

## Glaciers Created Illinois' Diverse Landscape

By Jenny Garver

Our world is an amazing place. It constantly changes and adapts over time. At first glance, Illinois appears to be a rather flat and boring landscape. With a closer look though, we see that it is constantly undergoing geological, geographical, and temporal changes. A study of Illinois' geology reveals that it has gone from a tropical sea, to a mixture of tropical forest and coal swamp, followed by an icy terrain that carved what we encounter today.

The most impactful event that happened to Illinois was glaciation. Several glacial advances covered nearly 90% of Illinois at least once over the last two million years. Macon County experienced at least three glacial advances, but areas like Galena and portions of Southern Illinois escaped these geological events. Glaciers are like huge rivers of ice. They move

very slowly under the intense pressure of their own weight. They would have ranged from 700 to 2,000 feet thick. Only two buildings in the world are taller than this. The weight of the ice carved away geological evidence of the dinosaurs and changed the landscape of Illinois forever. Approximately 12,000 years ago, the glaciers receded and new ecosystems formed from the barren landscape. Illinois is not just corn and beans, it is made up of forest, grassland, rivers, lakes, and so much more.

Learn more about the geology of Illinois in our new temporary exhibit at Rock Springs Nature Center: *More than Corn: Investigating Illinois' Unique Geology*. Wander through the exhibit to learn about the glaciers that changed Illinois' landscape. View some of the rocks and

minerals that are buried beneath Earth's surface. Explore the diversity of ecosystems that span our great state. Learn about the bogs and sand dunes of northern Illinois. Encounter the prairies, wetlands, and savannas that stretch across the middle of the state. Study caves and swamps found in southern Illinois, and the aquifers that flow beneath the ground. Discover why natural restoration is critical to help many of these amazing and distinctive ecosystems. This exhibit will be up at least through the end of April. Should the Nature Center close due to covid-19, the exhibit will continue after the building re-opens.

Admission to Rock Springs Nature Center and the exhibit are free. Face masks required. For Rock Springs Nature Center's hours visit [MaconCountyConservation.org](http://MaconCountyConservation.org).





Support local natural areas and wildlife at the first Rock Springs Ramble 5K, 1 Mile Fun Run, and Kid's Fun Run: Saturday, April 10.

This fundraiser supports the Macon County Conservation Foundation, a non-profit organization that helps fund natural area restoration and educational programs at the Macon County Conservation District, and its Rock Springs Nature Center.

The event will offer both a 5K route (3.1 miles) and 1 mile route beginning at 8am. You may walk and/or run either of these routes. At 9am, we'll hold a 100-yard Kids' Fun Run. All routes will take you in and around Rock Springs Conservation Area, utilizing the paved Nearing Lane and Rock Springs-Fairview Bike Trail.

Registration is \$30/5K and 1 mile Fun Run or \$5/Kid's Fun Run. Your 5K registration includes a finisher's medal, cloth buff, and age group awards. The 1 mile Fun Run registration gets a finisher's medal and cloth buff. The Kid's Fun Run will receive a special nature "grab bag" item and a wooden tree cookie.

Face masks and social distancing may be required before and after the race.

For more information or to register, visit [RunSignup.com/RockSpringsRamble](http://RunSignup.com/RockSpringsRamble).

Thank you to our generous sponsors for this event:

- The Greenberg Family**
- Jensen Properties**
- Speed Lube**
- Mt. Zion Self Storage**
- Sikich**
- Star Silkscreen**



### Naturalist Chats

Learn about the natural world around you during free, weekly Naturalist Chats on the West Lawn of Rock Springs Nature Center! Program Services staff will present these short, informal programs every Tuesday on a topic of the interpreter's choosing. One week we might take a short hike, or introduce you to one of our education animals. Another week we might show you a unique item from collections. We won't announce the topics ahead of time, so be ready for a surprise each week!

- 10am on the First and Third Tuesdays of the month
- 2pm on the Second and Fourth Tuesdays of the month
- No Naturalist Chat the Fifth Tuesday of a month

Free. For all ages. No registration required. Meet staff on the West Lawn of Rock Springs Nature Center. Dress for the weather.



Briefs



Where can you go canoeing, dissect owl pellets, and roast marshmallows over your own fire? Summer camp at Rock Springs Conservation Area of course! Staff have the entire summer packed with fun, educational activities for ages 1-15.

We hope you and your children or grandchildren can join us for a summer of exploring nature and history, while creating lasting memories. The camp season will be June 7 through August 13, 2021:

- **Mini Camp (ages 1-5):** Young children explore Rock Springs Conservation Area with their adult buddies in these hour-long camps. \$6/child each camp.
- **Earth Adventures (ages 6-12):** Children hike, canoe, and discover the world around them in this full-day, week-long nature camp with optional Before and After Child Care. \$125/camper each week. Optional Before and After Care are each \$25/camper per week. (Camp will not be held July 5-9.)
- **Adventure Club (ages 5-12):** Children join in on Earth Adventures nature camp on Tuesday mornings from 9am to noon. \$12/camper each day.
- **X-treme Camp (ages 10-15):** Full day of outdoor activities for children on select Wednesdays. \$35/camper each day.

Summer camps will follow COVID-19 mitigation measures for our area and are subject to change. Find details about each camp and register online at [MaconCountyConservation.org](http://MaconCountyConservation.org). Staff are happy to answer any questions you may have during business office hours, Monday-Friday from 8am to 5pm, at 217-423-7708.

## Volunteer Opportunity

We are recruiting players for the upcoming vintage base ball season! Vintage base ball attracts men and women for its slower pace, unique rules, showmanship, and sportsmanship. It's about friendship, having fun, and showing people how baseball was played in the 1860s. For ages 16 and up. Volunteers must be willing to travel to away games. Games are held a couple Saturdays a month, with a few Sunday games scattered throughout the season.



For more information or to sign up, visit the Ground Squirrels' Facebook Page, [facebook.com/GroundSquirrels](https://facebook.com/GroundSquirrels), or contact Volunteer Coordinator, Jenny Garver at [JGarver@MaconCountyConservation.org](mailto:JGarver@MaconCountyConservation.org) or 217-423-7708.

## Campground and Pavilions Opening

The campground at Friends Creek Conservation Area opens for the season on May 1. The campground welcomes RV and tent camping. It includes flush toilets, showers, and a dump station.



Daily fees for electric sites:

- \$17 for county residents
- \$20 for non-residents

Daily fees for non-electric sites:

- \$10 for county residents
- \$12 for non-residents

For more information, visit [MaconCountyConservation.org](http://MaconCountyConservation.org). Reserve your campsite by calling 217-423-7708.

The picnic pavilions at Rock Springs, Fort Daniel, and Griswold are also open for the season. Host your own outdoor event by reserving your pavilion for \$35/day at [MaconCountyConservation.org](http://MaconCountyConservation.org).

# Special Events

## Take Your Pick

Below you'll find activities offered at multiple times or locations. Register online before the last full weekday prior to the program. Programs held at Rock Springs Conservation Area unless otherwise noted:



### Night Hikes

Saturdays, March 13 and May 22, 8-9:30pm  
Griswold Conservation Area

Explore Griswold Conservation Area in the dark and use your senses to find the way through the woods. Discover what makes your eyes, ears, and nose work at night. Wear sturdy shoes. \$2/person. Register online by March 12 and May 21. Min/Max: 5/20.



Saturdays, April 17 and May 8, 10am-1pm

Paddle a canoe down one of our local waterways, the Sangamon River. All equipment provided. Bring a drink and clothes that could get wet. Must have at least one adult in each canoe. If river conditions are too low or high, we will canoe another route. Registered participants will be contacted with a meeting location based on river conditions. \$25/canoe. Register online by April 16 and May 7. Min/Max: 3/13 canoes.

### WILDFLOWER HIKES

Sundays, April 25 and May 30, 2pm  
Rock Springs Conservation Area

Venture into the forests and prairies with a naturalist. We will search for as many species of these beautiful spring delights as we can, including Virginia bluebells, spring beauties, and more. Wear your hiking boots. Free. Register online by April 23 and May 28. Min/Max: 5/20.

### Recent Archaeological Discoveries at Homestead Prairie Farm

Sunday, May 23 at 2pm  
at Rock Springs Conservation Area or  
Virtual Presentation on  
Thursday, May 27 at 6:30pm

Due to a 2018 project to strengthen the farmhouse's foundation, dirt that had laid dormant underneath for over 100 years was removed. Sifting the dirt revealed a wide variety of artifacts. Join us to learn more about these discoveries. Free. Register online by May 21 and 26. In-person Min/Max: 5/20. Virtual Min/Max: 5/50.



Macon County Conservation District

3939 Nearing Lane | Decatur, IL 62521 | 217-423-7708

[MaconCountyConservation.org](http://MaconCountyConservation.org)

# Special Events



Rock Springs Ramble 5K Run/Walk  
Saturday, April 10, 8am  
Rock Springs Conservation Area

The Macon County Conservation Foundation is planning a new 5K run/walk! The Rock Springs Ramble will begin and end at the main parking lot at Rock Springs Conservation Area and utilize portions of the Rock Springs-Fairview Bike Trail. Registration is \$30/5K and 1 mile Fun Run or \$5/Kid's Fun Run. 5K registration includes a finisher's medal, cloth buff, and age group awards. The 1 mile Fun Run registration gets a finisher's medal and cloth buff. The Kid's Fun Run will receive a special nature "grab bag" item and a wooden tree cookie. All proceeds benefit Macon County's natural areas and wildlife. Face masks required before and after the race. Register at [RunSignup.com/RockSpringsRamble](https://RunSignup.com/RockSpringsRamble).



## SANGAMON RIVER CLEANUP

Saturday, April 24, 10am-12pm  
Wyckles Road Canoe Launch  
Rock Springs Conservation Area

Help clear trash from the banks of the Sangamon River to make it a safer and more beautiful place for wildlife and people. Dress to get dirty and bring your own gloves. Bags will be provided. Come by yourself or bring the whole family. Organized groups should call 217-423-7708 in advance. Co-sponsored by the Community Environmental Council. Register online by April 23. Meet at the Rock Springs Canoe Launch on Wyckles Road.

## FESTIVAL OF SPRING

Saturday, April 24  
Rock Springs Conservation Area and  
Facebook Live

Celebrate Earth Day with a day of in-person and virtual activities! Watch bird banding Live on our Facebook page or register to attend in-person. At Rock Springs, families and adults can enjoy naturalist-led hikes, and children can collect take home activities from local organizations that protect water and wildlife. You may also pre-register online to attend an in-person Birds of Prey show by the Illinois Raptor Center. Free. Register online by April 23 for the river cleanup, in-person bird banding, and in-person Birds of Prey show. No registration required for other activities. See the full list of activities and times at [MaconCountyConservation.org](https://MaconCountyConservation.org). Co-sponsored by Decatur Audubon Society.



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# Happenings

Events located at Rock Springs Conservation Area and open to all ages unless otherwise indicated. Register online at [MaconCountyConservation.org](http://MaconCountyConservation.org) by noon, unless otherwise noted.



Macon County  
Conservation District

## Hours

### OFFICES OPEN

Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm

### NATURE CENTER OPEN

Monday-Wednesday, Friday, 8am-5pm

Thursday, 8am-8pm

Saturday, 9am-5pm

Sunday, 1-5pm

### TRAILS OPEN

Daily, 7am to sunset

## Holidays & Closings

### OFFICES & NATURE CENTER CLOSED

Sunday, April 4, Easter

### NATURE CENTER OPEN, OFFICES CLOSED

Friday, April 2, Good Friday

Monday, May 31, Memorial Day

## Open Houses

### BETHEL SCHOOL

Saturday, May 1, 1-4pm

See what going to school was like in the early 20th century at the historic one-room schoolhouse located at Friends Creek Conservation Area. 13734 Friends Creek Park Rd., Cisco, IL. Free.

### GOVERNOR OGLESBY MANSION

Sundays, March 28, April 25, and May 30, 2-4pm

Tour the restored home of Illinois Governor Richard J. Oglesby. Encounter the lives of its family members and explore their late 1800s lifestyle. \$2/person. Members are free. 421 W. William Street, Decatur, IL.



## Ground Squirrels Vintage Base Ball Games

Join us for the national pastime: base ball! Cheer for your home team, the Rock Springs Ground Squirrels, in a game of vintage base ball played with authentic 1858 rules. To see their complete schedule, go to [Facebook.com/GroundSquirrels](https://Facebook.com/GroundSquirrels)

Saturday, March 20, 12pm

Swansea, IL – Away game  
Goodwill Match against the  
Belleville Stags at the Belleville/  
Swansea Moose Lodge 1221



Saturday, April 17, 12pm

St. Louis, MO – Away game against the St. Louis  
Perfectos at Lafayette Park

Saturday, May 1, 1pm

Decatur, IL – Home game against the McLean  
County Prairie Chickens at BeautifulTroubaughField  
at Rock Springs Conservation Area

## Meetings

### MACON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD MEETINGS

Third Wednesday of each month, 5:30pm

March 17, April 21, & May 19

### DECATUR AUDUBON SOCIETY MEETINGS

Until in-person meetings return, connect with  
Decatur Audubon on Facebook.

## Connect with Us



Find out how you can make a difference  
217-423-7708

[MaconCountyConservation.org](http://MaconCountyConservation.org)

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## Music

The following programs are free and open to the public at Rock Springs Nature Center.

Depending on COVID restrictions, these events may be limited to the outdoors. If so, cold weather dates may be cancelled. Outdoor music events may resume on warm weather days. Check [MaconCountyConservation.org](http://MaconCountyConservation.org).

### DULCIMER CLUB

Saturdays, 10am-12pm

March 6 & 20

April 3 & 17

May 1, 15, & 29



### BLUEGRASS MUSIC JAM

Sundays, 1-4pm

March 14, April 11, & May 9

### CROSS COUNTRY CLASSICS

Thursdays, 6-7:30pm

March 4, April 1, & May 6

### SHAPE-NOTE SINGING

Sunday, May 23, 2-4pm

## Art

### NORTH GALLERY ARTISTS

JPK Photographs

March & April

View beautiful nature and wildlife photography captured by local photographer Jane P. Koenig.



Curt Knapp

May & June

Photographer Curt Knapp presents incredible images of nature, including eagles, wolves, and sunsets.

### SOUTH GALLERY ARTISTS

Katherine Unruh

March & April

Encounter animals and wild landscapes captured in the form of paintings and drawings by this local artist.



Kattina Williams

May & June

Enjoy photos of exotic birds, wildlife, and more from local photographer Kattina Williams.

## Mini Camp Nature Kits

Enjoy some one-on-one family time this spring with fun nature-themed kits designed for children ages 1-5 and an adult buddy. These pre-packaged kits contain activities, games, and crafts exploring each camp theme. Kits will need to be picked up from Rock Springs Nature Center during the timeframe specified. Allow 3 to 7 days for us to process your kit order. We will call you when your kit is ready for pick-up. Each kit includes materials for one child. \$6/kit. Maximum of 24 kits available for each theme.

### MARCH KIT: PITTER PATTER

Pick-Up March 1 through March 31

It gets a bit drippy in the spring! Discover how rain is important to both plants and animals. Register online by March 26.

### APRIL KIT: SPARKLY RAINBOWS

Pick-Up April 1 through April 30

Have fun studying and creating your very own rainbows. Register online by April 27.



# Happenings

Events located at Rock Springs Conservation Area and open to all ages unless otherwise indicated. Register online at [MaconCountyConservation.org](http://MaconCountyConservation.org) by noon, unless otherwise noted.

**NOTE:** Programs may be canceled or adapted due to COVID restrictions. Check the event on our website before attending. Face coverings required. Please stay home if you are feeling unwell.

## March

### SEASON'S CHANGES HIKE Sand Creek Conservation Area Sunday, March 14, 2pm

Explore nature on a guided hike as we move from winter into spring. Look for signs of change and learn what plants and animals are doing to prepare for the new season. Free. Register online by March 12. Min/Max: 5/20.



### RAG DOLL WORKSHOP Saturday, March 20, 2pm

Rag dolls have been one of the most popular forms of children's toys throughout history. Create and personalize your own old-fashioned rag doll. All supplies provided. For all ages, but children 13 and under must be accompanied by an adult. Free. Register online by March 19. Min/Max: 5/20.



### PRESCHOOL PEEPERS: ST. PATRICK'S DAY Sunday, March 21, 2pm

Learn about clovers and other green plants re-emerging from their winter sleep. Children will go on a scavenger hunt and paint with marshmallows. Free. Register online by March 19. Min/Max: 5/20.



### VIRTUAL PROGRAM: BIRDS OF A FEATHER

#### Wednesday, March 24, 2pm

Learn all about birds and their many adaptations through the use of several skulls, feathers, and mounts. Find out what makes our feathered friends so special and which ones you could find in your own backyard. Free. Register online by March 23. Min/Max: 5/50.



### HIBERNATORS OF MACON COUNTY

#### Saturday, March 27, 2pm

Local hibernators are beginning to wake and prepare for warmer weather. Learn which animals have been dormant all winter and why they go through this energy-saving process. We will have furs, skeletons, and a live animal to show you. Free. Register online by March 26. Min/Max: 5/20.



## April

### PRESCHOOL PEEPERS: TADPOLES

#### Sunday, April 18, 2pm

Baby frogs go through some amazing changes! Find out all about tadpoles, make a frog life-cycle craft, then head down to the pond and see if you can find any amphibian friends. Free. Register online by April 16. Min/Max: 5/20.



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Register online at [MaconCountyConservation.org](http://MaconCountyConservation.org) by noon, unless otherwise noted.

## May

### POLLINATOR POWER

Sunday, May 2, 2pm

Discover the amazing world of pollination as we discuss those native to our area, including bumblebees and mason bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, and even wasps. Then, go outside and take a short hike to search for some. Free. Register online by April 30. Min/Max: 5/20.



### BIRD BANDING OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, May 15, 8-10am

Join the Decatur Audubon Society and Millikin University professor Dr. Travis Wilcoxon for a look at bird banding: the practice of catching wild birds to collect data and place a metal band for identification on their leg. Learn how and why scientists band birds and see it happen in action. Meet at the Information Shelter pavilion near the parking lot. Free. No registration required.



### PRESCHOOL PEEPERS: BLUEBIRDS

Sunday, May 16, 2pm

What's so special about Eastern bluebirds? Young children are invited to find out by visiting a bluebird nest box, doing a craft, and learning about their natural history. Each registered family will receive a bluebird nest box. Free. Register online by May 14. Min/Max: 5/20.



### NIGHTTIME FROG QUEST

Saturday, May 29, 9-11pm

Test your frog-finding abilities by searching for as many species of frogs as you can discover! Bring your flashlights as we scope out water habitats for eye shine. We'll also try to catch some with nets and by hand. \$3/person or \$10/family. Register online by May 28. Min/Max: 5/20.



### WALLEYE FISHING TRIP TO LAKE ERIE

Sunday-Tuesday, June 13-15

Join staff on a trip to the Great Lakes to fish for walleye on a charter boat. Price includes two-day charter, fishing equipment, transportation, and lodging. Meals and license not included. Meet at the Information Desk at Rock Springs Nature Center. For all ages. \$475/person. Register online by June 1. Min/Max: 5/11.



### MACON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES & STAFF

Karen Schneller, President

Nina Bendsen, Vice President

David Castor, Secretary

Doug Johnson, Treasurer

Jim Beckhart, Second Vice President

Richie Wolf, Executive Director

Shane Ravellette, Operations Manager

Alysia Callison, Nature Center Manager

Pam Smith, Finance & H.R. Manager

### Contact Us

Macon County Conservation District • 217-423-7708  
[mccd@MaconCountyConservation.org](mailto:mccd@MaconCountyConservation.org)  
[MaconCountyConservation.org](http://MaconCountyConservation.org)

Macon County  
Conservation District  
3939 Nearing Lane  
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For trail conditions, visit [MaconCountyConservation.org](http://MaconCountyConservation.org).

Macon County  
Conservation District



The Prairie Islander is a free quarterly publication. Call or email for additional copies. "Go Green" by reading it online at [MaconCountyConservation.org](http://MaconCountyConservation.org).