Nature Programs

FREE! Nature Center Pre-K Fridays
Drop-in Fridays, January 17-February 28, 9am-12pm
Anita Purves Nature Center
Age 6 and Under with adult

Kids and their families can drop by the nature center to discover self-guided activities just for little naturalists. Your adventures may lead you outdoors as weather permits, so come prepared! Themes are announced the week before each program. Call 217-384-4062 for more information or follow the Anita Purves Nature Center on Facebook. We request a $2/child free-will donation.

Nature Play Kids
Fridays, March 6-April 17, 10-11am
Friendship Grove Nature Playscape
Recommended for Ages 3-6; kids under 6 months attend free
Fee: $4/child

Bring your young ones to the nature center for creative outdoor playtime with guidance and additional supplies from a Nature Play Facilitator. Everyone is welcome regardless of ability. Weekly themes depend on current events in nature. To keep these programs relevant to the changing seasons, themes are announced the week before each program. Call 217-384-4062 for more information or follow the Anita Purves Nature Center on Facebook. Pre-registration is encouraged so we have enough supplies for everyone. Drop-ins are welcome, in which case the $4/child fee is to be paid upon arrival.

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Forest Preschool
Monday & Wednesday, March 23-April 29, 8am-12pm
Anita Purves Nature Center
Ages 3-5; must be toilet trained

This budding program for children who have not yet attended kindergarten takes place entirely outdoors no matter the weather! Drop off is at 8am at the Friendship Grove Nature Playscape. From there kids will head into Busey Woods for themed nature explorations. Daily snacks are enjoyed around the campfire. More information is available in the Forest Preschool Parent Manual online at www.urbanaparks.org/programs/nature-programs

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Follow the Anita Purves Nature Center on Facebook for the most up-to-date program information, or sign up here to receive the nature center’s monthly e-newsletter: www.urbanaparks.org/e-news/
Adults Only Owl Prowl
Saturday, February 22, 5-7pm
Anita Purves Nature Center
Age 15 and Up
Explore Busey Woods at night in search of owls with Illinois Natural History Survey Ornithologist, Tara Beveroth. Start with a presentation on native Illinois owls, then head outside to listen for their calls. After the hike, meet the Anita Purves Nature Center’s resident screech owls and warm up with hot cocoa. Come prepared for wet/cold/slippery conditions. Participants may hike on soft, uneven surfaces. Pending weather conditions, this program may be rescheduled.

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Owl Prowl for All
Friday, February 28, 5-7pm
Anita Purves Nature Center
Age 6 and Up; under 15 with registered adult
This program is a special opportunity to explore Busey Woods at night in search of wild owls. We will start with a short presentation indoors, then hit the trail! After the hike, meet the nature center’s resident screech owls, warm up with hot cocoa, and dissect a real owl pellet! Come prepared for wet/cold/slippery conditions. Participants may hike on soft, uneven surfaces. Pending weather conditions, this program may be rescheduled.

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Birding for Beginners
with the Champaign County Audubon Society
Saturday, March 28, 9-11am
Anita Purves Nature Center
Age 8 and Up; under 15 with registered adult
This workshop is for people with little or no birding experience. Learn how to use binoculars, spot and identify common local birds and discover a bit about each bird’s natural history. We will spend time indoors getting acquainted with bird watching and then try out new skills during a hike in the woods. All equipment will be provided, including a trail snack.

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Searching for Salamanders
with the Society of Wetland Scientists
Saturday, April 11, 10-11:30am
Anita Purves Nature Center
All Ages; under 15 with registered adult
Explore Busey Woods with University of Illinois wetland scientists! Investigate the bizarre and extraordinary life that lurks in the seasonal ponds, including the elusive smallmouth salamanders. You may get wet, so dress for mess.

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Spring Wildflower ID
with the Society of Wetland Scientists
Saturday, April 18, 10-11:30am
Anita Purves Nature Center
Age 15 and Up
Explore Busey Woods with University of Illinois wetland scientists! See what spring wildflowers are in bloom and learn how to identify different plant species. This guided exploration will follow soft trails, so wear shoes that can get muddy.

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Forest Sensory Walks
Various Dates, 9:30-11:30am
Anita Purves Nature Center
Age 15 and Up
Experience the therapeutic effects of Shinrin-Yoku, the practice of immersing or “bathing” the senses in the atmosphere of the forest. Proven health benefits of time in nature include reduced blood pressure and stress (cortisol) and increased immune functioning, energy and focus. Enjoy a slow, mindful guided walk through Busey Woods as you awaken your senses and absorb nature. Each walk will include a variety of sensory awareness activities and local wild edibles.

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Live Animals!
Come meet the owls, turtles and snakes at the Anita Purves Nature Center and learn how you can “Adopt an Education Animal.” For an up-close visit with the screech owls, attend the Owl Prowl for All or the Adults Only Owl Prowl (see above).
FREE! Managing Mugwort
Saturday, March 28, 11am-12pm
Meadowbrook Park - Race St entrance
Age 18 and Up
Mugwort is an invasive species that we are finding in the organic gardens at Meadowbrook Park and may be in your home garden, too. Join Urbana Park District staff to learn the best practices for removing the aggressive plant and minimizing its re-sprouts. The program is free, please call 217-384-4062 to let us know you are coming.

FREE! The Scoop on Soil
TBA Date & Time
Meadowbrook Park - Race St entrance
Age 18 and Up
A healthy garden begins with healthy soil. Join park district staff and a soil expert to help navigate the best soil practices as you prepare your Meadowbrook Organic Garden plot. Program time and date to be announced. Call 217-384-4062 for more information.

Organic Gardens: Community Gardening in Meadowbrook Park
Growing Season: March 1-November 1, 2020
Meadowbrook Park - Race St entrance
Age 18 and Up
Garden at the oldest local organic community gardens! Since 1975, the Meadowbrook Organic Garden program has supported healthy bodies and a healthy community. We provide space, water, hoses and wheelbarrows. You supply tools, plants, labor, and optional fencing. A garden supervisor will assist with questions or concerns. Garden plots are rented in "as is" condition and participation is at your own risk. This is a community garden and interaction with the general public is expected and encouraged. For more information, call 217-384-4062 or read the garden manual at www.urbanaparks.org/parks/meadowbrook-park/.

To Register for a Garden Plot:
• Register by calling 217-367-1544 or completing the registration form on page 79. **Online registration is not available.**
• In addition to the plot rental fee, gardeners pay a $30/plot deposit. The deposit is returned at the end of the growing season if the gardener abides by the Urbana Park District’s published guidelines. Returning gardeners in good standing earn a discounted deposit.
• New gardeners must attend a Garden Meeting at the Anita Purves Nature Center where garden plot selection will take place. You must register and pay for the garden at least two days prior to attending a meeting.
• Returning gardeners are welcome and encouraged to attend any garden meeting at no cost. Call 217-384-4062 to let us know you are coming.

Garden Meetings at Anita Purves Nature Center:

<table>
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<td>Tue, Mar 17</td>
<td>6-7pm</td>
<td>Mar 15</td>
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<td>Mar 30</td>
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<tr>
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*Raised Plots are ADA Accessible

Be on the Lookout for Pop-Up Programs!
Naturalists from the Anita Purves Nature Center occasionally conduct last-minute or “pop-up” programs when special events occur in nature such as salamanders laying eggs, fairy shrimp in the ponds, or thousands of wildflowers blooming in Busey Woods! Look for pop-up program announcements on social media by following the Anita Purves Nature Center and Urbana Park District on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Or visit www.rainoutline.com, search Urbana Park District, and sign up to receive email or text alerts for nature programs.
The Urbana Park District is leading the community in environmental stewardship and education. Check out these new programs, and make a difference with us!

**Microplastics in the Environment**
with the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center
**Saturday, January 25, 4-5pm**
Anita Purves Nature Center
**Age 15 and Up**

Since the emergence of mass-produced plastics in the 1940s, the global appetite for these materials has skyrocketed. Due to their widespread use and disposal, plastics and microplastics (particles less than 5mm in size) are everywhere. Although there is evidence of wildlife and human exposure to microplastics, no one really knows if they are harmful. What is known is that they contain co-contaminants (additives and heavy metals) and are extremely persistent. Many research efforts are currently underway to address questions about microplastics; however, there still is a great deal of work to be done. Join guest presenter John Scott, Senior Chemist at the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center, whose current research interests include microplastics, emerging contaminants in the environment and utilization of waste materials.

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**DIY Spring Cleaning Workshop**
**Sunday, April 19, 2-4pm**
Phillips Recreation Center
**Age 15 and Up**

If you are curious about how to make your own essential oil All Purpose Cleaner or Air Freshener, then join Jodi Adams, our certified yoga teacher and essential oils guru to learn how. She will guide you through the process, while sharing tales of her time spent in the jungles of Costa Rica, using essential oils for virtually everything — from bug repellent to muscle comfort. Using the wisdom of plants that naturally clean the air and the surfaces of your home, these essential oils will help protect you and those that you love using safe, non-toxic formulas that are specially crafted with oils that are antiviral, antimicrobial and purifying. The All Purpose Cleaner can be used as a safe alternative to commercially sold products. The Air Freshener can be used in your closet, on your couch, in the car, or on your yoga mat. This make-and-take workshop allows you to get hands on experience using the oils. The cost of the workshop is $12 for either the bug spray or the mat spray or $20 for both.

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**Don’t Call It Dirt: The Science of Soil**
**Tuesday, April 14, 6-8pm**
Anita Purves Nature Center
**Age 15 and Up**

Dirt is what you find under your fingernails, but soil is what grows your food! Get your hands dirty during this interactive program about soil—a complex and dynamic natural resource. It supports plant growth, affects water and air quality, and helps clean wastes. Explore how soil is made, methods to conserve it and the chemistry and composition behind it. Bring your garden gloves and wear shoes that can get muddy.

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For more information on the Urbana Park District’s green initiatives, see page 71 and www.urbanaparks.org/about-us/green-initiatives/

**Urbana Park District Rainout Line - Download the app or call us.**

For information about program cancellations, including weather cancellations, and for updates about special events or other key happenings at the Urbana Park District, you may call the Sports, Program, and Event Hotline at 217-367-9575 ext. 20 for Nature Programs. For evening sports programs, this line will be updated after 4:30pm on weekdays and one hour before the scheduled program or sports on weekends. All other updates will be made as conditions change. You may also find out about the Rainoutline App for your phone at: http://www.urbanaparks.org/events/rain-outs-and-cancellations/
The Great Backyard Bird Count and Nature Store Grand Re-Opening
Saturday, February 15, 9am-4pm
• Guided Hikes: 10am & 3pm
Anita Purves Nature Center
All Ages - under 15 with adult
Become a citizen scientist by helping to count birds. Anyone can participate—count for as little or as long as you wish. Record the birds you see through the windowed Wildlife Observation Room and during guided hikes, and take home a Citizen Scientist button! Champaign County Audubon Society members will provide instruction in bird identification. Dress for the weather, and bring binoculars if you have them or borrow a pair at the nature center. Free activity stations will also be available. To learn more about this annual four-day-long nationwide event, visit gbcbc.birdcount.org/.

Sunday Morning Bird Walks
Sundays, March 1-May 31, 7:30-9am
Meet in Anita Purves Nature Center parking lot
All Ages - under 15 with adult
Birding is an adventure for any age. Walk with Champaign County Audubon Society leaders and search for birds in Busey Woods and Crystal Lake Park. Learn and practice basic bird watching and identification techniques. Bring a pair of binoculars if you have them or you may borrow one from the Anita Purves Nature Center with a refundable credit card deposit of $15 (pick up Monday-Saturday 9am-4pm).

Woodcock Walk
Wednesday, March 25, 6:45-8:15pm
Meadowbrook Interpretive Center; Race St entrance
All Ages - under 15 with adult
Treat yourself to an evening performance in the prairie as we witness the “sky dance” of the American woodcock, visible only during the first few weeks of spring. Discover why this strange bird is so remarkable. We will begin with a short presentation inside the barn, then head down the accessible path to the prairie. Bring a pair of binoculars if you have them or you may borrow one from the Anita Purves Nature Center with a refundable credit card deposit of $15 (pick up Monday-Saturday 9am-4pm).

Super Full Moon Hike
Tuesday, April 7, 8-9:30pm
Anita Purves Nature Center
All Ages - under 15 with adult
Sharpen your nocturnal senses and let the super-moon light your way during this guided hike without flashlights! Listen for owls and other creatures of the night, and discover a new side of Busey Woods. Call 217-384-4062 by Monday, April 6 to let us know you are coming.

Earth Day/New Moon Night Hike
Wednesday, April 22, 8-9:30pm
Anita Purves Nature Center
All Ages - under 15 with adult
The new moon is the darkest night of the month, and this year it falls on Earth Day! Celebrate Dark Sky Week, discover what creatures are awake, and explore the night sky during this guided hike where we will attempt to keep the flashlights off. Call 217-384-4062 by Tuesday, April 21 to let us know you are coming.

EarthCare Expo & Nature Hike
Saturday, April 25, 1-4pm
• Nature Hike: 1-2pm
• EarthCare Expo: 2-4pm
Anita Purves Nature Center
All Ages - under 15 with adult
Celebrate Earth Day as you meet community groups and engage with hands-on displays and activities for all ages. Co-sponsored by the Urbana Park District, Faith in Place, and Interfaith Alliance C-U, the event will feature displays from partners throughout the Champaign-Urbana area. A selection of EarthCare-themed short films will be shown at 2pm and 3pm; all ages will enjoy these thought-provoking gems. Enjoy a nature hike through Busey Woods. Kids’ activities will be offered at the adjacent Friendship Grove Nature Playscape. No pre-registration is required. Call 217-384-4062 with questions.

“Connecting You to Nature” Hikes
Wednesdays, 5:30-7:30pm
All Ages - under 15 with adult
Join Natural Areas Coordinator, Matt Balk, during these special hikes though district natural areas. Learn about restoration and how to identify native and invasive plants. See how each natural area changes throughout the season, and lend a hand removing invasive plants or trash. Your explorations may take you off-trail, so dress in shoes and clothes that can get dirty. These hikes take place in rain or shine. Trail snacks are provided! Call 217-384-4062 by 4pm each Wednesday to let us know you are coming.

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<td>Busey Woods - Meet at Anita Purves Nature Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weaver Park - Meet at the parking lot off Main St</td>
<td>March 11, April 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meadowbrook Park - Meet at Race St parking lot south of Windsor Rd</td>
<td>March 18, April 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perkins Road Wet Prairie - Meet at the Dog Park parking lot on Perkins Rd, a half mile east of Cunningham Ave</td>
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Environmental Education Opportunities

Each year the Anita Purves Nature Center staff engage with thousands of elementary and middle school students involved in educational tours and programs.

**Teachers** - Bring your class for a School Tour through Busey Woods, Meadowbrook Park’s Spomer Prairie, or Weaver Park. Programs at Busey Woods include time to explore the nature center’s Field Station. Or, invite a Naturalist in the Classroom to visit your school. An environmental educator will bring hands-on materials, interactive lessons, and as related to the topic, a live owl, turtle, toad, worms or snake to your classroom.

All programs meet grade-specific Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards. Teachers receive supplemental activity ideas to connect the real world to the classroom. The Nature Connections Brochure with tour information is available for download at: www.urbanaparks.org/programs/nature-programs/.

**Are you looking for a program to compliment a unit or lesson you are teaching?** We can work with you to develop a special request environmental education program to fit your specific needs.

**Requests must be made at least four weeks in advance.**

**Nature Items You Can Borrow**

The Urbana Park District offers a wide variety of education loan items at the Anita Purves Nature Center. Items such as curriculum guides and natural history reference materials are available as well as themed loan boxes. These boxes include natural history specimens, standards-based lesson plans for a variety of grades and materials to assist you. For more information on available loan boxes and photos of what’s inside, visit [www.urbanaparks.org/facilities/environmental-education-loan-boxes/](http://www.urbanaparks.org/facilities/environmental-education-loan-boxes/). Educators in Urbana-Champaign who do not have time to transport loan materials may request pick-up or delivery for a small fee.

**FREE! Be a School Tour Volunteer**

**By Appointment**

Anita Purves Nature Center
Age 18 and Up

Share the excitement of teaching while exploring Busey Woods, Weaver Park, and Meadowbrook Park’s Spomer Prairie. Volunteers learn to guide many fun and easy nature activities as they lead tours at these sites. To be a volunteer, you must be available on a weekday morning or afternoon.

“School Tour Volunteers play an important role in our community. Volunteers welcome excited children into natural areas and guide them while encouraging moments of curiosity and discovery. They help to open young minds to the wonders of the environment, and we are thankful for their valuable contributions.” - Chelsea Prahl, Environmental Education Coordinator

**Connecting Classes with Nature Sponsorship Program**

The Urbana Park District seeks funding from businesses, organizations and individual donors to cover the costs associated with environmental programming for local schools.

**Teachers**, for more information email Chelsea Prahl at ckprahl@urbanaparks.org or call the Anita Purves Nature Center at 217-384-4062.

**Businesses/Organizations/Individuals**, for information on helping students attend nature education programs at the Urbana Park District, contact Ellen Kirsanoff at 217-367-1536 or erkirsanoff@urbanaparks.org.

**Educators, Stay Connected!**

Join the Nature Connections Facebook Group to stay informed about environmental education opportunities, programs and other resources the nature center has to offer. The Anita Purves Nature Center is your classroom extension where learning comes naturally! [www.facebook.com/groups/natureconnections/about/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/natureconnections/about/)

For more information about these services, contact Chelsea Prahl, Educational Coordinator, at 217-384-4062 ext. 360 or email ckprahl@urbanaparks.org.
Adopt an Education Animal

The nature center houses a number of education animals that demonstrate the variety of wildlife living in Illinois. Most have injuries that would compromise their survival in the wild, or were captive-bred. All of the animals are on exhibit and featured during educational programs with schools, scouts and the general public. In 2019 these animals visited over 50 different groups!

You could be part of their lives! Your financial contribution, or “adoption”, goes directly toward the animals’ medical care, housing and food. This is a great way to support local environmental education! Adoptions also make great gifts to the animal lovers in your life.

Upon adoption you receive:
• Fact sheet with the animal’s history and photographs
• Adoption certificate
• Your name on the donor exhibit in the Field Station for the period of the adoption
• Invitation to a private adoption party at the Anita Purves Nature Center

You can also help increase visibility of wildlife in the outdoor habitat gardens by donating bird seed!

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<th>Cost/Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turtle or Toad</td>
<td>$15</td>
<td>$80</td>
<td>$150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snake</td>
<td>$30</td>
<td>$160</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owl</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$260</td>
<td>$525</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Call 217-384-4062 or visit www.urbanaparks.org/facilities/anita-purves-nature-center/ for an adoption application and additional information.

Teach with a Turtle
Borrow the Reptiles and Amphibians loan box and have a live turtle in your classroom for up to two weeks! This is a great way to have a classroom education animal for a short time and provide a hands-on experience for your students. This box includes supplemental activities involving turtle care and feeding instructions along with standards-based reptile and amphibian lesson plans. This loan box delivers an unforgettable experience for you and your students!
The Urbana Park District has been awarded the Best of the Best Award for Best Green Practices from the Illinois Association of Park Districts!

Environmental issues are important to the Urbana Park District. The District is a leader in implementing programs and practices that demonstrate the value of responsible environmental practices. The “Green Team” committee implements and oversees environmental initiatives district-wide.

The Urbana Park District follows these environmentally responsible practices:
1. Provide environmental education and interpretation opportunities for the public (see Nature Programs on pages 64-71).
2. Promote preservation, restoration management and stewardship of open spaces, nature preserves, waters, greenways and trails.
3. Conserve and protect water and soil, enhance air quality, limit the production and release of damaging pollutants, and protect plants and wildlife.
4. Conserve energy resources and utilize alternative energy technologies when possible.
5. Re-use or recycle natural materials and manufactured products whenever possible; cooperate with local government and community groups to support recycling efforts.
6. Purchase and use environmentally safe and sensitive products whenever feasible.

For more information about Urbana Park District green initiatives, visit www.urbanaparks.org/about-us/green-initiatives/.