



Dates to Remember

Volunteer Quarterly Meeting

Rock Springs Nature Center, Auditorium
Friday, July 16, 11:30am-1pm

Hear the latest news in educational programming, Nature Center updates, natural area restoration, Foundation projects, and more. Lunch provided. RSVP by July 12 at 217-423-7708.

Volunteer Recognition Dinner

Hickory Point Golf Course Banquet Facility
Tuesday, Aug 3

Join us for the 40th Annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner. Registration starts at 5:30pm and a buffet dinner will start at 6pm. Guests (\$18) are welcome. RSVP by June 29 at 217-423-7708.

Rock Springs Dulcimer Club

Rock Springs Nature Center, Auditorium
Saturdays, July 10 & 24, 10am
Saturdays, Aug 7 & 21, 10am
Saturdays, Sept 4 & 18, 10am



Rock Springs Quilters

Rock Springs Nature Center
Every Wednesday, 9-11am

Summer Concert Series

Rock Springs Nature Center & Live on Facebook
Sundays, July 11, 25, and
Aug 1, 7-8pm

The free, outdoor concert series has returned! Enjoy these acoustic concerts in-person, or watch the live stream on the Macon County Conservation District Facebook page: www.facebook.com/MaconCountyConservationDistrict. No registration required to attend in person.



Thank You Volunteers

Jenny Garver - Volunteer Coordinator

Thank you for being part of the Macon County Conservation District volunteer family! April 24 was our biggest volunteer day of the year so far. Forty-three volunteers turned out for the Sangamon River Clean-up. During the months of January through May, 204 volunteers turned in over 1,740 hours. Thank you! If you have any hours to turn in for 2021, send them to Jenny Garver: JGarver@MaconCountyConservation.org or Volunteer Coordinator, Macon County Conservation District, 3939 Nearing Lane, Decatur, IL 62521.



Volunteers in Action: 43 volunteers helped pick up trash along the river at the Sangamon River Clean-Up. Co-sponsored by Community Environmental Council.

Welcome New Volunteers!

Blue Bird Monitor - Dale Penn

Camps - Karis Gee-Norman, Merle Morgan,
and Melissa Scircle

Desk - Wanda Mast

Special Projects - Merle Collingwood

Trail Monitor - Cambell Lanier, Jameda Locker,
and Mack Thompson

Volunteer Naturalist - Mary Dawson

Dates to Remember (cont.)

Astronomy Jamboree

Friends Creek Conservation Area
Saturday, Aug 21, 8-10pm

Enjoy a free music concert from 8-8:45pm, then create a craft to take home, enter a giveaway, and view the stars and visible planets. Hot dogs, marshmallows, and water provided. Bring your telescope and share your knowledge. Free. Register online by Aug 20.

Hummingbird Festival

Rock Springs Conservation Area
Thursday, Aug 26, 4-7pm

Learn about hummingbirds. Watch as we capture, band, and release wild birds. Co-sponsored by Decatur Audubon. Free. Register online by Aug 25.

Monarch Madness

Rock Springs
Conservation Area
Sunday, Sept 12, 2-4pm
(Rain date: Sept 19)

Learn about monarch butterflies, then help capture and tag live butterflies. Co-sponsored by University of Illinois Extension Office. Free. No registration required.



Vintage Base Ball

Rock Springs Conservation Area
Beautiful Trobaugh Field

Saturday, Sept 18, 9am -
Stephen Douglas Cup Tournament
Participating teams to be announced.



Remembering Volunteers & Staff

Mary Bertram (November 1926 - March 2021)

Richie Wolf (August 1974 - April 2021)

Volunteer Opportunities

Astronomy Jamboree

Friends Creek
Conservation Area
Saturday, Aug 21, 8-10pm

Calling all amateur astronomers! We are looking for folks to bring and set up their telescopes and share knowledge during this "star party." Call Alysia at 217-423-7708 if you're interested in bringing your scope.



Acoustic Music Jam

Rock Springs Conservation Area

Do you like to tinker around on the guitar, bass, banjo, fiddle, or mandolin? Do you like to sing? Check out the second Sunday afternoon music jam! We are looking for more musicians to participate in this monthly event. For more information or to sign up, contact Jenny: 217-423-7708 or JGarver@MaconCountyConservation.org.



Prairie Pedal

Various Locations
Sunday, Sept 26,
6:30am-3pm

The Prairie Pedal bicycling event raises funds for the Macon County Conservation Foundation. All proceeds support natural areas and wildlife diversity in Macon County. During this event cyclists ride 20, 40, or 62 mile routes. Volunteers can choose from time commitments of 2 to 5 hours. Volunteer stations include: registration, rest stops along the bike routes, photography, and clean-up. To volunteer, contact Jenny by Sept 21: 217-423-7708 or JGarver@MaconCountyConservation.org.



Volunteer Fun & Learning

Library Assistant Training

Rock Springs Nature Center, Library
Thursday, July 15, 1-2pm

Do you enjoy books and learning? The District library is a great place to volunteer your time. Volunteers assist with checking out and reshelving books, as well as maintaining the library collection. Morning and afternoon shifts are available. Join us during this training session to learn more and join the volunteer librarian team. RSVP by July 13 at 217-423-7708.

Hand Quilting Demonstration

Rock Springs Nature Center
Wednesday, July 21, 9:30-10:30am

Stop by and observe the art of hand quilting with our volunteer quilters. Basics and technique will be shown. Bring your questions. This is a great way to see if you would like to join this volunteer group.

Hike Leader Training

Rock Springs Nature Center,
Rodney Washburn Classroom
Friday, Aug 20, 10am

Volunteer naturalists are essential to our education team throughout the year.

Brush up on your interpretation skills or take a closer look into this volunteer opportunity. Dress for the weather. RSVP by Aug 19 at 217-423-7708.



Visit the Sites Volunteer Tour

Rock Springs Nature Center, Information Desk
Friday, Sept 17, 9am-2pm

Visit natural areas within the Macon County Conservation District. Our tour will start at the Cattail Pond at Rock Springs. Afterwards, we will head to Sand Creek Conservation Area for some exploration. Our last stop will be Fort Daniel Conservation Area for a picnic lunch, short hike, and a chat about the 2019 expansion. Operations staff will meet us at each location to share current projects and future plans. Lunch is provided, all you need to bring is yourself! Dress for the weather and trail conditions. Space is limited. RSVP by Sept 14 at 217-423-7708.



Fall Colors Hike

Friends Creek
Conservation Area,
Bethel School Parking Lot
Thursday, Sept 30,
10-11am

Fall is filled with stunning colors. Take a relaxing hike through the forest to explore nature. If you choose to do so, bring your own lunch to enjoy a picnic at one of the pavilions after the hike. A cooler with ice will be provided. RSVP by Sept 28 at 217-423-7708.



Tidbits of Information

- We extend a warm welcome to our new Executive Director, Jerry Culp. Jerry joined the Conservation District team on June 21.
- There are many new faces around the Nature Center. Stephanie Klaus is the Historic Sites Intern. Amber Coon and Michael VanUyten are new Camp Counselors. Terri Dawson and Audrey Durbin are returning Camp Counselors.
- Most volunteer activities have resumed. The Rock Springs Nature Center library reopens to the public on July 5. The volunteer quilting group resumes on July 7.
- Dates are set for the fall Master Naturalist Classes. We are currently planning for in-person class. Class will be Sept 7 through Nov 16 on Tuesday nights, 6-9pm, with some Saturday field trips. If interested in becoming a Master Naturalist, contact Dena Hyde at DenaHyde@illinois.edu or 217-877-6042.

Program Services Update

Alysia Callison - Nature Center Manager

As the weather warms and restrictions ease, Program Services is gearing up for a fun and busy summer. Program Staff is excited to get back to it and provide opportunities for the public to learn about local nature and history.

One thing to look forward to this summer is the return of the Summer Concert Series. This year's series will include a variety of country, bluegrass, and

Americana performers, with new acts as well as some returning favorites. Thanks to relaxed restrictions, we no longer require pre-registration for these concerts; just show up with your lawn chairs and be ready for an evening of great music! We will still be live-streaming them on our Facebook page for those who aren't able to attend in person.



Another exciting thing this summer is the return of Summer Camps! We have three Summer Camp counselors and an Historic Sites' Intern that are jumping head-first into Summer Camp. It is wonderful to offer these camps to children after last year's quiet summer.

Thank you for all that you do for the District. I hope to see you at some of our programs and events over the coming months!

Operations Update

Shane Ravellette - Operations Manager

During our busy summer season, both staff and contractors will be working on several projects. At Rock Springs, the biggest project will be the oil and chip sealing of the Service Lane along Homestead Prairie Farm. The schedule is not set yet but it will be a quick, one or two day project. We will post detour signs to help everyone find their way.

At Friends Creek, projects include some electrical updates to the campground and some work on the offices at the shop. We will also be looking to replace the roof on the smaller shelter. Work will also progress on the installation of a short trail connecting the group campground to the larger trail system.



At Sand Creek, we'll begin some small restoration projects, including connecting two prairies behind the shop and opening up a "buried" oak savanna. Also at Sand Creek and at Fort Daniel, we will be scouting out and laying the ground work for a handful of small prairie wetlands.

As always, if you have concerns, ideas, or would like to volunteer on operations-related projects, we welcome your involvement. Please feel free to stop by and visit.



New fishing docks at the Cattail Pond, Rock Springs Conservation Area

The Birth of Vintage Base Ball at Rock Springs

Brent Wielt - Historic Sites Manager

Vintage base ball (two words in the 1800s) follows the rules of the earliest days of the sport from before the Civil War. Across the nation, numerous teams now play the unique game. Our club was launched by the Conservation District's long-time staff member Lee Slider using the name "Ground

Squirrels," corresponding with the District's wildlife mascot costume.



In 1992, they accepted an invitation from Ohio Village, an outdoor living history site, to play in Columbus. The Decatur group consisted of Conservation District staff, Homestead Prairie

Farm volunteers, and others. Although beaten in this first game, the group enjoyed it and discussed forming a team. After preparing an area that became the current ball field site, Lee hosted a series of "pick-up" games to build interest. He placed notices in local newspapers, inviting anyone interested. They played at least one or two pick-up games in September 1992. Encouraged by the early success, the fledgling vintage base ball program resumed in 1993 with more pick-up games.



It was clear an "official" vintage team could be launched, and Lee worked to find funds for uniforms and equipment. As for a true birthdate, the Ground Squirrels were born in July 1992 in Columbus, Ohio. (Happy 29th Birthday Rock Springs Ground Squirrels!) They emerged as an "official" vintage base ball team in August 1994, when the Deep River Grinders of Hobart, Indiana traveled to Decatur for a game.

For more about the team or to sign up, message the team on their Facebook page, www.facebook.com/GroundSquirrels, or contact Jenny: 217-423-7708 or JGarver@MaconCountyConservation.org.

Retired & Senior Volunteer Program

Charlie Gillaspie - RSVP Program Director

The Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) works with individuals 55 and older to enhance their volunteer roles in their communities. RSVP helps match volunteers to nonprofit agencies according to their skills and needs. The Macon County Conservation District and RSVP have been partners since 1990, with RSVP volunteers serving in various roles at the District.

Why join RSVP? Dove Inc. RSVP provides you with additional accident and liability insurance while you are volunteering.

How can you join? Begin by filling out an enrollment form. Enrollment forms are available at Rock Springs or online at www.DoveINC.org. If you prefer us to mail you one, just call 217-428-6616.

Why should you sign up with RSVP if you're already volunteering?



When you join RSVP, you join hundreds of other volunteers in Macon County, and demonstrate the wealth of caring and sharing among older Americans. It eliminates stereotypes about senior and retired citizens no longer contributing to their communities. Join us and help tell the story of one of our community's most valuable resources: older volunteers.

*"If you want to touch the past,
touch a rock. If you want to touch
the present, touch a flower.
If you want to touch the future,
touch a life."*

—Unknown