

Programs and Activities 2019



Photo: Michael Jeffords

Featuring ancient cypress-tupelo swamps, bottomland hardwood forests, sandstone bluffs and limestone caves, the Cache River Wetlands is a rich and diverse area that provides habitat for many fascinating plants and animals. The Cache is also a place where nature lovers of all ages can enjoy hiking, bicycling, kayaking and canoeing, hunting, fishing, birding and photography while learning more about this unique natural environment.

This year, the Cache River State Natural Area and Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge are offering many free, hands-on programs – so, bring your friends and family, and join us in exploring the wonderful world of the Cache!

For more information on these programs, unless otherwise listed, please call the Cache River State Natural Area, Barkhausen-Cache River Wetlands Center at **618-657-2064**.

Please note that, while all programs are free of charge, some do require advance registration, as indicated.

JANUARY

Nature Movie: Snowy Owl

Thursday, January 10, matinee 2-3pm, evening 6-7pm
Cache River Wetlands Center

The snowy owl, whose home is in the Arctic, is a rare visitor to southern Illinois. Individual owls were spotted in Gallatin County in 2018 and in Pulaski County in 2012. *Magic of the Snowy Owl* will explore how this bird lives and raises its young in one of the world's harshest environments.

Slide Tour: Springtime Birding in South Texas

Saturday, January 26, 10-11am
Cache River Wetlands Center

John Schwegman will be our travel guide to explore outstanding natural areas within vacation driving distance of southern Illinois, no passport needed! This slide program includes birds of the south Texas "Hill Country," birds and other wildlife attracted to water holes in the scrubby ranch lands, birds of the lower Rio Grande Valley and migrant songbirds streaming northward on South Padre Island.

FEBRUARY

Frog & Toad Survey Volunteer Orientation

Saturday, February 2, 1-3pm
Cache River Wetlands Center

Try a new venture by assisting with listening surveys of the frogs and toads of the Cache River Watershed for the Illinois Natural History Survey! Materials will be provided for the surveys, conducted four times between February and June.

Nature Movie: Ants

Thursday, February 14, matinee 2-3pm, evening 6-7pm
Cache River Wetlands Center

From vast underground caverns, working class armies pour forth to defend their homes and families. To learn more about the structure of ant colonies and their function in the natural order of things, join us for the NOVA program *Ants: Little Creatures Who Run the World*.

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Cache River Watershed**



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Slide Tour: Newfoundland and the Gaspé Peninsula

Saturday, February 16, 10-11am
Cache River Wetlands Center

John Schwegman will be our travel guide to explore outstanding natural areas within vacation driving distance of southern Illinois, no passport needed! This slide program covers the west coast of Newfoundland, including coastal tundra, rare orchids, a beached whale, icebergs and more. We'll also visit the sea bird nesting island of Bonaventure to see the large nesting colony of gannets, common murrelets and razorbills.

MARCH

Nature Movie: Armadillo

Thursday, March 14, matinee 2-3pm, evening 6-7pm
Cache River Wetlands Center

Nine banded armadillos have moved into Illinois. Though the giant armadillo is the subject of this NATURE program, *Hotel Armadillo* helps us better understand the nature of armadillos and their place in their native ecosystems.

Slide Tour: Spring Wildflowers and Birds of the Great Smoky Mountains

Saturday, March 16, 10-11am
Cache River Wetlands Center

The diversity of wildflowers in Great Smoky Mountains National Park, just a six-hour drive away, is unique in eastern North America. With John Schwegman as your guide, see trilliums, violets and much more, along with a variety of nesting and migrating birds, including the rare Swainson's warbler.

Hummingbirds – Winged Jewels

Saturday, March 23, 1-3pm
Cache River Wetlands Center

Get ready for the spring migration of hummingbirds by learning how to prepare your yard or garden for their arrival. The right habitat will supply these jewels of the sky with enough food and nesting opportunities that they will make their home in your neighborhood.

Beginning Birding Basics

Saturday, March 30, 9-11am
Cache River Wetlands Center

Need help in how to tell one red bird, or one blue bird, or one yellow bird from another? This program by Master Naturalist Anne Parmley will concentrate on the field marks and sounds of birds commonly found in southern Illinois. An optional hike will follow, weather permitting.

APRIL

A Shape in Time and Space

Sunday, April 7, 1:30-2:30pm
Cache River Wetlands Center

Retired archaeologist and author Michael McNerney traces the history of the necked discoid gravemarker, which appears in 41 cemeteries in 12 counties of southern Illinois.

Senior Van Tour via Tunnel Hill State Trail

Thursday, April 11, various departure times
Cache River Wetlands Center

Explore the history, hydrology and wildlife along a section of the Tunnel Hill State Trail between the Cache River Wetlands Center and Vienna on this guided van tour for seniors and persons with physical limitations. For departure times and required reservation, please call the Wetlands Center at 618-657-2064.

Nature Movie: Whooping Crane

Thursday, April 11, matinee 2-3pm, evening 6-7pm
Cache River Wetlands Center

The whooping crane is a very rare bird. In 1941, only 15 remained in the last wild flock in North America. In 2004, ten chicks from an artificial breeding program were chosen as pioneers to start a new flock. This month's film, the NATURE program *Flight School*, tells their story.

Introduction to Citizen Science

Friday, April 12, 9:30am-2pm
Cache River Wetlands Center

Do you enjoy making observations in nature and want to share them with others, but don't know where to start? Join Erin Medvecz from University of Illinois Extension to learn about citizen scientist opportunities and how to collect and share data. Programs covered include Project Budburst, I-TICK (Illinois Tick Inventory Network), Wild Spotter or EDDMaps (Early Detection & Distribution Mapping System), Project FeederWatch or eBird, and CoCoRaHS (Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Show Network). Note: this list is subject to change. The day will include indoor and outdoor components. Please bring a sack lunch.

Home Sweet Home

Saturday, April 27, 1-3pm
Cache River Wetlands Center

Share in the excitement of birds taking up residence in your yard by examining the construction of birds' nests. Learn how to build an easily constructed nesting box to install on your property, and learn about other nesting box designs to encourage a variety of bird species to your landscape.

MAY

Landscaping with Native Plants

Sunday, May 5, 1-2pm
Cache River State Natural Area

Want a sustainable landscape that is low maintenance and attractive to wildlife and pollinators? Learn how you can use indigenous plants to add beauty and diversity to your yard.

Galls Gone Wild

Saturday, May 18, 10-11am
Cache River Wetlands Center

Tricia Bethke, Forest Pest Outreach Coordinator, State of Illinois, will discuss galls' natural history, how to identify and manage them, and what's causing galls to persist in a changing climate.

Exploring Cave Creek Glade

Saturday, May 25, 10am-noon
Cache River State Natural Area, Cave Creek Glade Access

Join botanist Erin Medvecz for a wildflower hike at Cave Creek Glade. Hike the steep trail to the top of the glade to see a spectacular display of purple coneflowers in bloom. For directions to meeting place, call the Wetlands Center at 618-657-2064.

JUNE

Introduction to Orienteering

Saturday, June 8, 1-3pm
Cache River Wetlands Center

This workshop will introduce basic orienteering concepts: how to use a compass, measure distances with paces and traverse an orienteering course. Participants will be provided with the use of a compass and a course map, and will practice new-found skills along a predetermined course.

“Come Fish With Us” Fishing Clinics

Thursdays, June 13 and 20, 9-11am
Cache River Wetlands Center

Youth catch-and-release fishing clinic instructors will present fishing rules and regulations; basic instructions on baiting a hook, tying a knot and casting; tactics for catching fish; and how to return fish to the water. The free Urban Fishing Program clinics are targeted to children ages 16 and younger, but anyone interested in learning basic fishing techniques can attend. Equipment and bait are supplied by IDNR. Adults are not required to have a fishing license to assist during this program. Please register in advance by calling the Wetlands Center at 618-657-2064. For more information on the Urban Fishing Program, visit www.ifishillinois.org/programs/Urban_Fishing.html

Invasive Species: Identification & Management

Saturday, June 22, 9:30-noon
Cache River Wetlands Center

Erin Medvecz, University of Illinois Extension, and Nick Seaton, River to River Cooperative Weed Management Area, will share

tips and tricks for easily identifying invasive species found in southern Illinois. Learn about the options and tools needed to improve the quality of your land by successfully managing these unwanted invasives. This program will include indoor and outdoor components.

JULY

Nature Note Cards

Saturday, July 13, 10am-noon
Cache River Wetlands Center

Use a creative technique to bring nature into your life! Learn how to use pressed flowers, vines, various plant parts collected from trees and a variety of other natural items to create personal note cards. Each participant will have the opportunity to create two note cards with envelopes.

“Come Fish With Us” Fishing Clinics

Thursdays, July 11 and 18, 9-11am
Cache River Wetlands Center

The Urban Fishing Program and IDNR will present two more free youth catch-and-release fishing clinics: see June 13 and 20 calendar entry for complete details. Please register in advance by calling the Wetlands Center at 618-657-2064.

AUGUST

Reptiles in the Neighborhood

Saturday, August 24, 1-4pm
Location: Cache River Wetlands Center/Heron Pond Trail

How familiar are you with the common reptiles of southern Illinois? Can you tell a venomous snake from a non-venomous one? Do you know which skink has a blue-tipped tail, or why some male turtles have longer nails? Join us for an up close and personal interaction with reptiles native to southernmost Illinois. The one-hour indoor program concludes with an optional hike to look for cold-blooded creatures at Heron Pond.



Nature Fest at Cache River Days

Saturday, September 7, all day

Location: Ball Park, Ullin, IL

Join us for a full day of festivities in the Village of Ullin! Celebrate the Cache with live wildlife exhibits, nature activities, arts and crafts, live music, food, guided hikes and more. Cypress Creek Wildlife Refuge will provide free canoe tours at various times throughout the day. Limited space on canoe tours, please register in advance by calling Cypress Creek at 618-634-2231.

Which Grass Is Which?

Saturday, September 7, 10am-noon

Cache River Wetlands Center

Identifying grasses can be tricky! Join Erin Medvecz, University of Illinois Extension, to learn tips and techniques to help identify 30 different grasses in southern Illinois. After the presentation, take a hike with Erin to identify grasses around the Wetlands Center.

Monarch Phenomenon

Saturday, September 21, 10am-1pm

Cache River Wetlands Center

The magnificent monarch butterfly migrates up to 2,500 miles from North America to central Mexico for the winter. Monarch Watch Association has been tagging and monitoring migrating monarchs since 1992. Join us for a program from 10-11am to learn the monarch's natural history, and then spend the rest of the day capturing, tagging and releasing monarch butterflies.

OCTOBER

Fall Migration "Mini-Sit"

Late September or early October, TBA, 9am-noon

Cache River State Natural Area

Our objective for this bird-watching event is to record as many species as possible in the Cache River State Natural Area. Each team will sit in a 17-foot diameter circle for three hours, tallying all the birds they can identify by sight or sound. Data will be recorded on eBird hotspots; birdwatchers of all levels are welcome. Teams will be assigned a location: please register in advance by calling the Wetlands Center at 618-657-2064. If you can't get a team together but want to participate, call or stop by to see what access points are available. Bring a lawn chair, binoculars or a scope, and snacks to enjoy your morning. Event will be followed by a potluck at the Cache River Wetlands Center; feel free to bring a dish to share. Our "Mini Sit" is a spin-off of the "Big Sit" that will occur internationally October 12-13.

Senior Van Tour via Tunnel Hill State Trail

Friday, October 25, various departure times

Tunnel Hill State Trail Parking Lot, Tunnel Hill, IL

Explore the history, hydrology and wildlife along a section of the Tunnel Hill State Trail between Tunnel Hill and New Burnside on this guided van tour for seniors and persons with physical limitations. For departure times and required reservation, call the Cache River Wetlands Center at 618-657-2064.

Guided Hike at Cedar Bluff

Saturday, October 26, noon-2pm

Ferne Clyffe State Park/Cedar Bluff

Join us for a fall hike at Cedar Bluff Natural Area, an annex of Ferne Clyffe State Park. Be rewarded with bluffs over 50 feet tall, rocky overhangs, a shelter cave and dramatic views of southern Illinois' fall colors. For meeting place directions, please call the Wetlands Center at 618-657-2064.

Boo at the Slough

Sunday, October 27, 1-3:30pm

Cache River Wetlands Center

This program engages elementary to middle school-aged children on a guided trick-or-treat adventure through the Wetlands Center and Egret Slough Trail. The 0.5 mile hike offers a chance for families to interact with misunderstood creatures of the swamp and to enjoy the magic of Halloween. Children are welcome to wear Halloween costumes. To register, please call the Wetlands Center at 618-657-2064.

NOVEMBER

Guided Hike to Max Creek

Saturday, November 2, noon-3pm

Shawnee National Forest/Max Creek

Explore more of Johnson County as we travel to Max Creek, which might not be just another picturesque creek. This scenic area is infamous for the legend of a "vortex" where some hikers say they become somewhat disoriented, dizzy, or otherwise uneasy. For meeting place directions, please call the Wetlands Center at 618-657-2064.

DECEMBER

Annual Christmas Bird Count

Monday, December 16, 6am-sunset

Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge

This annual all-day census of early winter bird populations has been conducted by thousands of volunteers throughout the U.S. for more than 100 years, resulting in the longest-running database in ornithology. All ages and skill levels welcome. Questions, call Cypress Creek at 618-634-2231.

Friends of the Cache River Watershed is a non-profit group of citizens dedicated to protecting, enhancing and sharing this unique natural area. We invite you to become a member and receive our digital newsletter, invitations to special events, discounts on Friends' merchandise and more. Please visit www.friendsofthecache.org and click JOIN. For regular news and updates, like us on Facebook.

