

Discover Nature

Programs and News
from the ODC Network



Spring
2022



The **ODC Network** is a collection of business divisions with the mission to advance outdoor education and conservation in West Michigan.



FREE ADMISSION—Two Locations!

4214 56th Street • Holland, MI • 49423

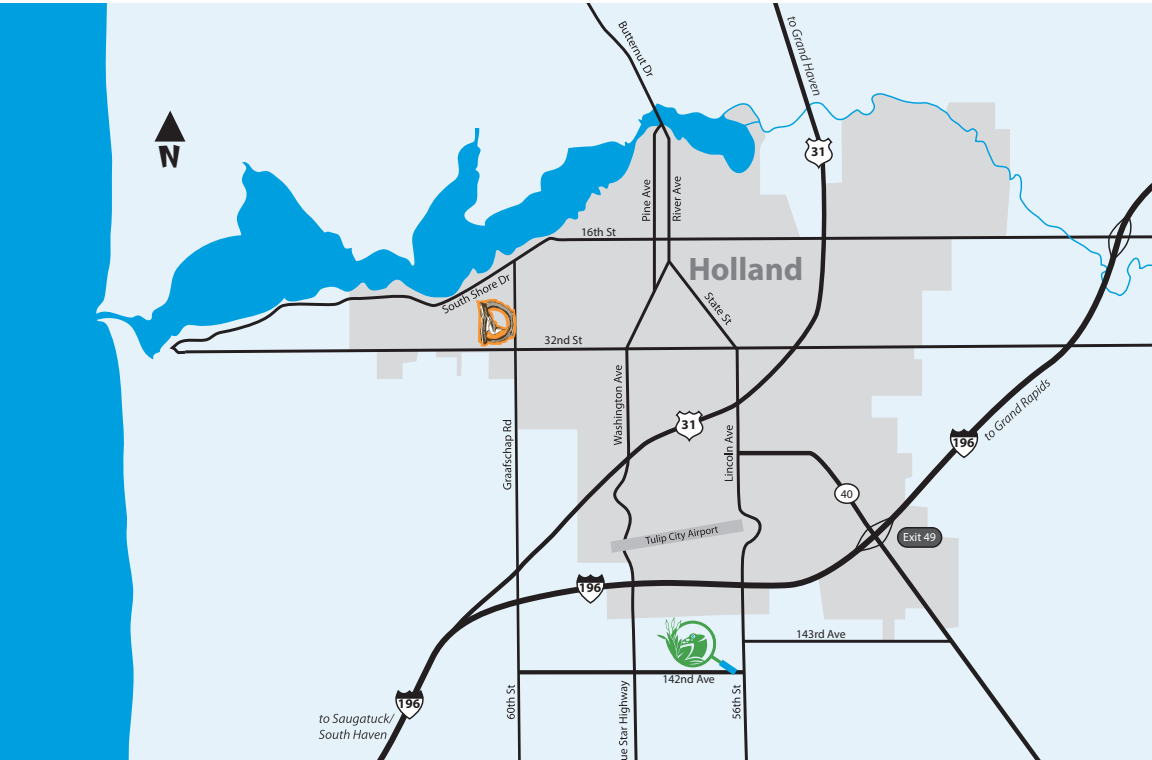


The Outdoor Discovery Center is 155 acres with about 3 miles of trails, located on the south side of Holland, just south of West Michigan Regional Airport. Admission is free! Trails open dawn to dusk—Visitors Center open 10 AM–3 PM, Monday–Saturday.

600 Graafschap Road • Holland, MI • 49423



DeGraaf Nature Center is 18 acres of forest and wetlands located within the City of Holland, just south of Lake Macatawa. Admission is free! Trails open dawn to dusk—Helen O Brower Visitors Center open 10 AM–3 PM, Tuesday–Saturday.



Discover Nature • Descubrir la Naturaleza

Preschool age children begin to notice similarities and differences at a young age. By age three, children begin to show signs of being influenced by societal norms and biases and may exhibit “pre prejudice” toward others on the basis of gender or race or being differently abled (Derman-Sparks, et al). Learning alongside peers of all abilities, races and ethnicities provides our youngest learners with opportunities to embrace and enjoy differences. Children learn to have authentic conversations about their differences and begin to understand the value of differences in our world. This is inclusion. This is part of our mission to provide ALL children with the opportunity to learn and play in the natural world.

Over the last three years, Little Hawks Discovery Preschool (LHDP) has been working behind the scenes with Hamilton Community Schools (HCS) to develop a nature-based inclusion preschool experience. In preparation for the 2021-2022 launch of nature-based inclusion, LHDP and HCS observed inclusion preschools around the state, attended many hours of training and created a task force focused on implementation. Little Hawks Discovery Preschool had partners at the Ottawa Area ISD observe Little Hawks classes to evaluate best practices in special education and provide feedback for improvement prior to the launch. Together, we learned that the model we have created is not truly seen anywhere else in our state.



Starting in the 2021-2022 school year, LHDP teachers and HCS Special Education Staff work together daily to support children with and without learning differences. If you could peek in on the class, you would see all teachers dressed for the weather, immersed in play with children and coaching them in all developmental areas at the Outdoor Discovery Center. Children of all abilities are spending all or most of their school day outdoors, in all weather. This allows for all types of learners to thrive together—catching frogs, following animal tracks, writing about adventures, sharing their wonders, making mud pies and so much more! These preschool days will leave an impact on the hearts of children for understanding, empathy for one another and respect for our natural world. ODC Network has much gratitude and respect for the educators involved in this launch. They are the ones that are changing education to truly impact the growth of the whole child!

Join us for a Program!

In the following pages, you will find titles or descriptions of our community programs available in the upcoming months. Look for more on our website or Facebook!

Program Locations

Programs may be held at the **Outdoor Discovery Center**, at **DeGraaf Nature Center**, or at **various other parks** and natural areas in our community. Attend programs closest to you—or discover new places in our community. All locations are listed next to the program title—when necessary, the address and details can be found in *italics* beneath the program description.



Outdoor Discovery Center
4214 56th Street
Holland, MI 49423
outdoordiscovery.org



DeGraaf Nature Center
600 Graafschap Road
Holland, MI 49423
degraaf.org



Other Locations
*Addresses listed beneath
program description*

April 2022

May

June

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Knee-high Naturalists Snake Snacks	2 Rainscaping Raptor Madness
3	4 Explore a Story	5	6	7 Woodcock Waddle	8 Knee-high Naturalists Woodland Walk	9
10	11	12	13	14	15 Knee-high Naturalists VoLes	16
17	18 Monday Morning Birdwalk Homeschool—Signs of Spring	19	20 Nature for Tykes	21	22 Knee-high Naturalists Tree Sale	23 Grand River Cleanup
24	25	26 Migratory Birds & Trail Cleanup	27	28	29 Knee-high Naturalists	30 VoLes
1	2 Monday Morning Birdwalk	3 Explore a Story	4	5	6 Knee-high Naturalists	7 Spring Wildflower Walk
8	9	10	11 Nature for Tykes	12 Macro-invertebrate Survey	13 Knee-high Naturalists VoLes	14
15	16 Monday Morning Birdwalk Homeschool—Animal Caretakers	17	18	19	20 Knee-high Naturalists Springtime Story Frog Catching!	21 Lake Mac Cleanup VoLes
22	23	24 Biomimicry	25	26	27 Knee-high Naturalists Snake Snacks	28
29	30	31	1	2	3 Knee-high Naturalists	4 Wild About Wetlands
5	6 Homeschool—Wonderful Wetlands	7	8	9	10 Knee-high Naturalists Banquet for Birds Creek Stomp	11
12	13 Little Explorers	14 Explore a Story WiN—Kayaking Compost	15 Nature for Tykes	16	17 Knee-high Naturalists VoLes Family Kayaking	18
19	20	21	22	23 Adult Archery Night	24 Cooking Colors Knee-highs Banquet for Birds Snake Snacks	25 VoLes Family Paddle
26	27	28	29 Marvelous Mud Day	30		

Find the right program for you at a glance with **suggested age ranges** at the top of each description. These are flexible with ability and attention span.

Snake Snacks (ODC) Ages 0-99

Have you ever wondered what snakes eat? Come to the Visitors Center and watch our resident serpents enjoy a meal.

Friday, April 1

Friday, May 27

Friday, June 24

4–5 PM • *Registration not required, but appreciated • Fee: \$6 per person, \$4 for members*



Live Birds of Prey—Raptor Madness Final Four (ODC) Ages 6-99

Come one, come all to our Birds of Prey Final Four. We will be highlighting the winners and losers of our Raptor Madness at this live bird show. No need to have filled out brackets in March to enjoy this event.

Saturday, April 2 • 11 AM–12 PM

Registration required • Fee: \$6 per person, \$4 for members



Discover Nature Spring Break Camp (ODC) Ages 7-11 Drop-off

This camp is for kids crazy about wildlife. They will study a variety of animals and plants native to Michigan and the habitats where they live at the Outdoor Discovery Center. We will discover animals both caught in the wild and from the Center's captive animal collection during camp.

Tuesday-Thursday, April 5-7 • 9–11:30 AM

Registration required • Fee: \$60 per child, \$45 for members



Little Explorers Spring Break Camp (ODC) Ages 4-6 Drop-off

Does your little one like to look for bugs and play in the mud? Would they like to explore for the day and discover what lives here at the Outdoor Discovery Center? In this camp we will do all that and more! We will spend our time inside and outside listening to stories, creating crafts and hiking.

Tuesday-Thursday, April 5-7 • 9–11:30 AM

Registration required • Fee: \$60 per child, \$45 for members



Woodcock Waddle (ODC) Ages 7-99

Explore the nature preserve with a naturalist in search of two bird species most people don't see: American Woodcock and Wilson's Snipe. Dress in dark clothing and be prepared to be outside the entire time. Flashlights are welcome. Meet at the Visitors Center for a brief introduction before going outside.

Thursday, April 7 • 8:30–9:30 PM

Registration required • Fee: \$6 per person, \$4 for members



Knee-high Naturalists (ODC) Ages 3-6 Drop-off

Knee-high Naturalists introduces the wonders of the natural world to young children. Crafts, activities, books, snacks, live animals, and outside exploration will be incorporated into their nature-based learning experience.

Parents can drop off their 4-6 year old or stay with the class. Parents or guardians are asked to attend with their 3 year old to help with bathroom use and transitioning into a group learning environment.



Friday, April 8

Friday, May 6

Friday, June 3

Friday, April 22

Friday, May 20

Friday, June 17

10 AM–12 PM • *Registration required • Fee: \$10 per child, \$5 for members*

VoLes (Various Locations) **Ages 12-18** **Drop-off**

Our Volunteer League (nicknamed “VoLes”) is a service club for teens to experience what it takes to maintain a natural area and captive wildlife. This program is designed for 12–18 year olds who will work with staff on a variety of indoor and outdoor tasks at the ODC and DeGraaf. Past projects have included removing invasive species, cleaning up animal enclosures, and adding nature play features. It’s a great way to earn those community service volunteer hours!

Fri, April 15 • 3:30–5 PM

Fri, May 13 • 3:30–5 PM

Fri, June 17 • 3–5 PM

Sat, April 30 • 10 AM–12 PM

Sat, May 21 • 10 AM–12 PM

Sat, June 25 • 10 AM–12 PM

Registration required • Fee: FREE



Homeschool Classes (ODC) **Ages 6-10** **Drop-off**

Join one of these programs to learn all about our local spring ecology, daily upkeep of captive wildlife, or macroinvertebrate life in a wetland.

Monday, April 18 • Theme: Signs of Spring

Monday, May 16 • Theme: Animal Caretakers

Monday, June 6 • Theme: Wonderful Wetlands

10 AM–12 PM • Registration required • Fee: \$10 per child



Nature for Tykes (ODC) **Ages 3-7**

Bring out your little tykes to learn more about nature. In each program, you and your little tyke will have the opportunity to explore together. This spring we will be learning about signs of spring, frogs, and birds! Please dress for the weather.

Wednesday, April 20 • Theme: Signs of Spring

Wednesday, May 11 • Theme: Frogs

Wednesday, June 15 • Theme: Birds

10–11:00 AM • Registration required • Fee: \$6 per child, \$4 for members



Wild About Wetlands (ODC) **Ages 5-14**

Catch a frog, touch a tadpole and have fun exploring a wetland at the Outdoor Discovery Center with a naturalist. All collection tubs and dip nets will be provided. No sandals or bare feet please.

Saturday, June 4 • 11 AM–12 PM

Registration required • Fee: \$6 per child, \$4 for members



Frozen Yogurt is back!

People visiting the Outdoor Discovery Center this spring will be excited to see the return of our frozen yogurt stand selling Peachwave brand treats. Look for the stand to be open on weekends through spring and have weekday hours once warmer weather returns in earnest!



Banquet for the Birds (ODC) Ages 0-99

Stop by the De Witt Birds of Prey Center during this open house style program and watch a naturalist feed our resident raptors. You can bring a snack for yourself too! Plan on a 10 minute walk from the Main Entrance to the De Witt Birds of Prey Center.

Friday, June 10

Friday, June 24

10:30 AM–12 PM • No registration necessary • Fee: FREE



Adult Archery Night (ODC) Ages 17-99

Hey grown-ups, don't you want to shoot an arrow at a polar bear? Or perhaps a dinosaur? What about a giant mosquito? Well then, come on out to the ODC for your chance to learn or hone your archery skills. We will provide all of the equipment. (Sorry, no outside bows.)

Thursday, June 23 • 6–7:30 PM

Registration required • Fee: \$12 per person, \$9 for members

Program Location: Meet at Kuipers Archery Range, 5675 142nd Ave, Holland

Cooking Up Colors (ODC) Ages 9-12 Drop-off

Join local artist Rachel Hefferan in partnership with SCA for a day of discovery and experiments with natural dyes.

Friday, June 24 • 9 AM–12 PM

Registration required @ sc4a.org/event/the-creative-outdoors-cooking-up-colors-w-rachel-hefferan • Fee: \$60 per participant

Marvelous Mud Day (ODC) Ages 0-99

Let them get dirty! Kids, even the grown up ones, need dirt and water and sticks and trees and mud. Come join us as we celebrate International Mud Day, connecting people around the world through the earth. Dress to get dirty because it's gonna be a mess!

Wednesday, June 29 • 12–1 PM

Registration not required, but appreciated • Fee: \$6 per person, \$4 for members

Celebrating the Earth Every Day of the Year

Although Earth Day is widely celebrated on April 22, there are many ways to enjoy and protect the Earth year-round!

Responsible recreation is the easiest way: following Leave No Trace principles, and leaving environments better than you found them will ensure that they are around for many years to come.

Properly Manage Stormwater

Prevent rainwater from washing chemicals and sediment from impervious surfaces in the city and suburbs into waterways.

Saturday, April 2 | Rainscaping Workshop | @ DeGraaf

Registration required • Fee: \$6 per person, \$4 for members
Learn about Rain Barrels and Rain Gardens

Rainscaping Survey Volunteer | schedule training or a site evaluation by visiting the-macc.org/rainscaping

EARTH ENGAGEMENT:

Look for our Earth Engagement suggestions throughout and see how many you can add to your year!



Installation May 2020



September 2020

This rain garden was installed to slow down and filter water before a storm drain takes it to the river.

2021 ODC Network Impact

We are excited about all the ways we've been able to advance outdoor education and conservation in West Michigan this past year! We hope you will continue to trust and believe in our team and see the tremendous impact, leverage, and value your investments in the ODC Network generate for our community.

**PROPAGATED
3,955
NATIVE PLANT
PLUGS FOR
RESTORATION
SITES**



**HOSTED OVER
2,000 ELEMENTARY
STUDENTS AT
SUMMER LITERACY
CAMPS**



**BUILT 5 NEW
NATURE
PLAYSCAPES**



**PLANTED
5,700
TREES**



**SEEDED OVER
10 ACRES of
NATIVE PRAIRIE
SPECIES**



**LAUNCHED
the FIRST
NATURE-RICH
BUSINESS
GUIDE**



**COMPLETED
UPDATES at the
ELDEAN FAMILY
NATURE PLAY
PARK**



**11
VOLUNTEER
GROUPS
COMPLETED
PROJECTS**



**COMPLETED
UPDATES on
the ARCHERY
RANGE FACILITY**



**INSTALLED
9 CURB-CUT
RAIN GARDENS,
CAPTURING
300,000 GALLONS
of STORMWATER
ANNUALLY**

**INSTALLED 4
NEW LEVEL 2 EV
CHARGERS MADE
POSSIBLE by
the WHITE PINE
FUND**





ACQUIRED 4 MAMMALS & 4 RAPTORS as ODC WILDLIFE AMBASSADORS

INSTALLED BILINGUAL TRAIL MAPS & MAMMAL EXHIBIT SIGNS at ODC



PLANTED 1,300 ACRES of COVER CROPS

BEGAN CONSTRUCTION for the NEW DRAGONFLIES DISCOVERY PRESCHOOL



OPENED GEERLINGS FARM PARK



CONSTRUCTED 1 MILE of 2-STAGE CHANNEL in PARK TOWNSHIP



OPENED the NEW ODC FROYO STAND



ADDED a HOLIDAY-THEMED WINTER NIGHT HIKE PROGRAM with MORE than 700 PEOPLE in ATTENDANCE

HOSTED a SUCCESSFUL TREATS & TRAILS EVENT for 2,200 PEOPLE



INSTALLED NEW OUTDOOR STRUCTURES at the CULTURAL HISTORY CENTER



PILOTED DRAGONFLIES PRESCHOOL CLASS in PARTNERSHIP with BEECHWOOD CHURCH



LAUNCHED a VOLUNTEER RAINFOREST PROGRAM

Thank you for your support and doing your part to make West Michigan the best place to live, work, play and learn.

Knee-high Naturalists (DeGraaf)**Ages 3-6 Drop-off**

Knee-high Naturalists introduces the wonders of the natural world to young children. Crafts, activities, books, snacks, live animals, and outside exploration will be incorporated into their nature-based learning experience.

Parents can drop off their 4-6 year old or stay with the class. Parents or guardians are asked to attend with their 3 year old to help with bathroom use and transitioning into a group learning environment.

Friday, April 1

Friday, April 29

Friday, May 27

Friday, June 24

Friday, April 15

Friday, May 13

Friday, June 10

10 AM–12 PM • Registration required • Fee: \$10 per child, \$5 per child for members

**Explore a Story (DeGraaf)****Ages 1-7**

It's time to round up the little ones and come to DeGraaf Nature Center for Explore a Story! We'll be introducing kids to the outdoors through books and outdoor adventures. We'll read stories, take hikes, meet animals, and have lots of fun. Dress for the weather because we'll be heading outside to experience the nature around us.

Monday, April 4

Tuesday, May 3

Tuesday, June 14

10–11 AM • Registration is not required, but appreciated • Fee: \$6 per child, \$4 for members

Monday Morning Bird Walk**Ages 7-99**

Start off your week bird watching during the peak months of bird migration. Thrushes, finches, flycatchers, vireos and warblers will be pursued as the group walks the trails of the nature center. Binoculars will be available to borrow.

Monday, April 18

Monday, May 6

Monday, June 6

10–11 AM • Registration is not required, but appreciated • Fee: FREE

Sustainability Series**Ages 7-99**

We embrace Richard Louv's vision of a nature-rich community, pursuing beauty, health, biodiversity, creativity, and social justice. Join this pursuit as we explore a different sustainable topic every month.

Saturday, April 2 • **9-10 AM: Rainscaping**Tuesday, May 24 • **7-8 PM: Biomimicry**Tuesday, June 14 • **7-8 PM: Compost**

Registration required • Fee: \$6 per person, \$4 for members

**Spring Wildflowers Flourish in Forests**

While deciduous trees are still growing this year's crop of leaves, flowers below are taking in the rays and making the most of the available sunlight. Walk along a wooded trail and you may find flowers like spring beauty, Dutchman's breeches, mayapple, yellow bellwort, trout lily, and great white trillium. A spring forest is colorful and noisy and smelly and beautiful and just what you might need to complete your day. Make time as often as you can to explore a forest near you this spring!

**EARTH ENGAGEMENT****Add Native Plants**

Help ecosystems stay healthy by providing familiar shelter and food for native animals.

Friday, April 22 | Allegan Co Conservation Dist Annual Tree Sale | @ ODC

Order ahead by April 15 at allegancd.org/annual-tree-sale or drop by on the 22nd for greenhouse tours and other activities

ODC Conservation Services | contact for assistance managing invasive species and ecological restoration

Woodland Walk (Sanctuary Woods) Ages 6-99

Visit Sanctuary Woods to explore the sights and sounds of spring. This time of year brings migrating birds, beautiful wildflowers, and active mammals. We will hike the lower loop and upper loop of this amazing dune ecosystem to see what animals and plants are ready for spring. Please note this hike does include approximately 170 stairs up a dune.

Friday, April 8 • 11 AM-12 PM

Registration required • Fee: FREE - sponsored by Laketown Township

Program location: Sanctuary Woods, 4749 66th Street, Holland

Grand River Cleanup of the SAG (Ottawa Sands County Park) Ages 5-99

Let's clean up The Sag! We will remove trash and debris from this part of the Grand River from Ottawa Sands. Volunteers may clean the shoreline from land, or the water via kayak. Kayak, paddles, and flotation devices will be provided. This event requires paddling and/ or walking natural surface trails and may not be universally accessible.

Saturday, April 23 • 1-4 PM

Registration required • Fee: FREE

Program Location: 18153 N Shore Dr, Ferrysburg

Migratory Birds and Trail Cleanup (Stu Visser Trails) Ages 8-99

Learn to identify some amazing birds as you hike the trails with a naturalist in search of spring migrants like warblers, vireos, flycatchers and shorebirds. We will also clean up the trail as we walk, helping the habitats these birds need to survive. This program is for any level of birder, from interested to expert! Binoculars and field guides are available for loan. Meet at the Ottawa Beach Road parking lot.

Tuesday, April 26 • 7:30-9 PM

Registration required • Fee: FREE - sponsored by Park Township

Program Location: Stu Visser Trails, 923 Ottawa Beach Rd., Holland

**Spring Wildflower Walk (Rabbit River Preserve)** Ages 7-99

Walk the trails of the Rabbit River Preserve with a naturalist in search of spring wildflowers like Dutchman's breeches, trillium, marsh marigold, and spring beauty. The hiking will be easy paced with frequent stops.

Saturday, May 7 • 10-11 AM

Registration required • Fee: \$6 per person, \$4 for members

Springtime Story (Littlejohn Lake Park) Ages 0-7

Bring the little ones out to Bysterveld Park and enjoy a story and a stroll as we find out who's awake for spring, who came back for warm weather, and how the animals that stayed all winter are getting ready for the new season. You will be able to meet some live animals too! Dress to be outside the entire time.

Friday, May 20 • 10-11 AM

Registration required • Fee: FREE - sponsored by Allegan County Parks and Recreation

Program location: Littlejohn Lake, 3540 113th Ave, Allegan

Frog Catching! (Farview Park) Ages 0-99

Families are invited to meet a naturalist at Farview Park in search of amphibians, insects and other aquatic life. All collection tubs and dip nets will be provided. Old shoes or boots that can go into the water are recommended. No sandals or bare feet please.

Friday, May 20 • 4-5:30 PM

Registration required • Fee: FREE - program sponsor Laketown Township

Program Location: Farview Park - 6257 138th Ave, Holland

Lake Macatawa Clean-up (Window on the Waterfront) Ages 5-99

Help clean Lake Macatawa at Window on the Waterfront. Depending on the group size, there may be a crew on the shores of the lake and another in kayaks in the lake. Anyone under 16 years old must be with an adult. All bags, gloves, grabbers, boats, paddles and life vests will be provided. Meet by the boat launch on River Ave.

Saturday, May 21 • 10 AM-12 PM

Registration required • Fee: FREE

Program Location: Window on the Waterfront - 10 S. River Ave., Holland, MI

Social Distance Cup (Ravines Golf Club) Ages 18-99

Join us for the Social Distance Cup at the Ravines Golf Club, located in Saugatuck, MI. This is an event to bring people together and support the programs of the ODC Network while practicing social distancing. During this event, golfers will have the opportunity to learn about all aspects of the ODC Network and see some live birds of prey where they've never visited before!



All funds raised will directly support the ODC Network's mission of advancing outdoor education and conservation in West Michigan.

Social Distance Cup

Wednesday, June 2
AM & PM Flights Available

Ravines Golf Club
3520 Palmer Dr, Saugatuck



Get more details and register your team at



outdoordiscovery.org/golf

Thanks to our first-in Sponsors:



Interested in becoming a Sponsor?

There are a variety of sponsor levels available to fit your investment goals. Based on your chosen sponsorship level, you have the opportunity to have your logo on our website, recognition on all marketing materials, social media recognition and one team registration.

Please email Ashley VanZee, ashley@outdoordiscovery.org, for more information.



Creek Stomp (Stu Visser Trails) Ages 0-99

Explore the wetlands and Pine Creek at Stu Visser Trails with a naturalist in search of insects, fish, crayfish and crustaceans! Expect to walk into the water with shoes or boots. No bare feet or open-toed sandals. Meet at the parking lot off Ottawa Beach Road. All materials will be provided.

Friday, June 10 • 10:30 AM-12 PM

Registration required • Fee: FREE - sponsored by Park Township

Program location: Stu Visser Trails - 929 Ottawa Beach Rd.

Little Explorers (Wolters Woods) Ages 0-5

Explore the nature trails as only a preschooler could. Find colors, shapes, and textures on the easily accessible trails of Wolters Woods. All materials will be provided. At the conclusion of the program, feel free to make time to play on the playground.

Monday, June 13 • 10-11 AM

Registration required • Fee: FREE - sponsored by Laketown Township

Program Location: Wolters Woods Park - 6281 147th Avenue, Holland

Women In Nature - Kayaking (Window on the Waterfront) Ages 12-99

Women in Nature is a program series designed to motivate women to be more healthy, active and passionate about the natural world surrounding them.

This program will take place on the Macatawa River in Holland. This river has little current and is ideal for an inexperienced or casual paddler. During these programs, women will get the opportunity to learn about river wildlife, our efforts to improve local watersheds, and enjoy a casual paddle with a naturalist.

Tuesday, June 14 • 6-7:30 PM

Registration required • Fee: \$12

Program Location: Window on the Waterfront - 20 S. River Ave., Holland

Family Kayaking (Gun Lake Park) Ages 8-99

Paddle Gun Lake with naturalists from the ODC Network. Kayaks, paddles, and vests are provided. The group will launch from the Gun Lake boat launch and paddle around the shore line. Lakes are the perfect place to learn to paddle for the first time or to get in some practice.

Friday, June 17 • 6-8 PM

Registration required • Fee: FREE - program sponsor Allegan County Parks and Recreation

Program Location: Gun Lake Park - 2397 Patterson Road, Wayland

Family Paddle (Lake Macatawa) Ages 8-99

Paddle Lake Macatawa with naturalists from the ODC Network. Kayaks, paddles, and vests are provided. The group will launch from the South Side Kayak launch and paddle around the shore line. Lakes are the perfect place to learn to paddle for the first time or to get in some practice.

Boats are limited. If you are registering for a double boat you only need to reserve one boat for 2 people (we don't need both people's information).

Saturday, June 25 • 10-11:30 AM

Registration required • Fee: FREE - program sponsor Park Township

Program Location: 1671 South Shore Drive, Holland

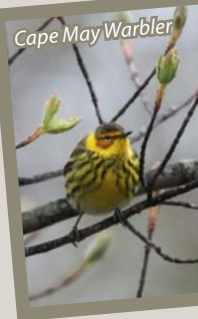
Spring is Nature's Way of Saying, "Let's Party!"

Robin Williams said it right when he made that exclamation. Spring is the time of year when things that were once dormant or gone can be found full of energy again. From the grasses growing between the cracks in the sidewalk to the singing return of the Wood Thrush, this is a great time of the year to get outside! Flying overhead you may find hummingbirds buzzing to collect spider webs for their

nests, flycatchers snapping up insects, blackbirds proudly defending their territory or warblers whistling their sweet songs as they gobble up insects. If you're new to identifying and observing birds or just want to enjoy the experience with others, look for one of our Morning Bird Walks at DeGraaf or join us at night to sneak up on a dancing Woodcock during our Woodcock Waddle at ODC.



Eastern Kingbird



Cape May Warbler

**EARTH
ENGAGEMENT**

Restore and Preserve Habitats

Assist with trash removal in local waterways (by land or by kayak) for the animals that live there.

Sat, April 23 | Grand River Cleanup | @ Ottawa Sands • *Registration required • Fee: FREE*

Tue, April 26 | Migratory Birds & Trail Cleanup | @ Stu Visser • *Registration required • Fee: FREE*

Sat, May 21 | Lake Mac Cleanup | @ window on the Waterfront • *Registration required • Fee: FREE*





Construction Underway at Dragonflies Discovery Preschool



Our Dragonflies Discovery Preschool campus continues to evolve as our contractors are hard at work. If you drive by today, you will see our maintenance garage is in place along with the two main education buildings that each house two classrooms. The offices, childcare, and all-purpose education and training space will be constructed soon.

Before the winter weather set in, all the foundations, utility lines, parking lot, entrance

drive, and water features were constructed. There is much work yet to be done, but we are excited to see this new community asset taking shape.

We opened registration for this program in early January. More than 100 students have already registered for the program which will begin in September 2022.

In a relatively short period of time, we have raised nearly \$4 million of the \$4.5 million need for the project. As we approach spring, we hope to have all the funding secured so we can focus on wrapping up the construction work.

We are hopeful construction will be completed by the beginning of August. The trail system, natural features, nature-play areas, and interpretive features will be installed this summer.



Warmer Weather Awakens Aquatic Macroinvertebrates

Aquatic macroinvertebrates are critters that live in lakes and streams including insects, crustaceans, clams, and snails. They vary in shape and size, but all live in the water for at least a portion of their life cycle. Many are food for fish and play an important role in the aquatic ecosystem. Different types of macroinvertebrates have different sensitivities to water pollution. We can look at the abundance and type of macroinvertebrates in a

stream to get a general idea of stream health. Most macroinvertebrates live in the stream bottom among rocks, under logs or in leaf packs, making them pretty easy to collect with a net. Collecting and processing macroinvertebrates is also something easily done with the help of volunteers. We monitor macroinvertebrate populations twice a year at seven stream locations in the Macatawa Watershed.



Good Bugs

Amphipods and Caddisflies cannot live in water with pollutants, so finding them means the water must be very clean!



Moderate Indicators

Crayfish and beetles can tolerate some pollution, streams that can harbor them are doing ok!



Poor Water Quality

Snails and damselflies can live in poor water conditions. If they're the only living thing in a waterway, it means conditions are poor enough that none of the other critters can live there.



Assessment Sheet

Quantities of each category of bug are tallied and a score can be assigned!



After collecting samples, teams identify and sort types of macroinvertebrates using supplies like plastic spoons, tweezers, and ice cube trays. A simple equation based on the totals then calculates a health "score" for the stream. Join us May 12 to experience it first-hand!



**EARTH
ENGAGEMENT**

Survey Wildlife

Sensitive species inform scientists about the health of our habitats.

Thur, May 12 | Macroinvertebrate Survey | Email Kelly Goward, Kelly@outdoordiscovery.org for information about volunteering

Frog & Toad Surveys | Visit the Michigan DNR website for more information or submit observations to miherpatlas.org





4214 56th Street • Holland, MI • 49423

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE
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HOLLAND, MI
Permit No. 339

