

## **2020 Wildflower Walkabout Series**

An Annual Favorite Hike Series Returns! Join Severson Dells and the Natural Land Institute staff and volunteers on an exploration of many of the local wildflower hotspots. Wildflower Walks showcase what is currently in bloom at various woodland and prairie preserves around Winnebago, Boone and Ogle Counties. All walks will begin at 6:00 p.m. No fee for the walks, but membership in Severson Dells and/or the Natural Land Institute is encouraged. For more information, please call 815/335-2915 (SD) or 815/964-6666 (NLI). [www.seversondells.org](http://www.seversondells.org), [www.naturalland.org](http://www.naturalland.org)

### **Wednesday, April 29 - Anna Page Park**

Barbara and Dan Williams will lead this walk at Rockford Park District's Anna Page Park. We will travel through a variety of plant communities, from creek bottoms to maple forest to view marsh marigolds, trillium, blue-eyed Marys and numerous other spring flowers. Moderate hiking, possibly with muddy areas. We will meet at the large parking lot at the westernmost point along the park loop road (not the parking area by the playground and bathrooms).

### **Tuesday, May 5 – Piscasaw Fen**

Join Aaron Minson and Brian Hale on a hunt for spring wildflowers in the fen and oak savanna habitats of Piscasaw Fen. Guests will also see the habitat restoration at this Boone County Conservation District site. The Piscasaw Fen is located at 8605 Norris Ln., Capron. Easy hiking.

### **Wednesday, May 13- Howard D. Colman Dells Nature Preserve**

Greg Keilback of Byron Forest Preserve District will lead this hike on property owned and managed by NLI. This 96-acre Nature Preserve is located along Hall Creek, southwest of Rockford. One of the attractive features of this preserve is a series of cliffs known as the dells. Many unique plants restricted to limestone and dolomite outcrops are found here, as well as some northern relict plants. Located near the intersection of East Severson Road and North Weldon Road. From Meridian and Montague Road, drive south and turn west onto McGregor Road, turn north onto Weldon Road. Moderate-difficult hiking.

### **Tuesday, May 19- Pecatonica River Forest Preserve**

Mark Keister and Dave Koska will take us on a tour of the Pecatonica River Forest Preserve, which includes river edge floodplain forest, oxbow pond marshes and upland forest along the Pecatonica River. The site has outstanding spring flora and bird life. Please meet at 7260 Judd Road, Pecatonica at the picnic shelter. Hiking will be easy to moderate.

### **Wednesday, May 27- Cedar Cliff Forest Preserve**

Explore the newest forest preserve with Mike Groves and John Peterson from the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County. We will walk through a second year restored prairie and head to the forest full of Chinkapin, Bur and Red Oaks on the cliffs overlooking the Rock River, while enjoying the Jack-in-the-pulpit, wild geranium, sharp-lobed hepatica, and bloodroot. Take Highway 2 south past the airport, turn right on

Kishwaukee Road and drive for 3.8 miles. Cedar Cliff Forest Preserve will be on the right side of the road at 7901 Kishwaukee Road, Stillman Valley. Moderate-difficult hiking.

### **Tuesday, June 2- Searls Prairie Nature Preserve**

Joni Denker of the Rockford Park District and Jack Armstrong, Severson Dells and Rockford Park District board member, will lead this hike through mesic and wet-mesic prairie where prairie dropseed, Indian grass, and big bluestem grow. This site is one of the highest quality wet prairies in the state. Meet at Searls Park on Central Avenue in Rockford across from the soccer fields. Easy hiking, but the area may be wet.

### **Wednesday, June 10- Bald Hill Prairie Preserve**

Join us for an evening at Bald Hill Prairie Preserve in Mt. Morris with Russell Brunner, Superintendent of Land Management, and Educator Susan Kleiman. This Preserve has endangered woolly milkweed, several recently restored bur oak savannas and is home to the Big Tree Champion for the State of Illinois, an Eastern cottonwood that is 28.5 feet in circumference and 122 feet tall. The preserve is also home to many nesting grassland birds such as bobolinks, Eastern meadowlarks, and short-eared owls. Bald Hill Prairie Preserve address is 5502 North Silver Creek Road, Mt. Morris. Moderate hiking.

### **Tuesday, June 16- Beach Cemetery Prairie Nature Preserve**

Zach Grycan of the Natural Land Institute will be our guide on this 4-acre dry hill prairie in Ogle County. We will see one of the best displays of flora in remnant prairies in northern Illinois, including prairie dropseed, leadplant, and pale purple coneflowers. NLI has owned this area since 1972. From the intersection of IL Rt 251 and Big Mound Road, drive west 2 3/4 miles. The prairie is on the north side of the road-just 1/4 mile east of White Rock Road at 11220 E Big Mound Rd., Davis Junction. Easy hiking.

### **Wednesday, June 24- Harlem Hills Prairie Nature Preserve**

Gary Anderson and Tyler Pelligrini of the Natural Land Institute will offer their expertise on this visit to Harlem Hills Prairie. If we hit it just right, the hills should be bright with the pink and purple of the pale purple coneflowers. The always-beautiful sunset will be a bonus on this favorite of walks. Please meet on Flora Drive in Loves Park. Easy hiking.

### **Tuesday, June 30 - Colored Sands Nature Preserve**

Lee and Lynda Johnson, long-time naturalists, will lead the group on an exploration of the sand country at Colored Sands Forest Preserve. The plant community is unique to dry sand prairies, which once dominated this area but are now very rare. Meet at the Sand Bluff Bird Observatory parking lot, at the end of Haas Road near Durand, with your wildflower book (if you'd like) and bug spray. Easy to moderate hiking.