations are less likely to develop and spread diseases, some of which are harmful to humans, and hunting and trapping are key to maintaining those healthy populations.

The best news is hunters and trappers do not have to wait until January to take part in Missouri's furbearer season. In fact, the season starts November 15. (See the *2015 Fall Deer & Turkey Hunting Regulations and Information* booklet for special regulations regarding hunting coyotes during firearms deer season.) Several hunting methods exist for furbearers including archery, muzzleloader, shotgun, rifle, and pistol. This means those wishing to hunt furbearers seldom have to add more than a call to their supplies. Trapping may require a bit more as far as supplies go, but I've seen trappers eagerly open their barn or shed to share traps and knowledge on the subject with someone wanting to get started.

Add some excitement to your life this winter by viewing, trapping, or hunting furbearers. You might just find a closer connection to the land and the resources than you ever knew existed.

—Greg Collier, *Outdoor Skills Specialist*



Deer Rifle Sight-In Days

October 24–November 13
Daily 9 AM–4:30 PM

No registration required and regular range usage fees apply

Hours are extended and days added for deer hunters to have the opportunity to bring their favorite deer rifles to sight them in. Taking time to sight-in firearms helps ensure a quick, clean kill and reduces wounding loss. This also provides an opportunity for quality family time and honing shooting skills. If you have not been to the range, take a few minutes and review the range procedure video online at mdc.mo.gov/node/25379.



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 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



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:

November 1–February 29

Building: Tuesday–Saturday: 8 AM–5 PM
Closed Sunday and Monday

Trails: Sunday–Saturday: 8 AM–6 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.

Building, area, and trails closed:

November 26 • Thanksgiving
December 25 • Christmas
January 1 • New Year's Day

Temporary Exhibit

November • **A Botanical Year In The Ozarks**
Original Illustrations by Linda Ellis

Project Feeder Watch

Tuesdays and Wednesdays • 9 AM–3 PM • November 10/11 and 24/25
December 8/9 and 22/23 • January 12/13 and 26/27
February 9/10 and 23/24 • March 8/9 and 22/23

Drop by and help volunteer naturalists count birds in our Wildlife Viewing Area. The nature center participates every November–March in this winter-long survey of birds sponsored by Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Bird Studies Canada. Learn how you can participate too!



November Events

Badge Bonanza

November 10 • Tuesday • 6:30–8 PM
Registration begins October 15 (ages 6–adult)
Attention all scouting and youth organizations! You won't want to miss this program on birds that will help you earn nature badges. We'll play some games and do fun activities that will help you learn about bird migration and identification. Program is also open to the public.

Story Time With Ms. Ladybug

November 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 Nature Fishing Lecture Series Muskie Management And Fishing Techniques

November 11 • Wednesday • 7–8:30 PM
Registration begins October 15 (ages 7–adult)
Come learn about fishing for the elusive muskellunge right in Missouri. You don't have to travel more than a few miles to fish for trophy muskies. Conservation Department biologist Dave Woods and members of the *Muskies, Inc.* fishing club will explain Missouri's muskellunge program, fishing techniques, places to fish, and tips for practicing catch-and-release with these toothy creatures.

Hiking Club

November 14 • Saturday • 8:30 AM–4 PM
Registration begins November 3 (ages 18–adult)
Explore the Homesteaders Trail on the Henning Conservation Area with Volunteer Naturalist Sandy Vaughn. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Bring a sack lunch and water and wear comfortable hiking shoes. **Hike is approximately four miles and rated moderate to difficult.**

For Adults Only

Dutch Oven Cooking 101

November 14 • Saturday • 9 AM–12 NOON
Registration begins November 3 (ages 18–adult)
Learn the basics of Dutch oven cooking to amaze your family and friends with delicious, easy-to-cook meals. After a brief session on basics, the rest of the workshop will involve hands-on learning and tasting.

Dutch Oven Cooking 101 For Women

November 14 • Saturday • 1–4 PM
Registration begins November 3 (women and girls ages 14–17 accompanied by adult female)
Learn the basics of Dutch oven cooking to amaze your family and friends with delicious, easy-to-cook meals. After a brief session on basics, the rest of the workshop will involve hands-on learning and tasting.

Feral Hogs–Missouri Menace

November 19 • Thursday • 7–8 PM
Registration begins November 3 (ages 12–adult)
Conservation Department Wildlife Damage Biologist James Dixon returns to share information about one of the biggest threats to wildlife and agriculture in Missouri—the feral hog. Learn the history of this illegally introduced species and the latest measures, including technology, that are being taken to eradicate them.

Winter Tree ID

November 21 • Saturday • 9–11 AM
Registration begins November 3 (ages 12–adult)
Identifying trees in winter requires know-how and an eye for detail. Dress for the outdoors as Volunteer Naturalist Earl Niewald helps you get to know trees without their leaves.

Beginner Archery

November 21 • Saturday • 9–10:30 AM or 10:30 AM–12 NOON
Registration begins November 3 (ages 8–adult)
You don't have to be a hunter to become a skilled archer. Learn a new skill and spend time practicing. No experience is necessary and archery equipment will be provided. This program takes place in our Outdoor Classroom which is not ADA accessible.

Conservation Kids' Club A Whale Of A Tale

November 24 • Tuesday • 6:30–7:45 PM
Registration begins November 3 (ages 7–12)
Join us for an interactive evening of storytelling and fun. Learn how our ancestors used stories to entertain and to explain the natural world around them, hear a few stories, and stretch your imagination as you create your own animal tale. Please, no younger siblings and only one adult per group of kids.

Discovery Table: Let's Talk Turkey

November 27 • Friday • 1–4 PM
No registration required (all ages)
Drop by for a closer look at turkeys.

Ozark Whittlers & Woodcarvers

November 28 • Saturday • 1–4 PM
No registration required (all ages)
Stop by to see members of the Ozark Whittlers & Woodcarvers transform wood into treasures.

Little Acorns programs are listed on page 5.

Springfield Conservation Nature Center

4601 S. Nature Center Way, Springfield, MO 65804 • mdc.mo.gov/node/287

December Events

Discover Nature Fishing Lecture Series Alternative Fishing Techniques

December 3 • Thursday • 7–8:30 PM

Registration begins November 17 (ages 7–adult)

Everyone knows you can catch fish with a hook and line, but did you know there are many other methods? Come learn about a variety of alternative fishing methods from Conservation Department staff Shane Bush, Andy Cornforth, and Andy Humble. Discussion topics will include catching catfish with trotlines, limblines and jugs, paddlefish snagging, and gigging for suckers.

Nature And The Arts 40 Years Of Wilderness Photography With Tim Ernst

December 4 • Friday • 5–6 PM or 7–8 PM

Registration begins November 17 (ages 12–adult)

Enjoy the scenic photography of nationally known nature photographer Tim Ernst as he returns to share images set to music from his latest publication, *A Rare Quality of Light—40 Years of Wilderness Photography*. See stunning images that will leave you inspired to explore the natural beauty of the Buffalo National River area, the Ozarks, and areas beyond. Tim will be available for a book signing from 6–7pm and 8–9pm.

Evening Stroll

December 4 • Friday • 6–9 PM

No registration required (all ages)

You've seen the fancy flashing light displays all over town—now come out for a quieter, old-fashioned holiday evening. Enjoy a crackling fire, sip hot chocolate, and browse through the gift shop and exhibits when you come indoors to get warm. The trails will be open and patrolled, so bring a flashlight and a walking partner because you're on your own.

Overnight Backpacking For Women

Leave • December 5 • Saturday • 8 AM

Return • December 6 • Sunday • 4 PM

Registration begins November 17 (women and girls ages 14–17 accompanied by adult female)

Experience backpacking and camping at Paddy Creek Wilderness with Volunteer Naturalist Carmen Hallock. Pack and carry your own gear, food, and water. A gear list will be sent after registering. Hike 5 miles on day one, stop to camp, and then hike 3 miles on day two. Meet at the nature center and carpool.

Conservation TEEN Club: Shooting 22s

December 5 • Saturday • 9 AM–12 NOON

Registration begins November 17 (ages 12–17)

Learn how to shoot 22-caliber rifles at the Andy Dalton Shooting Range at the Bois D'Arc Conservation Area. After classroom discussion, it is out to the range to practice and test your skills. So whether you're a beginner or an expert shot, meet at the range and enjoy the fun! Refreshments will be provided.

Conservation Kids' Club Holiday Crafts For Kids

December 8 • Tuesday • 6–8 PM

Registration begins November 17 (ages 7–12)

Hey, kids! Here's your chance to make some presents out of natural and recycled items just in time for the holidays. Drop by anytime and plan to spend at least an hour during this special meeting date and time. Bring a colorful mismatched sock, a glass jar, a sack to carry your crafts, and lots of creativity. All other items will be provided. Please, no younger siblings and only one adult per group of kids.

Story Time With Ms. Ladybug

December 9 • 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.

Natural Holiday Crafts

December 12 • Saturday • 10 AM–3 PM

No registration required (all ages)

Stop by anytime to make some simple holiday crafts from natural and recycled materials. We'll supply the materials, kids bring the creativity, and parents provide the guidance.

Conservation TEEN Club Year-End Review

December 17 • Thursday • 7–8:30 PM

Registration begins December 1 (ages 12–17)

Join us as we celebrate the close of another successful year of TEEN Club. After viewing photos of the year's outings, we'll enjoy cake and vote on possible TEEN Club outings for 2016. Prospective and current members ages 12–17 and their families are welcome to attend.

Hiking Club

December 19 • Saturday • 8:30 AM–5 PM

Registration begins December 1 (ages 18–adult)

Volunteer Naturalist Mike Mihalik leads this six-mile hike at Bennett Spring State Park. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Bring a sack lunch and water and wear comfortable hiking shoes. **Trail is rated as moderate to difficult.**

Winter Bird Walk

December 29 • Tuesday • 11 AM–12 NOON

No registration required (ages 7–adult)

Dress warmly and join us for a winter bird walk. Bring binoculars and a bird field guide if you have them.

Animal Bingo

December 29 • Tuesday • 1–2 PM

No registration required (ages 5–adult)

Put your nature knowledge to task as you and your family participate in *Animal Bingo*.

Toddler Tales

December 30 • Wednesday • 11–11:45 AM

No registration required (ages 2–6)

Bring your tots to hear a special tale about nature and to complete a craft project.

Snakes Of Missouri

December 30 • Wednesday • 1–2 PM

No registration required (ages 5–adult)

Sometimes they startle us, but snakes always fascinate us. Learn about this often misunderstood reptile, see snakes up close, and even touch one!

Please limit to one per month.

Little Acorns

Programs are 45 minutes in length.

November Events

Registration begins November 3 (ages 3–6)

Foxes In The Fields And Forests

November 12 • Thursday • 11 AM or 1:30 PM

Which fox lives in the fields? Which lives in the forests? Pounce on this program to find out facts about fox families. Make a fox "face" to take home.

Wonderful Whitetails

November 20 • Friday • 11 AM or 1:30 PM

November 21 • Saturday • 11 AM

We all know Bambi but what do you know about real deer? Where do they live? What do they eat? Come in for some antler-related antics and learn some of the wonders of the whitetails.

Turkey Talk

November 25 • Wednesday • 11 AM or 1:30 PM

Where do wild turkeys live and what do they eat? Which turkeys have beards? What sounds do they make? We'll discover the answers to these questions and more. Gobble! Gobble!

December Events

Winter Woodpeckers

December 4 • Friday • 11 AM or 1:30 PM

December 5 • Saturday • 11 AM

Registration begins November 17 (ages 3–6)

Many birds fly south seeking warmer weather in the winter, but not Missouri's wonderful woodpeckers. Fly on in to learn more about these "hardheaded" birds and how to attract them to your yard during the cold winter months.

Wily Coyote

December 10 • Thursday • 11 AM or 1:30 PM

December 19 • Saturday • 11 AM

Registration begins December 1 (ages 3–6)

Howl like a coyote and hear some coyote folklore. Learn why the cunning nature of this animal has earned it the nickname "trickster."

Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery and Conservation Center

483 Hatchery Road, Branson, MO 65616 • 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.

November and December Events

Bird Feeder Workshop

November 22 • Sunday • 2–3:30 PM

Registration required (families, ages 5 and up)

This is our annual woodworking workshop in which families get to make and take home their own wooden bird feeder. In addition to going step-by-step making the feeders, you will also learn the best seed to attract the birds and a few tips on discouraging squirrels. Only one feeder per family and each family must make their own reservation. Bring a hammer.

Nature Ornaments

December 12 • Saturday • 9:30–11:30 AM

Registration required (families, ages 5 and up)

Here is your chance to make unique ornaments for windows, holiday trees, or indoor decorations. There will be a variety of nature-related ornaments for each person to make. These will include clear globes with fishing lures, snowflake animals, origami butterflies, and snowy owls made from pine cones. This activity will help you to find creative ways to enjoy nature throughout the holidays.

Ask the Naturalist:

Our staff was recently asked about the winters in southwest Missouri and one question in particular was “What do snakes do in winter?” For most people, winter provides a much needed break from

mosquitoes, chiggers, and ticks. For others, not seeing snakes is both good and bad.

The main reason why we rarely see snakes in the winter, or other reptiles for that matter, is because they are considered to be ectothermic, sometimes referred to as “cold-blooded.” Ectothermic means they maintain stable body temperature by using their surroundings (sun, cave, water, rocks, shade) instead of generating their own heat or sweating to cool off. Snakes go underground in the heat of the summer and also go underground to escape freezing temperatures in the coldest months. Just like humans, if they get too cold they could die.

Going underground in the winter does not mean the snakes are inactive. Technically, reptiles do not hibernate. Instead, they undergo a much simpler process called overwintering. Unlike hibernation which involves several metabolic changes over several weeks, overwintering animals like reptiles can raise or lower their activity in response to changes in their surroundings. Recent research with massasauga rattlesnakes in northwest Missouri shows that they can be active all year. We are learning more about overwintering snakes in that they move and drink water more than we expected. It has also been found that some well-established overwintering locations can have more than one species together in the den. While snakes may use winter as a vacation, they are definitely not inactive.

So, while it is very unlikely to see snakes in the snow or on a cold day, don't be surprised if on an unusually warm winter day you see a snake peeking out of its overwintering hole. Like you, it is waiting for the warmer spring and summer days to get out and enjoy the natural world.

—John Miller, Interpretive Center Manager

What do snakes do in winter?



A massasauga rattlesnake can be active all year.

Southwest Regional Office

2630 N. Mayfair Avenue, Springfield, MO 65803 • mdc.mo.gov/node/257

Fur Trapping And Conservation



Beaver trapped in 1951.

Missouri has a strong tradition of conservation. Since citizens established the Department of Conservation in 1937, we have seen the restoration of a number of species that were once uncommon. It's hard to believe that deer and turkey, mostly absent from the Ozarks less than 100 years ago, are now harvested in abundance. Today, the majority of Missourians understand that conservation is about the wise use of our natural resources. This "wise use" includes harvesting wildlife in a manner which is sustainable long term. This includes hunting and fishing, but some Missourians might be surprised to know that the Department also regulates and advocates the trapping of furbearers (mammals that are harvested primarily for their fur). This includes raccoons, beavers, otters, foxes, muskrats, coyotes, and a few other mammals. Here are some of the reasons why furbearer trapping is considered wise conservation: it uses a

renewable resource, helps manage populations, and is humane.

Renewable resources are those that can be harvested again and again with proper management. We are used to thinking this way about some resources, such as trees in a forest or fish from a lake. However, many people do not realize that furbearers can also be harvested in a renewable manner. The number of trapping permits sold and animals harvested are monitored by the Department. If a population of animals cannot sustain harvest, strict limits may be placed upon trappers or a particular season may be closed altogether. This tactic has been used to help restore river otters to Missouri and was once used to limit the take of bobcats. Both those species are currently abundant and harvest is encouraged. As further proof of the sustainability of trapping, each year about 100,000 raccoons are harvested by trappers, and the raccoon population continues to increase overall.

Trapping also helps manage populations of animals that may easily become overabundant. Not many hunters are interested in harvesting muskrats, beavers, or coyotes. But, left unchecked, these animals will thrive in rural, and sometimes even urban, environments to the point they conflict with human activities. Trapping is a tool we depend on to harvest many species which would otherwise be difficult to control. It allows a limited number of these animals to be harvested which will quickly be replaced by those born in the spring of the following year.

Trapping, as it is practiced in Missouri, is also a humane activity. Traps which cause unnecessary pain and damage to wildlife, such as traps with jagged teeth in the jaws, are not legal in this state. The law also requires all trappers to check their traps at least once every 24 hours and release or harvest any trapped wildlife. Of course, as with hunting or fishing, occasionally a captured animal may suffer more damage than intended, but our regulations are crafted to minimize such occurrences.

Furbearer trapping is not practiced widely as it once was, and it can be difficult to find a mentor to show you the ropes. The Department of Conservation offers workshops in the fall to teach you everything you need to know to get started with trapping for sport.

—James Dixon, Wildlife Damage Biologist



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
Springfield Conservation Nature Center	November 6 • Friday • 6–10 PM
	December 11 • Friday • 6–10 PM

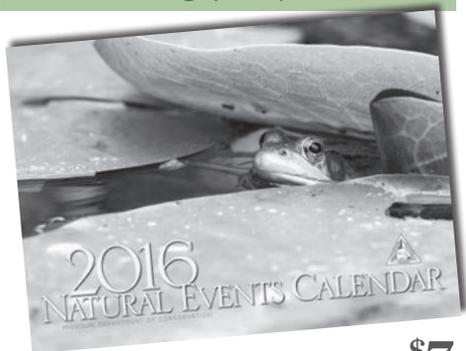
Skills Sessions

Location	Date/Time
Springfield Conservation Nature Center	November 7 • Saturday • 8 AM–12 NOON OR 1–5 PM
	December 12 • Saturday • 8 AM–12 NOON OR 1–5 PM
Andy Dalton Shooting Range	November 7 • Saturday • 8 AM–12 NOON
	December 5 • Saturday • 8 AM–12 NOON
Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center	November 3 • Tuesday • 6–10 PM
	December 7 • Monday • 6–10 PM

Reminder

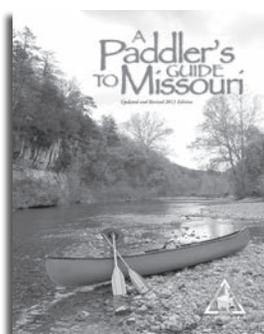
Hunter Education certification has two parts: knowledge and skills. You must complete and pass **BOTH** sessions to earn your certificate. For more information on Hunter Education, contact your local Missouri Department of Conservation office or visit the Conservation Department website at on.mo.gov/1JkL7uU.

Give the gift of nature!



\$7

This calendar will keep you in touch with the year's seasonal changes. Daily notes keep you posted on what's blooming or nesting and other natural phenomena.

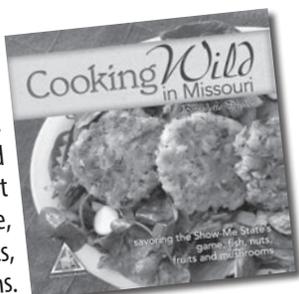


\$8

Discover Missouri's rivers and streams. This publication features 58 rivers and streams to canoe and kayak.

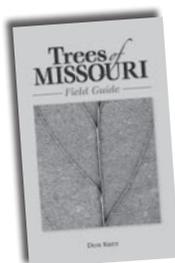
\$15

More than 100 delicious, kitchen-tested recipes highlight Missouri's game, fish, nuts, fruits, and mushrooms.



This publication is 20% off in November and December.

Heritage card discount does not apply



Use these easy-to-carry field guides to start identifying trees, shrubs, and woody vines in your yard,



neighborhood, or out in the wild.

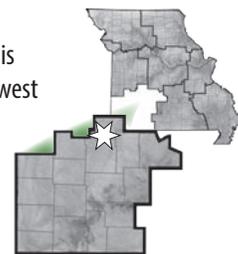
\$7.50 each

Available at the Springfield Conservation Nature Center and Southwest Regional Office

Conservation Showcase:

Murphy State Forest And Wildlife Area

LOCATION: The John F. Murphy Memorial State Forest and Wildlife Area or Murphy State Forest and Wildlife Area, as it is more commonly referred to, is located in west central Hickory County, ½ mile east of Wheatland, 4 miles west of Hermitage, and 28 miles north of Bolivar. Main access to the area is directly off of Highway 54 east of Wheatland where there is a parking lot and small storage building. There is also a small access to walk into the area along the eastern side, north off of Highway 54, on an unmarked county road.



HISTORY: The Conservation Department acquired the original 215 acres for the John F. Murphy Memorial State Forest and Wildlife Area in 1981 from a generous donation by Mr. Murphy himself. Mr. Murphy was an avid conservationist who had worked at the Hickory County Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) office for a number of years. Throughout his tenure with the ASCS, he had a close association with several farm foresters and conservation agents in the area. This led him to bequeath his land to the Conservation Commission—"so long as it is used by it, or its successors, for limited public and/or conservation uses to the extent that the resources thereon can support such use." An additional 110-acre tract was purchased from Phyllis A. Hudson in 1990 using Conservation Commission funds bringing the area to the present acreage of 325.

Historical records show that the Cross Timbers (to Quincy) Spur Road of the Old Butterfield State Coach Line curved up the southwest portion of the original tract. According to local stories, passengers took refuge in the caves on this area during bad storms. Another legend tells that during the Civil War, an underground railroad to help slaves escape to freedom up north passed through this area. A two-story house just north of the area, locally referred to as "The Mansion," was used as a refuge for the slaves on their journey. The slaves reportedly hid out in caves during raids and in other times of danger.

Murphy State Forest and Wildlife Area contains many excellent examples of limestone-dolomite forest, woodland, and glade natural communities, and caves, sinkholes, and small springs. All caves on this and other Conservation Areas are currently closed or restricted to public access. The fungus that causes White-nose Syndrome in bats was found in Missouri in 2010, resulting in the Missouri Department of Conservation's (MDC) White-nose Syndrome Action Plan that limits public access to protect bats. Deer, turkey, raccoon, squirrel, rabbit, coyote, and many other small animals and birds are commonly seen from the wooded trails.

HUNTING AND TRAPPING: Murphy State Forest and Wildlife Area is open to statewide regulations for hunting deer and turkey. Trapping on the area is allowed by requesting and obtaining a Special Use Permit from the area manager. Wildlife habitat management includes the creation of watering ponds and manipulation of fields within the area to provide supplemental food sources. Timber stand improvement and prescribed burning are also important elements in the habitat management of the area. These practices aim to promote plant species diversity in each natural community found on the area, providing the quality habitat that many wildlife species require in their life cycle. Murphy State Forest and Wildlife Area's reasonable size and good habitat make for good hunting and trapping opportunities while you enjoy the sights and sounds of the area.

CAMPING AND HIKING: There are multiple areas designated for primitive camping. Camping is allowed by requesting and obtaining a Special Use Permit from the area manager.

There are over 4 miles of trails available to explore by means of hiking. Trails vary in distance and in difficulty so there will likely be one that meets your preference. Trail maps are not currently available on-site or online, but may be obtained by contacting the MDC Bolivar Office at 417-326-5189. For more information on the John F. Murphy Memorial State Forest and Wildlife Area, visit the Missouri Department of Conservation website at <mdc.mo.gov/node/a8130>.

—Brice Kelso, Resource Forester