

2019 *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).

Tuesday, April 23 - 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).

Wednesday, May 1 - Kinnikinnick Creek Conservation Area

Aaron Minson, Boone County Conservation District, and Brian Hale, Conservation District Volunteer, take us through the recently restored prairie and basswood, hickory and white oak forest to explore the wildflowers in northern Boone County. Kinnikinnick Creek Conservation Area is located 3.2 miles north of Route 173 on Caledonia Road. The entrance is just north of North Boone School Road. Moderate hiking.

Tuesday, May 7- Deer Run Forest Preserve

Join us for an evening with Mike Groves and Steve Hornbeck from the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County. We will be on the lookout for Virginia bluebells, trout lilies, red trillium, spring beauties, rue anemones, wild ginger, May apples and more as we enjoy the forest and wetland at Deer Run. Located 3 miles southeast of Rockford city limits on River Road. Easy hiking.

Wednesday, May 15- Pecatonica Wetlands Forest Preserve

Mark Keister and Richard Benning will take us on a tour of the Pecatonica Wetlands 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 birdlife. Please meet at 4550 North Pecatonica Road, Pecatonica. Hiking will be easy to moderate.



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Tuesday, May 21- Burr Oak Valley Preserve

Zach Grycan, Natural Land Institute staff, will lead us through some of this 99-acre property that is owned and managed by NLI. The natural communities we will visit include mesic upland forest, dolomite prairie, dolomite cliff and intermittent stream. Expect to see blue-eyed grass, Columbine, maidenhair fern, and the rare kittentails. Please park at the northern entrance of the preserve at Cross and Crown Lutheran Church, 7404 Elevator Rd. in Roscoe. Moderate hiking.

Wednesday, May 29- Colored Sands Forest 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 now are very rare. Hiking will be easy to moderate. 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.

Tuesday, June 4- Bald Hill Prairie Preserve

Join us for an evening at Bald Hill Prairie Preserve in Mt. Morris with Russell Brunner, Superintendent of Land Management, Todd Tucker, Byron Forest Preserve District Executive Director and Mark Herman, Superintendent of Education. 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.

Wednesday, June 12- Keiselberg Forest Preserve

Lenae Weichel and Dave Koska will lead this trip to discover the natural beauties of native prairie remnants and restoration in North Central Illinois. We will work our way through many prairie and sedge meadow communities from dry to wet. Keiselberg is located at 5801 Swanson Road in Roscoe. Hiking will be easy.

Tuesday, June 18- Harlem Hills Prairie Nature Preserve

Gary and Judy Anderson and Jerry Paulson 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.

Wednesday, June 26 - 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. Easy hiking, but the area may be wet. Meet at Searls Park on Central Avenue in Rockford across from the soccer fields.

