



# Notes from the Dells

January, February, March 2017 Vol. 38 No. 1

## The Snow

Emily Dickinson

It sifts from leaden sieves,  
It powders all the wood,  
It fills with alabaster wool  
The wrinkles of the road.  
It makes an even face  
Of mountain and of plain, —  
Unbroken forehead from the east  
Unto the east again.  
It reaches to the fence,  
It wraps it, rail by rail,  
Till it is lost in fleeces;  
It flings a crystal veil  
On stump and stack and stem, —  
The summer's empty room,  
Acres of seams where harvests were,  
Recordless, but for them.  
It ruffles wrists of posts,  
As ankles of a queen, —  
Then stills its artisans like ghosts,  
Denying they have been.

Originally published in 1896

*The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Series Two*



photo by David Olson



# Happy 2017!!!

With the New Year comes a new chapter at Severson Dells. Don Miller, the Director of Nature Education has retired and I have the pleasure of taking over the reins of his 28-year legacy.

A little about my background. I grew up in California, but my parents and extended family are from northwest Iowa, so the Midwest is not completely foreign to me. I've had wonderful professional opportunities that have allowed me to teach in a variety of different settings to ages ranging from pre-school to retirees. Organizations that I've worked for include: Camp SEA Lab, Aquarium of the Pacific, Children's Maritime Foundation, Tallship Education Academy, Islandwood, the Pacific Science Center and most recently, the Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History.



In my first few weeks I have been blown away by the enthusiasm and community support that Severson Dells is fortunate enough to have. This place is a gem, not only for its natural beauty, but for the people that support it by visiting, volunteering, being members and donors. I could not have asked for a more ideal situation in which to work.

I look forward to getting to know the Severson Dells communities, plant, animal and human alike, as we move into a new year!!

If you would like to get in touch with me, please feel free to give me a call at 815-335-2915 or email at [ann@seversondells.org](mailto:ann@seversondells.org).

Thank you so much for supporting the work of Severson Dells!!

Sincerely,  
Ann Wasser  
Director of Nature Education and Research





# Calendar of Events

**Please register for events at:**  
**[www.seversondells.com/community-programming-1/](http://www.seversondells.com/community-programming-1/) or call 815-335-2915**

## **Severson Naturalist Night • 7:00pm–8:15pm**

**Tuesday Evenings:**

**January 24 – Basics of Ecology**

**February 7 – Geology**

**February 21 – Botany**

**March 7 – Prairie Ecology**

**March 21 – Dendrology**



Do you need a refresher on some of the basics? Join Greg Keilback for an engaging classroom experience on some of his favorite areas of study on the natural world.



## **Family Winter Walk**

**Saturday–January 28th • 10:00am–12:00pm**

Put on your layers and let's head off trail!! Join Greg Keilback for a moderately challenging hike over the hills of Severson Dells. On this family friendly hike, we will explore areas of the preserve not seen from the trail.

## **Bird Monitoring and Natural Resource Management**

**Presented by Tara Beveroth of the Illinois Natural History Survey**

**Thursday–February 2 • 7:00pm**

Bird monitoring can play a vital role in bird survival, as it allows us to track population trends in specific species. Throughout time we have learned that bird monitoring aides us in making decisions regarding the best management practices for birds. Come learn about two ongoing bird monitoring programs we have here in Illinois and the many different ways birds can benefit from collected data.

## **Tour Your Local Environments with Dave Donahue**

**Sunday–February 5 • 1:30pm–3:00pm**

Come and enjoy a photographic walk with nature in the Parks, Forest Preserves and back yards of Winnebago and Boone counties. Dave Donahue will discuss where and when to see the wonderful things our area has to offer. It's not so much about "What to photograph" as it is "What to discover".

photo by David Olson



## Old Time Lantern Walks

**Friday-February 10 and Friday-March 24 • 6:30pm-8:30pm**

Come and enjoy an evening walk in the woods by the light of oil lamps with Greg Keilback. Dress warmly and feel free to bring a thermos of your hot drink of choice. Oil lamps will be provided, but feel free to bring your own oil lamp. Please no other light sources. Open to ages 8 and up.



## Workday and Bonfire

**Saturday-February 18 • 10:00am-1:00pm**

Lend a hand with the restoration crew that has been hard at work removing invasive honeysuckle. Please come out and help build our burn pile and enjoy watching the fruits of your labor with a bonfire.

## Eastern United States Road Trip with Ann Wasser

**Sunday-February 26 • 1:30pm-2:30pm**

Take this opportunity to come and meet the new Director of Severson Dells and learn about her four month road trip through National and state parks, historic points of interest and just plain fun before landing here at Severson Dells.

## Animal Habitats at Severson Dells Girl Scouts - 4th-5th grade

**Saturday-March 11 • 10:00am-12:00pm**

Inviting all Girl Scout Juniors to explore the animals that live at Severson Dells. Join volunteer Jen Shepeck to spend the morning learning about animal habitats and earn the Animal Habitat Badge. If you can't make this date please call to schedule your own date!. Registration required. Requirements: 5 girl minimum/20 girl maximum. \$5/per girl.



## Science Saturday-Mammal Madness!!

**Saturday-March 18 • 10:00am-2:00pm**

*Come out to the Dells for the first in our new monthly Science Saturday series.*

During this day all about mammals, we will explore unique adaptations of mammals, make a mammal tracks field guide to take home and hike the trails. This is a drop in program, so feel free to come anytime between 10am-2pm.

## Bison Impacts on Flora and Fauna in a World-Class Prairie Restoration

**Dr. Holly Jones, Northern Illinois University**

**Thursday-March 30 • 7:00pm**

Learn about the restoration research being done by Dr. Holly Jones and others in her lab to quantify the impacts of bison reintroduction, revegetation, and prescribed fire at Nachusa Grasslands. This includes bird nesting success, small mammal populations, ground and dung beetle responses, and attempting to use a drone to quantify plant response.



photo by Charles Larry

**Please register for events at:**

**[www.seversondells.com/community-programming-1/](http://www.seversondells.com/community-programming-1/) or call 815-335-2915**



# Summer Camp at Severson Dells



Register your camper online at  
[www.seversondells.com/summer-camp/](http://www.seversondells.com/summer-camp/) or call 815-335-2915

## **NATURE PLAY • AGES 4-6 • MONDAY-FRIDAY • 9AM-1PM**

**WILDLIFE WONDERS—\$80 FOR FRIENDS OF SEVERSON DELLS, \$95 FOR NON-MEMBERS**

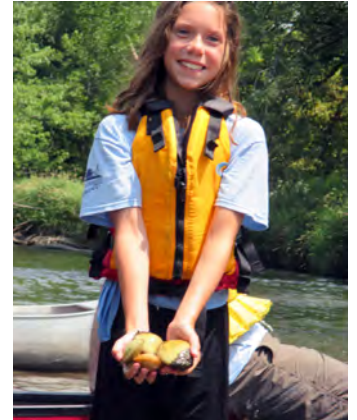
**JUNE 12TH-16TH**

Discover the many critters that call Severson Dells home while hiking the trails, exploring the mud and Hall creek and playing nature games. Come join us for a week of fun in the woods!!

## **ART AND NATURE—\$80 FOR FRIENDS OF SEVERSON DELLS, \$95 FOR NON-MEMBERS**

**JULY 10TH-14TH**

Get crafty and dirty during this week full of finding the art in nature. We will explore the many habitats of Severson Dells while playing with paint and making crafts from natural materials.



## **SEVERSON EXPLORERS • AGES 7-10 • MONDAY-FRIDAY • 9AM-3PM**

**PEEK-INTO-CREEK—\$110 FOR FRIENDS OF SEVERSON DELLS, \$140 FOR NON-MEMBERS**

**SESSION 1: JUNE 19TH-23RD**

**SESSION 2: JULY 17TH-21ST**

Jump into the science of creek life! This week will be full of hiking, watery explorations and the legendary slosh through Hall Creek. Come join us for a week of fun and science in the dells!

## **JUNIOR BIOLOGISTS—\$110 FOR FRIENDS OF SEVERSON DELLS, \$140 FOR NON-MEMBERS**

**JUNE 26TH-30TH**

Are you ready to become a scientist for a week at Severson?! We will dive into the ecology, biology, ornithology and many other *ologies* that make Severson Dells special, while playing nature games and creating a personal field guide to take home.

## **ART AND NATURE—\$110 FOR FRIENDS OF SEVERSON DELLS, \$140 FOR NON-MEMBERS**

**JULY 24TH-28TH**

Take a look at the creative side of Severson Dells! This week full of science, sketching, painting, games and investigations will leave you seeing this place in a whole new light.



## **TEEN ADVENTURES • AGES 12-16**

**JULY 10TH-14TH • 9AM-3PM**

**BLAZING PADDLES CANOE CAMP—**

**\$170 FOR FRIENDS OF SEVERSON DELLS,**

**\$200 FOR NON-MEMBERS**

Join us for a week of adventure by canoe along the waterways of Winnebago County. Each day we will explore a different area (each day will have a different drop off location), learning and improving our paddling technique while learning about the local plants and animals and enjoying river fun.





# EVERYTHING IS INTERRELATED, EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED.

**Greg Keilback**

The word “legacy” has been thrown around in our society so much that it has lost its true meaning. A quick look at the word in your online search engine will show that many nursing homes and assisted living establishments love to have “legacy” in their names, and titles of music albums, song titles, and corporations use legacy to describe everything they do. Cars and trucks are named legacy and celebrities name their babies Legacy. The Webster’s dictionary sitting on my table says that legacy is, “anything handed down from the past, as from an ancestor or predecessor”, but that is such a dry, dull thought. Anything? Anything is a little vague and just makes my mind so full of possibilities that it freezes up in the overload.

If I think about it with an ecological mindset perhaps legacy is equal to impact. Impact cannot be defined by a label of good or bad because it can be one or the other, but probably more apt to be a conglomeration of both. And this of course is purely an anthropocentric perspective; certainly a river or an oak tree has a legacy and cares not if it is positive or negative, just that a part of it continues into the future.

Legacy can be a sharp, explosive single action that changes the paradigms of a society or a landscape, like a lightning bolt striking a prairie hilltop. Or legacy can be a long series of events that leave a trail through history, such as everyday weather dictates what we label “climate”. Legacy is succession. Legacy is fluid, but built by players anchored in their own time.

A forest can remind us of the prairie among which it grew. The prairie’s legacy is the odd bunch grass remaining in a clearing between the trees, or are those grasses just a memory, and the legacy are the trees?

(continued on next page)



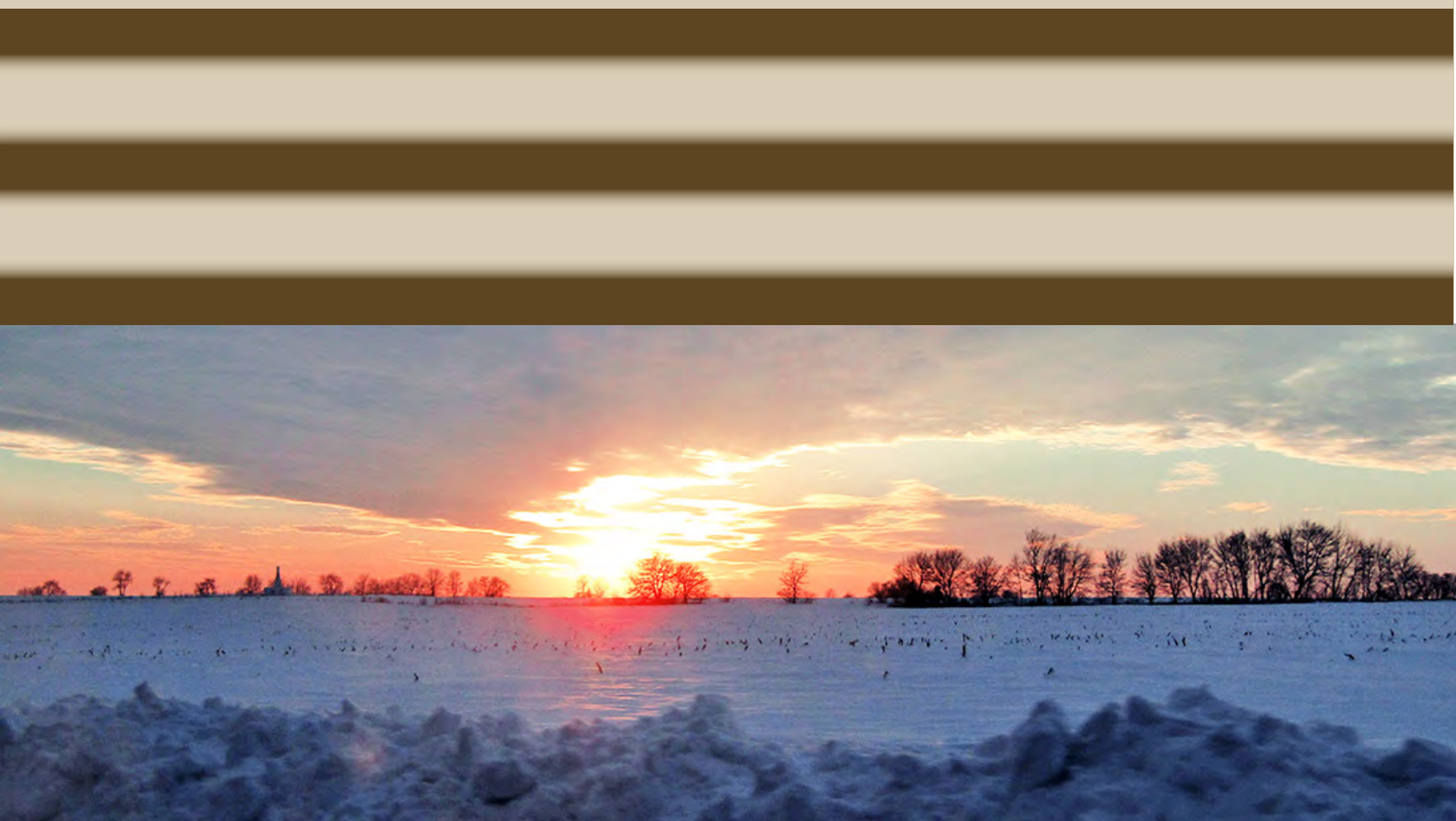
I guess it is how you view it. Do we focus on the events that change our landscape, or do we focus on all that remains constant? The lightning bolt caused the fire, but patches were left unburned. What do you see? Do you preserve the memory of what was before, or leap through the threshold and enter a whole new sere of development?

Are these the thoughts of an oak tree watching prairie fire change the undergrowth to be more conducive for the prairie's own development, or it could be the thoughts of the prairie as its friend fire visits less frequently and causes grass to be weaker under the ever-increasing shade of encroaching timbers.

Change is inevitable and obviously can be viewed with a multitude of opinions, but perhaps it is the legacy of how change affects you that truly will be recorded in time. Success for an oak tree comes from a single acorn. One oak tree can live to be 400 years old and has the time to build a climatic legacy. People do not have that length of time, and so must focus our intentions.

The effect people have on each other is as important as the touch we have on the environment around us. I can plant one tree. I can plant one tree, and I can tell one hundred others to do the same. Even better- after I plant the tree, and tell one hundred others to do the same, I can tell the one hundred to tell one hundred more.

A forest starts with a single acorn, a movement with a single thought. Strong oaks start as saplings amongst the noise of grass, but if lucky enough to survive they rise and tower above - full of future possibilities that, with love and support, can grow to their full potential. A forest is not missed if you look at one tree. You are just watching the growth of the next legacy.



# Nature-Chapter 1

from *Nature; Addresses and Lectures* (1849)

Ralph Waldo Emerson

To go into solitude, a man needs to retire as much from his chamber as from society. I am not solitary whilst I read and write, though nobody is with me. But if a man would be alone, let him look at the stars. The rays that come from those heavenly worlds, will separate between him and what he touches. One might think the atmosphere was made transparent with this design, to give man, in the heavenly bodies, the perpetual presence of the sublime. Seen in the streets of cities, how great they are! If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore; and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God which had been shown! But every night come out these envoys of beauty, and light the universe with their admonishing smile.



The stars awaken a certain reverence, because though always present, they are inaccessible; but all natural objects make a kindred impression, when the mind is open to their influence. Nature never wears a mean appearance. Neither does the wisest man extort her secret, and lose his curiosity by finding out all her perfection. Nature never became a toy to a wise spirit. The flowers, the animals, the mountains, reflected the wisdom of his best hour, as much as they had delighted the simplicity of his childhood. When we speak of nature in this manner, we have a distinct but most poetical sense in the mind. We mean the integrity of impression made by manifold natural objects. It is this which distinguishes the stick of timber of the wood-cutter, from the tree of the poet. The charming landscape which I saw this morning, is indubitably made up of some twenty or thirty farms. Miller owns this field, Locke that, and Manning the woodland beyond. But none of them owns the landscape. There is a property in the horizon which

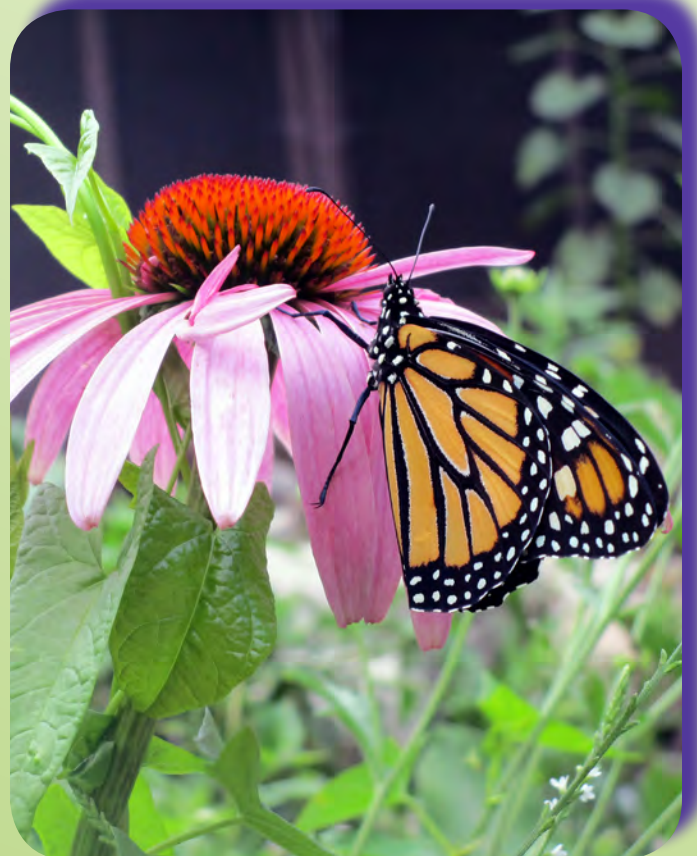
no man has but he whose eye can integrate all the parts, that is, the poet. This is the best part of these men's farms, yet to this their warranty-deeds give no title. To speak truly, few adult persons can see nature. Most persons do not see the sun. At least they have a very superficial seeing. The sun illuminates only the eye of the man, but shines into the eye and the heart of the child. The lover of nature is he whose inward and outward senses are still truly adjusted to each other; who has retained the spirit of infancy even into the era of manhood. His intercourse with heaven and earth, becomes part of his daily food. In the presence of nature, a wild delight runs through the man, in spite of real sorrows. Nature says, — he is my creature, and maugre all his impertinent griefs, he shall be glad with me. Not the sun or the summer alone, but every hour and season yields its tribute of delight; for every hour and change corresponds to and authorizes a different state of the mind, from breathless noon to grimmest midnight. Nature is a setting that fits equally well a comic or a mourning piece.





In good health, the air is a cordial of incredible virtue. Crossing a bare common, in snow puddles, at twilight, under a clouded sky, without having in my thoughts any occurrence of special good fortune, I have enjoyed a perfect exhilaration. I am glad to the brink of fear. In the woods too, a man casts off his years, as the snake his slough, and at what period soever of life, is always a child. In the woods, is perpetual youth. Within these plantations of God, a decorum and sanctity reign, a perennial festival is dressed, and the guest sees not how he should tire of them in a thousand years. In the woods, we return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life, — no disgrace, no calamity, (leaving me my eyes,) which nature cannot repair. Standing on the bare ground, — my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space, — all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God. The name of the nearest friend sounds then foreign and accidental: to be brothers, to be acquaintances, — master or servant, is then a trifle and a disturbance. I am the lover of uncontained and immortal beauty. In the wilderness, I find something more dear and connate than in streets or villages. In the tranquil landscape, and especially in the distant line of the horizon, man beholds somewhat as beautiful as his own nature.

The greatest delight which the fields and woods minister, is the suggestion of an occult relation between man and the vegetable. I am not alone and unacknowledged. They nod to me, and I to them. The waving of the boughs in the storm, is new to me and old. It takes me by surprise, and yet is not unknown. Its effect is like that of a higher thought or a better emotion coming over me, when I deemed I was thinking justly or doing right. Yet it is certain that the power to produce this delight, does not reside in nature, but in man, or in a harmony of both. It is necessary to use these pleasures with great temperance. For, nature is not always tricked in holiday attire, but the same scene which yesterday breathed perfume and glittered as for the frolic of the nymphs, is overspread with melancholy today. Nature always wears the colors of the spirit. To a man laboring under calamity, the heat of his own fire hath sadness in it. Then, there is a kind of contempt of the landscape felt by him who has just lost by death a dear friend. The sky is less grand as it shuts down over less worth in the population.





## Don Miller's Retirement Donations



Thank you so much to all who donated to Severson Dells in tribute to Don Miller's legacy. If you haven't had a chance with the busy holiday season to say thank you and best wishes in retirement to Don you are welcome to send cards to Severson and we'll make sure he receives them. He asked that instead of gifts, donations be made to Severson Dells.

*Thank you, again, for those that contributed to helping continue Don's passion for environmental education!*

### Friends of Severson Dells Membership Number

You will notice as you renew your membership with us that at the bottom of your renewal there is a member number. Please keep that as we will be using that when you RSVP for events and make store purchases. If you forget or misplace it, we are more than happy to look it up for you. Thank you for your continued support of Severson Dells and its programs! If you are not already a member, become a member today by going to [www.seversondells.org](http://www.seversondells.org) to join.



## SEVERSON DELLS CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

by Greg Keilback

On Wednesday, December 21st three extraordinary humans wandered into the woods of Severson Dells on a quest for knowledge. "What birds are utilizing these trees", we asked ourselves. So, through the snow we trudged and were fortunate enough to witness some of what the woods were hiding. Among the almost 40 species of different feathered friends were some pretty unique finds. Robins, bluebirds, and yellow shafted flickers enjoy the bounty that allow them to dismiss, or delay migration. Belted kingfisher, and great blue heron both utilize the open waters of Hall creek and brown creepers ring out amongst the old large trees. If you want to see some of this action and discover what else is waiting to be discovered, then please come out and visit us at Severson Dells! Oh one more thing- I actually don't even want to tell you guys this because this will just bring you out in mass, but while enjoying the diversity of birds I also was lucky enough to have a flying squirrel glide over my head!

For more information about the Christmas Bird

Count and the 116 years of data see:  
[www.audubon.org/conservation/science/  
christmas-bird-count](http://www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count)

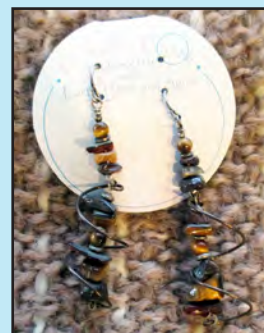
## Gift Shop Sale

**Enjoy up to 30% off in the Severson Dells gift shop this January!**



**From January 17th-31st a wide range of items will be on sale - 20% for non-members and an additional 10% for Friends of Severson Dells. Come peruse a selection of shirts, books, jewelry and greeting cards for a gift for a friend, family member or even yourself.**

**The Center is open Monday-Saturday 8:00am to 4:30pm  
and Sunday 1:00pm to 4:30pm**





## MEMORIALS

Our thoughts and prayers for those who have given in memory of or in honor to the following people connected to Severson Dells this past quarter.

Eugene D. Allen  
Keith Blackmore  
David and Neva Burdick  
Fran Kerns Dewey  
Betty Edwards  
Gordon Eggers  
Christ J. Fillip, Jr.  
The Frana Family  
Eugenia "Jeanie" H. Fruin  
Fred Kalivoda  
Mark Luthin  
Don Miller's Retirement  
Roberta "Robbie" Mink  
Jack & Carla Phillips 50th Wedding Anniversary  
Marilyn Shatt  
Robert C. Von der Ohe  
Barbara Whitsett  
Lois Winkel



### Severson Dells Nature Center Board Members:

*President* - Lenae Weichel  
*Vice President* - Jakob Loescher  
*Secretary* - Steve Vee  
*Treasurer* - Dan Zeigler

Jack Armstrong, Denise Delanty,  
Joe Hemlock, Daniel Huntley,  
Janet Johnson, Ed Kuehl,  
James Marshall, Jane McMillan  
Patty Oliveri, Hans Rupert,  
Toni Vander Heyden

### ***Become a Member of "Friends of Severson Dells" or give an additional gift***

#### **Members receive:**

- \* 10% discount at Severson Dells Bookstore
- \* reduced admissions to Severson Dells programs
- \* members only programs at Severson Dells
- \* check-out privileges at Severson Dells Library
- \* "Notes From the Dells" quarterly newsletter with calendar of programs and special events
- \* free admission to participating ANCA member nature centers around the country

#### **Annual Membership:**

- \_\_\_ Individual \$30
- \_\_\_ Family \$50
- \_\_\_ Sponsor \$100
- \_\_\_ Benefactor \$500
- \_\_\_ Sustaining \$1,000

**Become a member online at  
[www.seversondells.org/become-a-member/](http://www.seversondells.org/become-a-member/)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**I would like to support the mission of SDNC  
with a gift of \_\_\_\_\_ at this time.**

***Contributions are tax deductible as allowed by law.***

**Thank you  
for your  
support!**

### ***What Will Your Legacy Be?***

Name Severson Dells Nature Center  
in your will or bequest.  
You'll help us raise the  
next generation of earth stewards.

Contact your attorney or  
financial advisor for advice.



Severson Dells Nature Center  
8786 Montague Road  
Rockford, IL 61102-9713

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

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**TELEPHONE: 1-815-335-2915**  
**FAX: 1-815-335-2471**  
**www.seversondells.org**  
**e-mail: ann@seversondells.org**

**Hours:**  
**Mon. - Sat.: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**  
**Sun.: 1:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

**Severson Dells Nature Center Staff:**  
Ann Wasser - Director of Nature Education  
Nancy Bleile - Administrative Assistant  
Greg Keilback - Biologist / Educator



Severson Dells Nature Center  
is a cooperative effort with the  
Forest Preserves of Winnebago  
County.

Severson Dells Nature Center and the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act will assist in providing for those individuals with special needs. *(Please notify us in advance of your needs that may require special staffing.)*

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#### **Severson Dells Activities: 815-335-2915**

Cut out and post where you keep track of your family's activities!

##### **January 2017**

24 - Severson Naturalist Night-Basics of Ecology, 7-8:15pm  
28 - Family Winter Walk, 10-12:00pm

##### **February 2017**

02 - Bird Monitoring and Natural Resource Mgmt., 7:00pm  
05 - Tour Your Local Environments, 1:30-3:00pm  
07 - Severson Naturalist Night-Geology, 7-8:15pm  
10 - Old Time Lantern Walk, 6:30-8:30pm  
18 - Workday and Bonfire, 10-1:00pm  
21 - Severson Naturalist Night-Botany, 7-8:15pm.  
26 - Eastern United States Road Trip with Ann Wasser,  
1:30-2:30pm

##### **March 2017**

07 - Severson Naturalist Night-Prairie Ecology, 7-8:15pm.  
11 - Animal Habitats at Severson Dells Girl Scouts,  
10-12:00pm  
18 - Science Saturday-Mammal Madness!, 10-2:00pm  
21 - Severson Naturalist Night-Dendrology, 7-8:15pm  
24 - Old Time Lantern Walk, 6:30-8:30pm  
30 - Bison impacts on flora and fauna in a world-class prairie  
restoration, Dr. Holly Jones, NIU, 7:00pm

