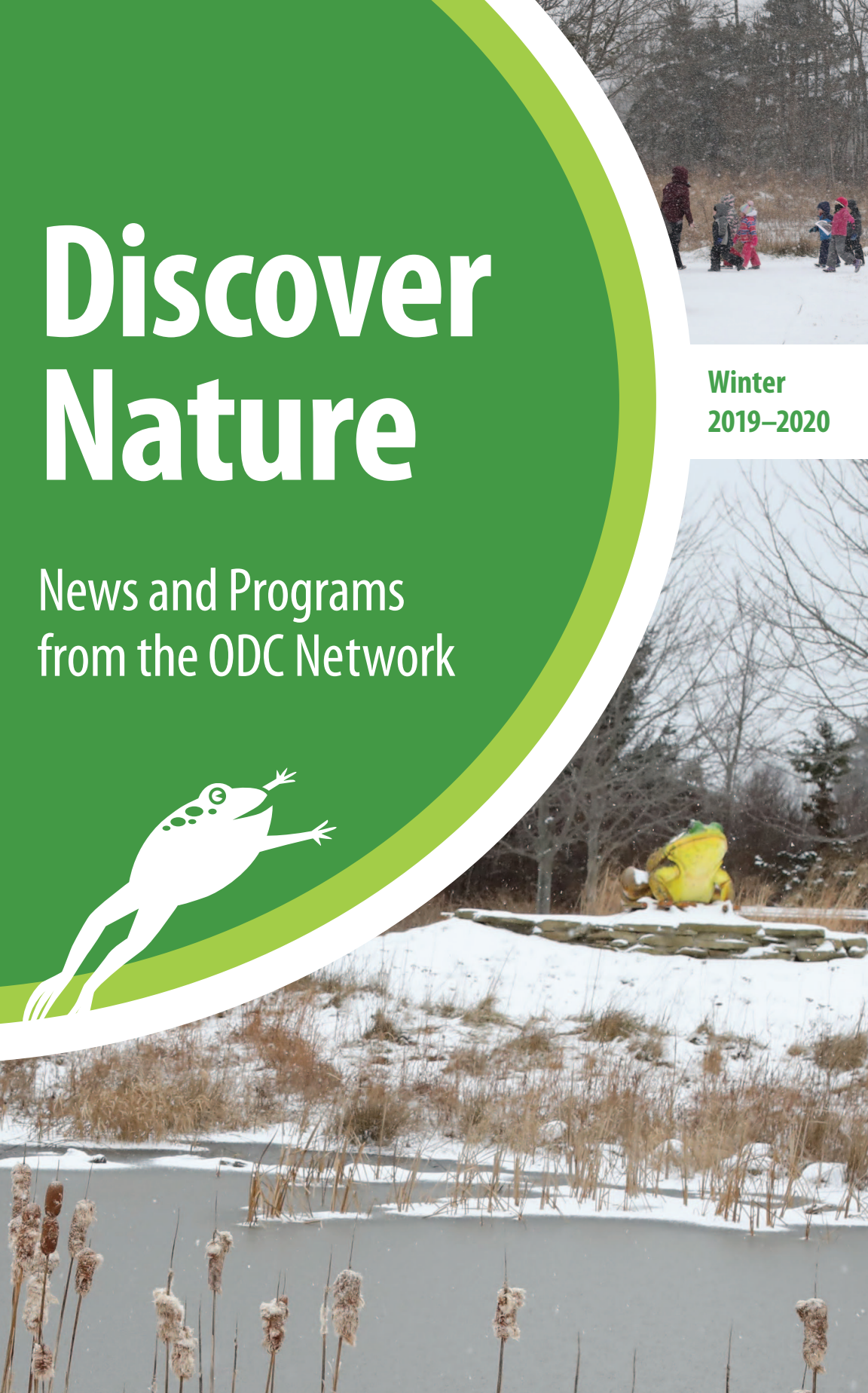


Discover Nature

News and Programs
from the ODC Network



Winter
2019–2020



The **ODC Network** is a collection of nine 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!

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!



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!

Find more program details and register at outdoordiscovery.org

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*



Join us December 14 for Homestead Holiday at DeGraaf!

December 2019

January 2020

February

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5 Greenery Workshop Little Hawks Open House	6 Knee-high Naturalists	7
8	9	10	11	12	13 Knee-high Naturalists	14 Homestead Holiday
15	16	17	18 Nature for Tykes	19	20 Explore a Story Knee-high Naturalists	21
22	23 Hungry, Hungry Serpents	24	25	26	27 Knee-high Naturalists	28
29	30 Winter Wildlife Walk	31	1	2 Christmas Bird Count	3 Knee-high Naturalists Birds of Prey	4 Cooking for the Birds
5	6	7 Explore a Story	8	9	10 Knee-high Naturalists	11
12	13	14	15 Nature for Tykes	16	17 Knee-high Naturalists	18 Waterfowl Birding Fire Making 101
19	20 Hungry, Hungry Serpents	21	22	23	24 Knee-high Naturalists	25
26	27	28 Homeschool Winter Ecology	29	30	31 Knee-high Naturalists Superb Owl Prowl	1 Snowshoe Hike Wonderful World of Spiders
2	3	4 Explore a Story	5	6	7 Knee-high Naturalists	8 Nestbox Construction
9	10	11	12 Nature for Tykes	13	14 Knee-high Naturalists	15 Great Backyard Bird Count Owl Prowl
16	17 Hungry, Hungry Serpents	18	19 Michigan's Indigenous People	20	21 Knee-high Naturalists	22 Crafting a Bird Mask
23	24	25	26	27	28 Knee-high Naturalists	29 Birding Field Day

Greenery Workshop (ODC)

Make your own wall decoration or table arrangement and leave the mess behind. We'll provide fresh greens and other natural materials; bring your own gardening gloves, wreath frames, ribbons, or accessories, if you wish to use them.

Thursday, December 5 • 6–7:30 PM • Registration required, space is limited • Fee: \$15 per person

Knee-high Naturalists (formerly Nature School) (ODC)

Friday, December 6

Friday, January 3

Friday, February 14

Friday, December 20

Friday, January 17

Friday, February 28

Friday, January 31

10 AM–12:00 PM • Registration required • Fee: \$10 per child, \$5 per child for members

Find more program details and register at outdoordiscovery.org

Nature for Tykes (ODC)

Wednesday, December 18 • Theme: Hibernation

Wednesday, January 15 • Theme: Tracks and Scat

Wednesday, February 12 • Theme: Insects in Winter

10–11:00 AM • Registration required • Fee: \$5 per child, FREE for members

**Hungry, Hungry Serpents (ODC)**

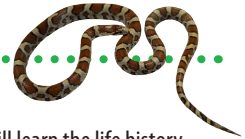
Have you ever wondered what snakes eat? Snakes are carnivores and only eat other animals. They are definitely not vegetarians! Come to the Visitors Center to watch our resident serpents enjoy a meal.

Monday, December 23

Monday, January 20

Monday, February 17

2–3 PM • No registration necessary • Fee: FREE

**Birds of Prey (ODC)**

What makes a bird of prey different from other birds? Using our collection of live birds, you will learn the life history of several species including hawks, owls, and falcons. There will be a chance to get an up-close look at the birds and explore artifacts including skulls, wings, talons, and feathers.

Friday, January 3 • 1–2 PM • Registration required • Fee: \$5 per person, FREE for members

Firemaking 101 (ODC)

Learn how to start and build a fire using several different techniques. We will try a hand drill, bow drill, flint and steel and other methods to start our fires. Children should be accompanied by an adult. *Please meet at our Cultural History Classroom: 5675 142nd Ave. Holland, MI.*

Saturday, January 18 • 1–2 PM • Registration required • Fee: \$6 per person, \$3 for members

Homeschool Program—Michigan's Indigenous People (ODC)

Using artifacts, language, traditional houses, games, hunting tools, and common life skills, our educators will share some of the basic life activities of Michigan's Indigenous Peoples before and after contact with Europeans. *Please meet at our Cultural History Classroom: 5675 142nd Ave. Holland, MI.*

Wednesday, February 19 • 9:30 AM–12 PM • Registration required • Fee: \$10 per child

Crafting a Bird Mask (ODC)

Create a fabulous mask of your favorite bird. Your mask will be a real piece of art using plaster, paint, and feathers. All materials will be provided. Ages 10 and up.

Saturday, February 22 • 1–3 PM • Registration required • Fee: \$10 per person, \$5 for members



Registration for 2020-21 School Year Opens January 30

The ODC Network offers preschool classes for 3- and 4-year-olds at our Little Hawks Discovery Preschool. Running from mid-September to mid-May, Little Hawks offers a nature-based preschool program that is unique in its emphasis on outdoor play as a key component for preschoolers' development and school readiness. Children spend at least half of each preschool session outdoors—throughout the year!

Half-day sessions are offered for different age groups:

3-year-olds

4-year-olds

3's and 4's together

Children must be 3 years old on or before September 1st to enroll.

Registration for the 2020/21 school year will open online on Thursday, January 30. Visit our website—littlehawks.org—to learn more about class sessions offered, tuition cost, scholarships available, and to add your name to our contact list to receive registration information and announcements via email. Questions? Call or email Jayne Schutter, Chief Administrator, at 616-393-0949 or littlehawks@outdoordiscovery.org.



Public Open House
Thursday, December 5 • 4:30–6 PM

Explore our space and meet our outstanding teachers. Please dress for the weather, we will be outside!



Knee-high Naturalists (DeGraaf)

Friday, December 13
Friday, December 27

Friday, January 10
Friday, January 24

Thursday, February 7
Thursday, February 21

10 AM–12:00 PM • *Registration required • Fee: \$10 per child, \$5 per child for members*

Homestead Holiday (DeGraaf)

This popular “make it and take it” time is fun for everyone. Choose from an assortment of pioneer-era holiday crafts and enjoy cookies and hot chocolate by a warm fireplace. Crafts and treats will be available for a small fee. Santa will be at the log cabin between 1:30-3 pm to visit with guests.

Saturday, December 14 • 11 AM–3 PM • *No registration necessary • Fee: FREE to enter, variable fee per craft*

Explore a Story (DeGraaf)

Friday, December 20

Tuesday, January 7

Tuesday, February 4

9–10 AM • *No registration necessary • Fee: \$5 per child, FREE for members*

Christmas Bird Count (DeGraaf)

The Christmas Bird Count is in its 119th year as the longest running citizen science project on the planet. Help ODC Network staff tally all the birds in the Holland count circle. No experience is required other than a willingness to be outside! Binoculars are available for lending.

Thursday, January 2 • 8 AM–3 PM • *Registration required • Fee: FREE*



Find more program details and register at degraaf.org

Cooking for the Birds (DeGraaf)

Do you enjoy cooking and baking? Do you also enjoy birds visiting your backyard? In this class you will make three easy recipes using natural ingredients that your backyard birds will love during the cold winter months. Each participant will also receive two additional recipes to try at home. Ages 8–Adult.

Saturday, January 4 • 1–3 PM • *Registration required • Fee: \$10 per person, \$5 for members*

Homeschool Program—Winter Ecology (DeGraaf)

Learn all about our local winter ecology in this drop-off program geared for home schoolers ages 6 - 10.

Tuesday, January 28 • 9:30 AM–12 PM • *Registration required • Fee: \$10 per child*

The Wonderful World of Spiders (DeGraaf)

Learn the uniqueness of these eight-legged animals from YouTube personality Bob McAndrews, aka “Bob The Spider Hunter”. Bob will talk about the value of spiders including the 880 million tons of insects they consume from our prairies, woods, and gardens each year. After a fun overview, Bob will share his special project that brought him close to Michigan’s Six-spotted Fishing spider.

Saturday, February 1 • 1–2 PM • *Registration required • Fee: \$5 per person, FREE for members*

Build a Birdhouse (DeGraaf)

We will have pre-cut birdhouse kits available for you to assemble. They can be finished for cavity nesters such as bluebirds, tree swallows, chickadees, and wrens. This is a great program for young children with an adult helper.

Saturday, February 8 • 10–11:30 AM • *Registration required • Fee: \$12 per bird house, \$8 for members*

Great Backyard Bird Count (DeGraaf)

Saturday, February 15 • 11 AM–3 PM • *No registration necessary • Fee: FREE*

Owl Prowl (DeGraaf)

Join a naturalist in search of our resident owls. Following an introduction to Michigan’s native owls, we will head out to call for those in the neighborhood. If there are any nearby, we will hopefully hear their response.

Saturday, February 15 • 6:30–8 PM • *Registration required • Fee: \$5 per person, FREE for members*



Winter Activities to try on the Greenway

Afraid of getting a little stir crazy this winter? Don't be! There are plenty of opportunities to get outside that don't involve a cramped airplane flight to a far-off destination. Consider trying these opportunities at one of the many partner parks along the Macatawa Greenway.

Sledding: One of the best sledding hills in the area is located at Van Raalte Farm in Holland. Park at the entrance of 24th Street for closest access, or take a walk through the woods and meadows by parking at one of the other entrances. It's a great way for the kids to burn some energy!



Cross-country skiing: The Upper Macatawa Natural Area is a bike rider's paradise in the warm months. During the winter, many of the same hiking and biking paths become usable for cross-country skiers and snowshoers. Park at either entrance (84th or 76th Avenue in Zeeland) to hike through the expansive trails through the hills and floodplain along the upper reaches of the Macatawa River.

Snowshoeing: If you are new to snowshoeing and want to try it out, you're always welcome to use one of our pairs at the Outdoor Discovery Center when we have enough snowpack. But

if you've already invested in your own pair, try heading over to Paw Paw Park in Holland. The east side in particular has expansive meadows and trails along the river to explore.

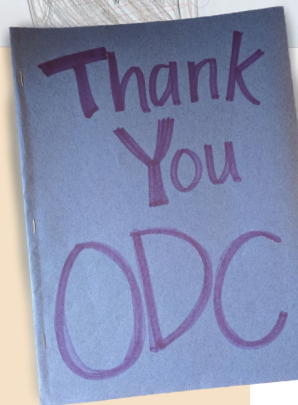
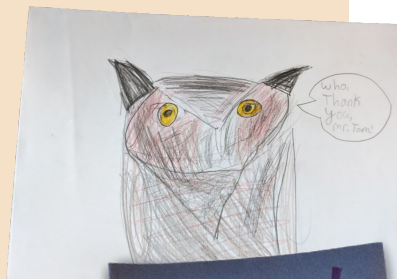


Bird watching: There are plenty of birds that stay in West Michigan or come here for the winter. Many hardy ducks and other waterfowl can stick around as long as there is a patch of open water. Check out the channel going between Lake Macatawa and Lake Michigan, which is often a waypoint for travelling birds. You can park at either the Black Lake Boardwalk or Holland State Park. Bring binoculars and protection against the wind. You may come across some interesting finds, such as Barrow's goldeneye, long tailed duck, or even a bald eagle!



Production sponsored by:

YOU



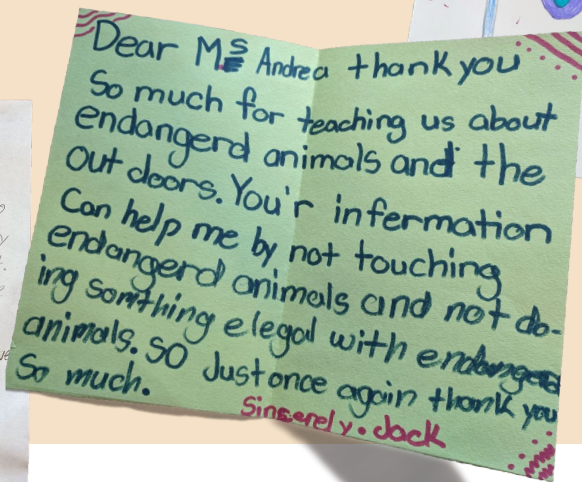
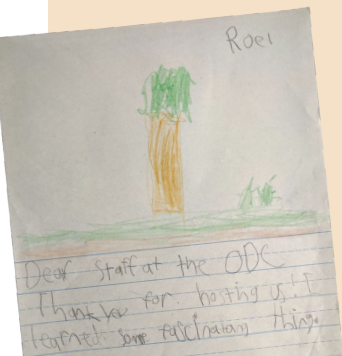
Hi Everyone,

The ODC Network provides priceless outdoor experiences for children and adults in our community. In fact, each year more than 50,000 people participate in our programs. We couldn't do that without you.

You can help us reach more people in three simple ways. First, join one of the programs in this guide. Second, tell someone else about us. Third, make a year-end gift to support our mission in the enclosed envelope or online.

Thank you for helping to make our community the best place to live, work, play, and learn!

Your friends at the
ODC Network



Winter Wildlife Walk (Holland Energy Park)

Come with us as we walk Window on the Waterfront trails and Holland's famous snowmelt system in search of winter wildlife. We are partnering with Holland Energy Park for this naturalist-led hike in downtown Holland. We are sure to see and hear plenty of birds as we walk along the marsh and into town. Please dress for the weather for this 2.5 mile walk and bring binoculars!

Monday, December 30 • 10–12 AM

*No registration necessary • Fee: FREE - sponsored by Holland Energy Park
Program Location: Holland Energy Park 1 Energy Way, Holland, MI*

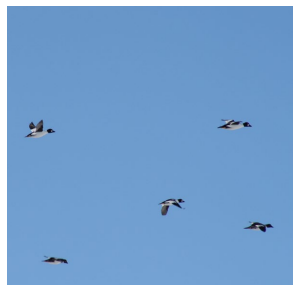


Waterfowl Birding (Holland State Park)

Explore Holland's waterways in search of birds. The group will start at Holland State Park and move inland from there with stops along Lake Macatawa or surrounding waterways and parks. Dress for the weather and be prepared to be outside! Binoculars will be available for loan.

Saturday, January 18 • 9–11 AM

*Registration required • Fee: \$6 per person, FREE for members
Program Location: Holland State Park, 2398 Ottawa Beach Rd, Holland, MI 49424*



Superb Owl Prowl (Sanctuary Woods)

Hike the dune of Laketown Township's Sanctuary Woods in search of resident and migratory owls. The group will try to call in Eastern Screech, Barred, and Great Horned Owls as they hike. Flashlights are welcome. Dress for the weather! Please note this hike does include approximately 170 stairs up a dune.

Friday, January 31 • 5:30–6:30 PM

*Registration required • Fee: FREE - sponsored by Laketown Township
Program Location: Sanctuary Woods, 66th Street Holland, MI*



Snowshoe Hike (Bysterveld Park)

We are partnering with Allegan County Parks to offer a family snowshoe hike. Hikers will explore the trails of Bysterveld County Park in search of interesting animals and plants while walking in wooden, Ojibwa-style snowshoes. The snowshoes are ideal for people aged 8 years and up. Participants are welcome to wear their own snowshoes and bring a sled for little ones to be pulled while hiking.

Be prepared to be outside the entire time hiking. At least 4 inches of snow base is required for our snowshoes.

Saturday, February 1 • 10–11 AM

*Registration required
Fee: FREE - sponsored by Allegan County Parks, Recreation & Tourism
Program Location: Bysterveld Park 4171 14th Street, Wayland, MI 49348*



Birding Field Day (Holland State Park)

Hawks, owls, ducks, woodpeckers and more will be searched for during this morning of birding. The group will stop at several hotspots for birds in late winter that may include Stu Visser Trails, Holland State Park, Black Lake Boardwalk, Pigeon River Access, and 128th Avenue and Bingham.

Saturday, February 29 • 9 AM–12 PM

*Registration required • Fee: FREE - sponsored by Park Township
Program Location: Holland State Park, 2215 Ottawa Beach Rd, Holland, MI 49424*



Building Nature-based Playscapes in Our Community

Over the past five years, the ODC Operations team has been hard at work designing and building eight nature playscapes: three on-site and five at different schools in the surrounding Holland area. While many playgrounds feature manufactured metal or plastic-based structures, our team combines the beautiful organic shapes of nature, with the function of more typical playscapes. These handbuilt structures utilize natural hardwood logs that have not been treated, intentionally allowing stations to transition into new and exciting micro-environments for children to explore. "Any child can play on a plastic rocket ship, but that is all it can ever be," states Ops Manager, Mike Oosting. "When they approach these logs, the structures can become anything. We want to remove the boxes that have been placed on their creativity."

The unique set of design and building skills that our team demonstrates has allowed them to become pioneers in the community, both in teaching their skills so that others may create similar scapes, and providing the types of outdoor learning environments that our students deserve and require to succeed.

By playing on our climbing settings, kids will learn risk management, develop their problem solving skills, gross motor skills, and communication methods, improve their self-discipline, and discover self-accomplishment.

Elements (like a climbing structure) are included in each design to positively impact children's health and development. Physically, plants and green spaces improve overall health, reduce stress, bolster immune systems, and increase physical activity. Socially, time



in nature promotes positive social behavior, encouraging children to share play spaces and work together. Academically, outdoor environments improve cognitive abilities, which is reflected in improved critical thinking skills and standardized test scores. By starting outdoor education early, children develop a foundation for formal learning, and unearth an innate desire to study the natural world.

Immersion in our environment during young ages promotes stewardship in adulthood, which is needed now more than ever as natural spaces are in ongoing decline. Whether they are transforming existing natural spaces, or returning developed spaces to their natural roots, our team is constantly creating more environments to explore. These spaces are not restricted to use only during the school day, but instead are an added asset in the community, providing a space for all ages to enjoy the inherent benefits.



Natural Treasures of the Sonoran Desert Photography Tour

March 22-28, 2020

Wildlife photographers and bird watchers alike will explore the “Real, natural, Arizona”. The group will start its trip in Tucson where they will be introduced to wildlife and plants of the southwest at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum. This world-renowned facility is a zoo, natural history museum, and botanical garden all in one. It will be a terrific springboard for the week with opportunities to see captive animals including hummingbirds, javalina, Gambel’s quail, Mexican wolf, coati, and more. The site will also allow people unfamiliar with desert southwest plants and wildflowers to learn first-hand about many native species.

From our base camp in the Tucson area, we will find the perfect places to catch sunrises and sunsets over the Sonoran desert including the iconic saguaro cactus. Other highlights of the experience will include a private photo session with native Arizona



wildlife and visits to our favorite locations to take in all that the desert has to offer.

Contact trip leader Joy Funk for more information or to reserve your spot: 616.393.9453 ext 2 or joy@outdoordiscovery.org.





Isle Royale June 15-21, 2020

Isle Royale National Park is an amazingly wild island national park located within the boundaries of Michigan in Lake Superior. The park's rugged features and stunning shoreline provide visitors with an immersive wilderness experience that is difficult to find in most locations. There are countless benefits to spending time in a wilderness setting and visiting this place will certainly help you get your "Vitamin N". Isle Royale National Park is the perfect place for those seeking solitude and respite from our daily lives.

While in the park, visitors will be treated to an abundance of plant and animal life, including some rare plants that are typically found in arctic or Pacific NW regions, as well as a population of wolves and moose that have been studied for more than 50 years. Many of the islands 40 endangered plant species are arctic disjuncts such as pearlwort, eastern paintbrush, and yellow

mountain saxifrage. Isle Royale is also home to Devil's Club which can be found in the coastal rainforests of the Pacific Northwest north into Alaska. Isle Royale's wolf and moose populations have made this living laboratory a hotspot for researchers as they study the effects of predation on a population as well as how outside factors can affect population size.

Contact trip lead Mike Graves for more information or to reserve your spot: 616.355.1057 or mikeg@outdoordiscovery.org.





Sylvania Wilderness Area Kayak Trip

August 1-6, 2020

The Sylvania Wilderness Area in Michigan's Upper Peninsula encompasses over 18,000 acres of the Ottawa National Forest near Watersmeet, MI. The wilderness has 34 named lakes and a large natural area of old growth forest providing habitat for a wide range of living things like rare

orchids, bald eagles, loons, and osprey. The forests consist of mostly virgin northern hardwoods mixed with patches of ancient white pines. The rolling hills and deep clear lakes were formed by glaciers thousands of years ago.

The group will spend three full days paddling and exploring the lakes and islands, as well as the many trails in search of wild things. Don't worry, there will be time for fishing or just relaxing in a hammock too! In the evenings we will return to our campsite for a wilderness dinner. This is a kayak camping trip, therefore appropriate camping gear is required.

Contact trip lead Mike Graves for more information or to reserve your spot: 616.355.1057 or mikeg@outdoordiscovery.org.



Women in Nature Adventure to Hocking Hills, Ohio

October 14-18, 2020



Come join us on a fun-filled weekend trip with the girls to Hocking Hills State Park in central Ohio. The Hocking Hills are characterized by massive sandstone outcroppings, deep cool gorges, towering hemlocks, and glistening waterfalls. Perhaps no other area in the state of Ohio is as wild, romantic and picturesque and it's hard to miss the gorgeous colors of this region in the fall! We will be staying four nights in a luxurious lodge located on

a private, natural-wooded setting, close to several area attractions. Our weekend will include a variety of outdoor activities along with a few luxuries every woman can appreciate.

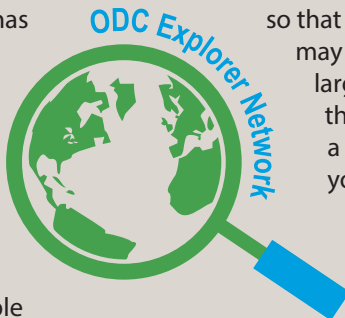
Contact trip leader Lisa McKellips for more information or to reserve your spot: 616.393.9453 ext 2 or lisa@outdoordiscovery.org.



Exploring Nature Around the World Since 2002

The ODC Explorer Network has been coordinating nature-based, small group trips since 2002. Our staff lead trips to regional, national, and international destinations with the help of tourism industry experts and professional nature guides to provide the best possible experience. When you travel with the Explorer Network, you will be rewarded with unique encounters and memorable moments.

We have high expectations for our trips and of our tour leaders. We travel with a small group,



so that we can provide experiences that may be difficult to find as part of a large tour company trip. We hope that your travels with us will not be a single experience but one where you become a repeat traveler who enjoys unique lodges and great hotels, incredible food with a local touch, and traveling with a group of people you will soon call friends.

For more information about our upcoming adventures, visit odcexplorernetwork.org.



4214 56th Street • Holland, MI • 49423

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

