



Dates to Remember

Check the District website or Facebook page before attending in-person events, in case they are cancelled due to COVID-19.

Save the Date! Volunteer Holiday Party

The Volunteer Holiday Party is tentatively set for December 9. Invites will go out in November. This event could be affected by COVID-19. We will re-evaluate and make any necessary changes closer to the date.

Rock Springs Quilters

Rock Springs Nature Center
Every Wednesday, 9-11am

Dulcimer Club

Rock Springs Nature Center, East Conference Room
Saturdays, October 2 & 16, 10am
Saturdays, November 13 & 27, 10am
Saturdays, December 11, 10am

Archaeology Open House

Rock Springs Conservation Area,
Homestead Prairie Farm
Sunday, October 3, 1-4pm

Discover the treasures found beneath the Trobaugh-Good House during recent repairs to this 19th century home. Then try sifting for more! Free. No registration required.

Remembering Volunteers & Staff

Wanda Dettman (September 1929 - August 2021)

Jo-Ann Jacobs (January 1933 - July 2021)

Bruce Leonard (January 1923 - July 2021)

Audrey Maurice (October 1928 - August 2021)

Welcome New Volunteers!

Camp - Tiffany Wetzel

Desk - Joann Glacken

Dulcimer - Joan Fulton and Larry Fulton

Homestead Garden - Pam Buttz and Tom Jones

Prairie Heritage Volunteer - Samantha Scott

Trail Monitor - Alli Schuessler

Thank You Volunteers

Jenny Garver - Volunteer Coordinator

This year has been full of ups and downs, successes and challenges, but you have been a resilient lot. Due to current COVID-19 metrics in the community, we are back to wearing masks inside the Nature Center again. On a positive note, most of our volunteer opportunities have resumed in some form or another. No matter how many hours you donated this year, we thank you for making a difference! We are happy to report that 261 volunteers donated over 4,000 hours through the end of August.



Volunteers in Action: Garden volunteers keeping up the native plant garden in front of Rock Springs Nature Center this summer.

Dates to Remember (Cont.)

Fall Harvest Festival

Rock Springs
Conservation Area,
Saturday, October 16,
1-4pm



Celebrate fall with fun outdoor activities including 3-D archery, canoeing, pumpkin painting, a scavenger hunt, wagon rides, tours at Homestead Prairie Farm, and live animals. 3-D archery, canoeing, and pumpkin painting are \$3 each. All other events are free. No registration required.

Candlelight Tour

Rock Springs
Conservation Area,
Homestead Prairie Farm
Saturday, November 13,
6:30-8:30pm



Electricity and modern conveniences were not always at our fingertips. Glimpse what an evening in the 1860s was like at Homestead Prairie Farm, lit by candlelight and lamplight, as guides in period clothing walk you through the home. Free. No registration required.

Stay Connected

Like Us on Facebook:
[@MaconCountyConservationDistrict](#)

Follow Us on Twitter:
[@MCCD_217](#)

Join the Volunteer Facebook Group:
"MCCD Volunteers"

Visit the website:
MaconCountyConservation.org

Volunteer Fun & Learning

Fall Volunteer Hikes

Tuesday, Oct 6, 11am,
Griswold Conservation Area
Wednesday, Oct 13, 10am,
Friends Creek (Bethel School
parking lot)
Thursday, Oct 21, 12pm,
Fort Daniel (pavilion
parking lot)
Monday, Oct 25, 1pm, Sand Creek
Friday, Nov 5, 11am, Rock Springs (west deck)



Join us at each location for an educational hike to stretch your legs and learn something new. Dress for the weather. Please RSVP to 217-423-7708 at least one day in advance to receive any weather and location change updates.

Homestead Prairie Farm Volunteer Tour

Rock Springs,
Homestead Prairie Farm,
Tuesday, Oct 26, 1pm



Enjoy a personal tour of the Trobaugh-Good House.

Learn about the lives of the families that lived there and how we care for the farm today. With a behind-the-scenes look, we'll share how we prepare for the season ahead and show you the ongoing archaeology work. RSVP to 217-423-7708 by October 25.

Holiday Wreath Contest

We challenge you to help us deck the halls! Volunteers are invited to create a holiday wreath to display at Rock Springs Nature Center during December. Staff will select one winner by December 9 to receive a \$25 gift card. Wreaths can be dropped off November 21-30 and picked-up January 5-14. Each wreath must be labeled with your name and phone number to ensure that we return them to the correct person. If you have questions, contact Jenny Garver (217-423-7708 or JGarver@MaconCountyConservation.org).

Volunteer Opportunities

Archaeology & Artifacts

Homestead Prairie Farm

We unearthed a rare archaeology volunteer opportunity! Help screen through dirt for artifacts from excavations under the farmhouse. For ages 13 and up. For more information or to sign up, contact Brent Wielt (217-423-7708 or BWielt@MaconCountyConservation.org).



Fall Harvest Festival

*Rock Springs Conservation Area
Saturday, Oct 16, 1-4pm*

Help in a variety of areas during this annual event. Volunteer opportunities include children's crafts, canoeing, campfire supervisor, children's games, Homestead Prairie Farm tours, wagon ride narrators, and more. For more information or to sign up, contact Jenny Garver by October 8 (217-423-7708 or JGarver@MaconCountyConservation.org).



Native Seed Collecting

*Friends Creek
Conservation Area,
Saturday, Oct 23, 9-11am*

Help harvest native wildflower seeds to diversify the plants at other sites. This light intensity work involves picking seed from stalks and walking through tall vegetation. No experience is necessary. Wear long pants, long sleeves, and sturdy work shoes. Gloves and all necessary equipment will be provided. For all ages. RSVP with Ethan Snively by October 21 (217-853-3465 or ESnively@MaconCountyConservation.org).



Candlelight Tour

*Rock Springs Conservation Area,
Homestead Prairie Farm,
Saturday, Nov 13, 6:30-8:30pm*

Help bring Homestead Prairie Farm to life during this fun evening event. Volunteer opportunities include tour guides, trail guides, serving refreshments, and outdoor lantern tenders. For more information or to sign up, contact Brent Wielt by November 5 (217-423-7708 or BWielt@MaconCountyConservation.org).



Fall Restoration Day

*Rock Springs
Conservation Area,
Meet at Homestead Prairie
Farm Parking Lot
Saturday, Nov 20, 9-11am*

Assist natural resources staff with bush honeysuckle removal around the Cattail Pond and Homestead Prairie Farm at Rock Springs. This workday will involve cutting shrubs while walking over uneven woodland terrain. Wear long pants, sturdy shoes like boots or tennis shoes, and prepare to get dirty. Tools and work gloves will be provided. RSVP with Ethan Snively by November 18 (217-853-3465 or ESnively@MaconCountyConservation.org).



Holiday Decorating

*Rock Springs Nature Center
Tuesday, Nov 30,
10am-1pm*

We are looking for some jolly elves to help decorate the Nature Center for the holidays. Volunteers will decorate Christmas trees and the area around the Information Desk. Lunch and laughter will be provided. For more information, or to sign up, contact Jenny Garver by November 23 (217-423-7708 or JGarver@MaconCountyConservation.org).



Program Services Update

Alysia Callison - Nature Center Manager

As summer draws to a close, we are grateful for a busy, active season with plenty of activities, camps, and events that reached the public. Summer camps wrapped up in August and were a great success this year, which was not a guarantee due to the pandemic. Amazingly, camp registration was on par with 2019, if not better than. We were so glad to offer summer camps again this year.



Program Services staff had a busy summer with other programs, too. Most public programming was well attended, including the Summer Concert Series, Independence Day 1860, Astronomy Jamboree, and Hummingbird Festival. Even though summer is nearly over, the fun won't stop!

This fall, we're looking forward to the Fall Harvest Festival. We've changed the date of this event a bit, and this year it will be held Saturday, October 16 from 1-4pm. With pumpkin decorating, canoeing, 3D archery, wagon rides, homestead tours, and more, it's sure to be a fun event for everyone! We hope to see you there as a volunteer or visitor.

Other upcoming events include a trip to the Great Pumpkin Patch in Arthur, several hikes on a variety of topics including astronomy, decomposers, and Halloween, as well as Mini Camps and Preschool Peepers programs for the little ones. Check out the latest *Prairie Islander* for our full offerings!

Thank you for dedicating your time and talent to the District. We simply could not do without you!

Operations Department Update

Shane Ravellette - Operations Manager

Operations has been busy with several projects. The most notable project is at Friends Creek. We are working on a two-part electrical project to improve the campground and picnic area. The campground will finally be converted to all electrical sites and almost half of the total sites will be upgraded to 50 amp service to accommodate larger RVs. The picnic area will receive 27 LED bollard lights spaced 45 feet apart along the roadway. This will provide gentle lighting for walking the roadway in the evening.



We are looking at some small trail reroutes at Sand Creek to improve drainage and reduce the duration of trail closures. Furthermore, we will be looking to install a small wetland at Sand Creek. Wetlands require clay based soil to be most effective and Sand Creek has very little (it is mostly sand if you were wondering). Due to a happy accident, we found a clay heavy area on the southeast side of the conservation area. Wetlands provide habitat for amphibians and mammals. They also slow rain runoff and help improve the quality of streams and creeks.

Fall burn season will be here soon. Prescribed burns make sure the hard work of restoration continues, and our mature prairies and savannas remain strong and healthy. If you would like to volunteer to help with burning or other restoration efforts, please see Jenny or Ethan:

Jenny Garver: 217-423-7708

JGarver@MaconCountyConservation.org

Ethan Snively: 217-853-3465

ESnively@MaconCountyConservation.org



Fall at Rock Springs Conservation Area

Volunteer Spotlight: Lonnie Williams

Brock Rowland - Senior Program Naturalist

If you haven't sat down to talk with one of the Conservation District's newer volunteers, Lonnie Williams, then you are missing out.



During the interview, we swapped stories about our love for nature, family, and how just one person can make such a huge impact on someone's life. That is something Lonnie really is great at doing; I can speak from experience.

Lonnie is an avid nature lover. You can find him doing many things at the Conservation District: monitoring trails, working in the tiered garden, and watching over the books in the library. Speaking of libraries, ours isn't the only one where you'll find him. He also volunteers in the history room at the Decatur Public Library. This is just the tip of the iceberg for Lonnie. He also volunteers for Caring Black Men, an organization whose mission is to help young males become positive and productive citizens, and the African American Genealogical Society. These are just a few of the places he has chosen to help at over the years.

Due to the pandemic, Lonnie has had to stop participating in one of his favorite hobbies: traveling. It isn't all that bad because it's given him more time for his other passions, which include reading about history, fishing, and the most important pastime: spending time with family.

Lonnie understands the importance of learning about the natural world around you and sharing that knowledge with others. He believes in helping your community out because it's the right thing to do, and that at the end of the day family is what matters. We appreciate everything he does for not only us, but for our community. The world would be a little bit dimmer without people like Lonnie to light it up. Thank you, Lonnie.

Tidbits of Information

- A new exhibit, *Exploring the Sangamon*, is on display in the north hall of Rock Springs Nature Center. Learn about the history of the river, how humans used it, and the plants and animals that depend upon it. This exhibit features photography from the Decatur Camera Club. See it through December.
- Did you know tracking hours is very important and can be used when the Macon County Conservation District applies for grants and other forms of funding? 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).
- Welcome to our new weekend naturalist, Charlotte Landreth. Charlotte was a Historic Sites Intern in 2011 & 2012.
- Did you know Rock Springs Nature Center showcases quilts? Over the years, volunteer quilters have lovingly shared their quilts with the public, and we now extend this opportunity to all volunteers and staff. If you have a quilt you wish to display for 1-2 months, let Jenny know, or pop in on a Wednesday morning between 9-11am to add your quilt to the schedule. This is a wonderful way to showcase these treasures. A label with information will be placed next to each quilt.
- Have you joined the MCCD Volunteers Facebook group? It is a great way to get up-to-date information, reminders about upcoming volunteer events, and behind the scenes photos. Join the group today!



[www.facebook.com/groups/
MaconCountyConservationDistrictVolunteers](https://www.facebook.com/groups/MaconCountyConservationDistrictVolunteers)

