

# Discover Nature

News and Programs  
from the ODC Network



Summer  
2021



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



**FREE ADMISSION—Two Locations!**

**4214 56th Street • Holland, MI • 49423**

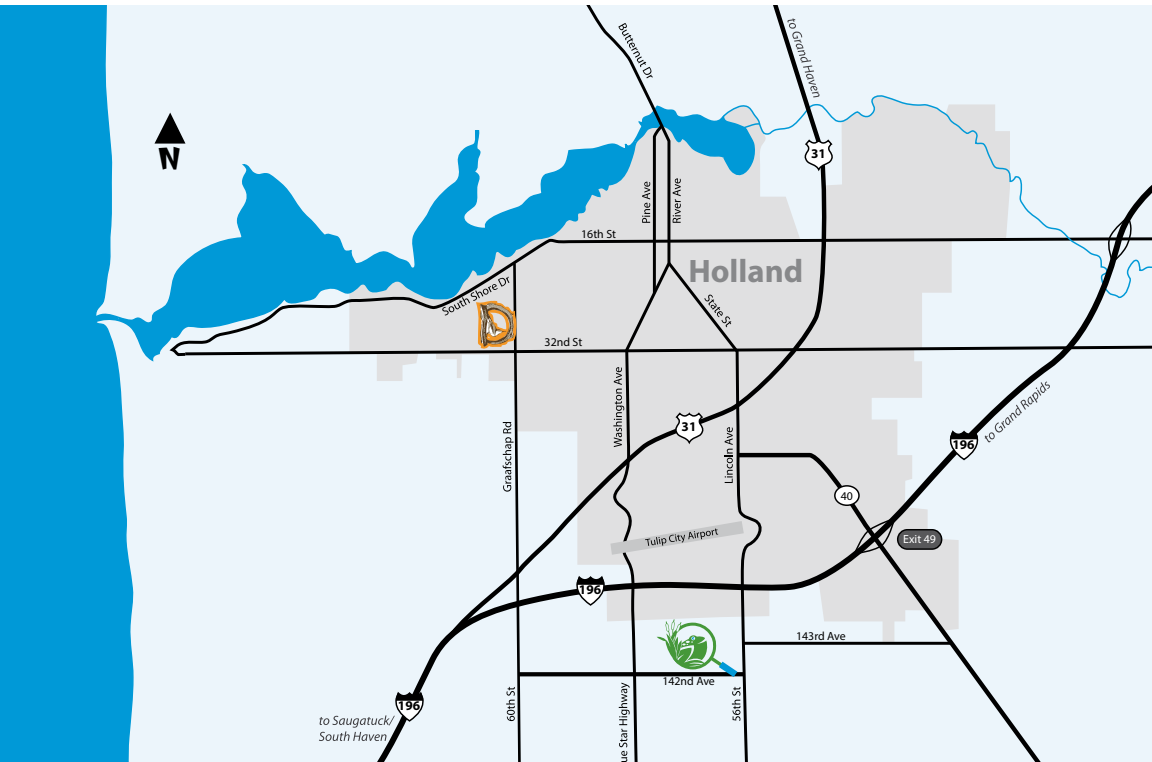


The Outdoor Discovery Center is 155 acres with about 3 miles of trails, located on the south side of Holland, just south of West Michigan Regional Airport. Admission is free! Trails open dawn to dusk—Visitors Center open 10 AM–3 PM, Tuesday–Saturday.

**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

The ODC Network Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Plan 2021 is launching into action. One of the goals is to help our staff and community understand the definitions in DEI. Definitions are important because words have the power to unite or divide us. We acknowledge that based on our literacy skills, comprehension abilities, and life experiences. Our minds process words and it can trigger a response in our bodies. In the DEI space we have the choice to empathetically lean in and listen - grow in knowledge - or we experience mixed feelings, have questions, or shut off completely. We welcome you to join us on this inclusive learning journey.



ODC Staff representing their cultural heritage during a team meeting.

Here are some examples the ODC Network uses:

**Diversity:** Psychological, physical, and social differences that occur among any and all individuals; including but not limited to race, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, religion, education, marital status, language, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental or physical ability, and learning styles. A diverse group, community, or organization is one in which a variety of social and cultural characteristics exist.

**Equity:** The guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement combined with an effort to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups.

The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist equality in the provision of effective opportunities to all groups.

**Inclusion:** The act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people.

## 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](http://outdoordiscovery.org)



DeGraaf Nature Center  
600 Graafschap Road  
Holland, MI 49423  
[degraaf.org](http://degraaf.org)



Other Locations  
*Addresses listed beneath  
program description*

# July 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 VoLes	2 Knee-high Naturalists Celebrate Eagles	3
4	5	6 Win – Birds of Prey	7	8	9 Knee-high Naturalists Banquet for the Birds VoLes	10 Hawks, Falcons, and Owls
11	12 Wilderness Survival	13 Explore a Story	14	15 Archery Night	16 Knee-high Naturalists	17 Macatawa Water Festival
18	19 Up Close and Wild	20 Win – Dune Hike	21	22 Blueberry Fields Forever	23 Knee-high Naturalists Banquet for the Birds	24

*Did you know?*

Check for updates and more details online at [outdoordiscovery.org](http://outdoordiscovery.org)!

# August

	26 Michigan Animals	27	28 Nature for Tykes	29	30 Knee-high Naturalists	31
	2	3 Explore a Story	4	5	6 Knee-high Naturalists	7 Family Kayaking
8	9	10 Turtle Races	11	12 Win-Archery	13 Knee-high Naturalists Banquet for the Birds VoLes	14 River Encounter
15	16 Amazing Insects	17 Up Close & Wild	18	19	20 Knee-high Naturalists	21 VoLes
22	23 Knee-deep in a Wetland	24	25 Nature for Tykes	26 Win – Nature Hike	27 Knee-high Naturalists Banquet for the Birds	28
29	30	31	1	2	3 Knee-high Naturalists Banquet for the Birds	4 Michigan Wildlife
5	6	7 Explore a Story	8	9 Adult Archery Night	10 Knee-high Naturalists	11

# September

12	13 Win-Native Gardening	14 Explore with Your Senses	15	16	17 Knee-high Naturalists	18 Splendid Snakes
19	20	21	22 Nature for Tykes	23 Birds & Brews	24 Knee-high Naturalists	25
26	27	28 Fall Evening Paddle	29	30		



## VoLes (Various Locations)

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!

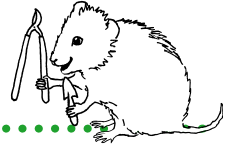
Thurs, July 1 • 3–5 PM

Fri, Aug 13 • 3–5 PM

Fri, July 9 • 3–5 PM

Sat, Aug 21 • 10 AM–12 PM

Registration required • Fee: FREE



## Knee-high Naturalists (ODC)

Friday, July 2

Friday, July 30

Friday, August 27

Friday, Sept 24

Friday, July 16

Friday, August 13

Friday, Sept 10

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

Find more program details and register at [outdoordiscovery.org](http://outdoordiscovery.org)

## Celebrate Eagles (ODC)

The big party is here, America’s birthday party! To celebrate, the whole family is invited to meet our national symbol in the feather. You will be able to see our resident bald eagles and their cousin the golden eagle. Plan on a 10 minute walk from the Main Entrance to the De Witt Birds of Prey Center.

Friday, July 2 • 3–4 PM • Registration required • Fee: \$6 per participant, \$4 for members

**Women in Nature–Birds of Prey (ODC) Tuesday, July 6 • 6–7 PM • Registration required • Fee: \$6 per person**

## Banquet for the Birds (ODC)

Stop by the De Witt Birds of Prey Center and watch a naturalist feed our resident raptors.

Friday, July 9

Friday, August 13

Friday, September 3

Friday, July 23

Friday, August 27

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

## Hawks, Falcons, and Owls, Oh My! (ODC)

Saturday, July 10 • 11 AM–12 PM • Registration required • Fee: \$6 per person, \$4 for members

## Archery Night (ODC)

Thursday, July 15 • 6–7:30 PM • Registration required • Fee: \$12 per person, \$9 for members

**Women in Nature–Archery (ODC) Thursday, Aug 12 • 6–7:30 PM • Registration required • Fee: \$12 per person**

## Adult Archery Night (ODC)

Hey grown-ups, don’t you want to shoot at a duck-billed dinosaur or possibly a giant mosquito? This event is for adults of all levels. We will provide all of the equipment you will need. (Sorry, no outside bows.)

Thursday, September 9 • 6–7:30 PM • Registration required • Fee: \$12 per person, \$9 for members

## Women in Nature–Gardening with Native Plants (ODC)

In this gardening program, participants will learn the difference between native plants and “wildflowers”, how they can be used in urban or suburban landscapes, and how native plants can attract birds and butterflies to their yards.

Monday, September 13 • 6–7:30 PM • Registration required • Fee: \$6 per person

## Splendid Snakes (ODC)

Michigan is home to 17 different snake species. Come to this program to learn about some of these snakes and see them up close. We will discuss what snakes eat, how they move, and why everyone should welcome these great animals. Dress for the weather—the entire program will be outdoors.

Saturday, Sept 18 • 10–11 AM • Registration required • Fee: \$6 per child, \$4 for members





## A Surge of Electricity...in the Parking Lot?

The demand for use of our electric vehicle charger has grown beyond the single charger we had, so with contributions from the White Pine Fund, we now have 2 charging stations providing 4 total standard charging plug-ins available for use by the public. Each pedestal has two charging units, suitably named "Juice Box", which are 40 Amp commercial EV chargers.

One of the charging stations will sometimes be occupied by our electric vehicle, a 2020 Chevrolet Bolt. We chose the Bolt because it leans into our mission of conservation and education while demonstrating the value of greener transportation options. This car is capable of driving 259 miles off a single charge (the equivalent of driving from Holland to the Mackinac Bridge). One of many innovative features is a regenerative braking system. While braking, this system allows the vehicle to convert all kinetic energy of the car's forward momentum to electric energy that is stored in the battery for future use.

### Save the Date: Evening at the ODC September 14

Join us for our annual fundraising event and help us celebrate outdoor education, learn about our progress, and hear our future plans as we continue to serve our community.

**Tuesday, September 14** • *Look for more details at [outdoordiscovery.org](http://outdoordiscovery.org)*



## Walk in the Woods Clears \$35K Mark!

Walk in the Woods is Little Hawks and Seedlings Discovery Preschools' largest fundraiser. This year we raised funds for new and updated play and learn spaces, new outdoor gear, and scholarships to help remove financial barriers for future preschool students.

For this event, we fundraise in three major ways: Community/Business Sponsorships, Student Sponsorships, & Basket Raffles. In

total, we had 430 individuals attend over four nights of events and we raised over \$36,000!

Thank you to 5/3rd Bank and DeNooyer Chevrolet, and to the numerous Little Hawks and Seedlings students for sponsoring the event, and to City Delicatessen for providing delicious food!



FIFTH THIRD BANK



### Knee-high Naturalists (DeGraaf)

Friday, July 9  
Friday, July 23

Friday, August 6  
Friday, August 20

Friday, Sept 3  
Friday, Sept 17

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

### Explore a Story (DeGraaf)

Tuesday, July 13

Tuesday, August 3

Tuesday, September 7

10–11 AM • No registration necessary • Fee: \$6 per child, \$4 for members

Find more program details and register at [degraaf.org](http://degraaf.org)

### Turtle Races (DeGraaf)

Come one, come all to the great turtle race! Meet the competitors and learn a little bit about some of our native turtles. Pick your favorite one and root for it during the race. They might end shell and shell with each other. Come out to see the excitement!



Tuesday, August 10 • 11 AM–12 PM • Registration required • Fee: \$6 per child, \$4 for members

### Michigan Wildlife (DeGraaf)

Learn about the reptiles, amphibians and birds that can be found in Michigan with a naturalist from the DeGraaf. Live animals will be used in this family friendly presentation that is great for all ages. There will be time to explore natural artifacts like bones, feathers, and furs. Also, you will be able to get an up close look at some of our captive animals.

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



## Thanks to All of Our Golfers!

On June 2, we held the 2nd Annual Social Distance Cup at the Ravines Golf Club in Saugatuck. We had 38 teams participate throughout the day and were able to raise \$25,000 to go toward our mission of advancing outdoor education and conservation in West Michigan.

Thank you to Ravines Golf Club for hosting us again this year, and to all who participated and supported the event. A special thank you goes out to our Eagle and Birdie sponsors: CL Construction, Gentex, Huntington Bank, K-Line Industries, HNI Risk Advisors, Saugatuck Brewing Co., and the Menerick Family.

#### Morning Flight Winners

First place team: All About you Chiropractic, shot 56  
Second place team: Bayside Capital, shot 58

#### Afternoon Flight Winners

First place team: Brad Klow Group, shot 58  
Second place team: Ferris, Busscher and Zwiers P.C., shot 60





# Macatawa Water Festival (Windmill Island Gardens)

This year's Macatawa Water Festival will be returning to Holland's Windmill Island. As an organization, we will follow guidelines and recommendations for a safe event for all volunteers, staff, and attendees. We are excited to celebrate the Macatawa Watershed and educate and encourage you to continue to visit, explore, and care for it.

Community partners, local businesses and organizations are joining together to provide in-person activities, suitable for all ages.

We need volunteers!  
Contact Ashley Van Zee,  
scan the QR code, or call  
the office (616) 393-9453  
for more information.



**Saturday, July 17**  
**9 AM-1 PM**

*Program Location:*  
*Windmill Island Gardens, 1 Lincoln Avenue, Holland, MI*  
*No registration necessary*  
*Fee: FREE*



## Everyone Lives in a Watershed

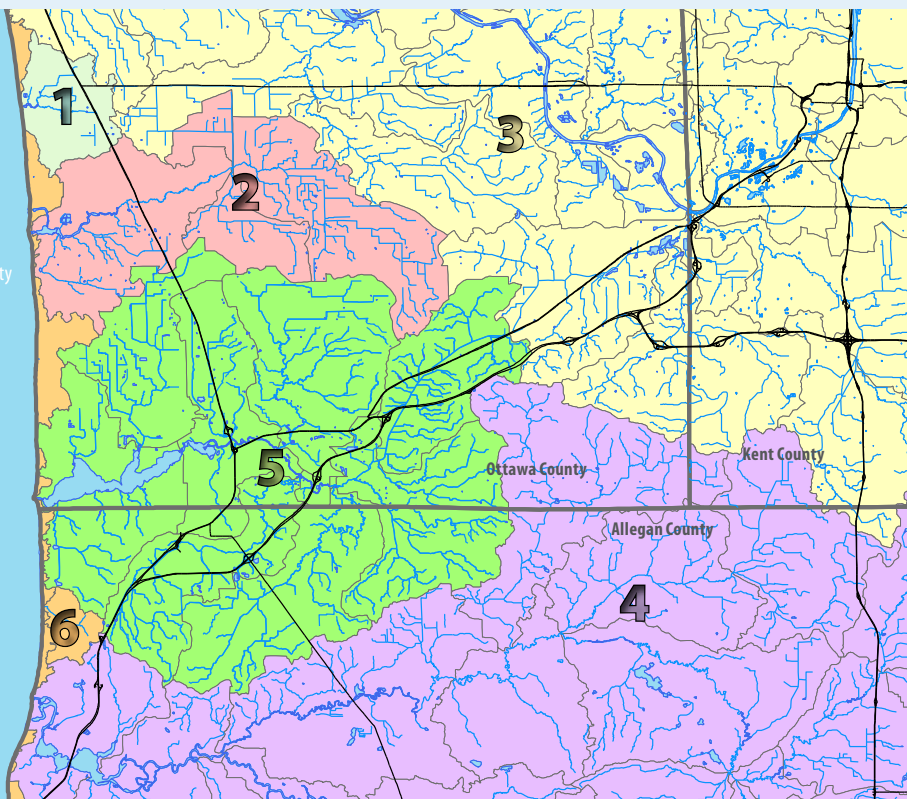
Learn all about watersheds with games and activities at the Macatawa Water Festival! Here are the watersheds closest to us. Do you know which watershed you're standing in right now?

1. Little Pigeon Watershed
2. Pigeon Watershed
3. Grand River Watershed

4. Kalamazoo Watershed
5. Macatawa Watershed
6. Direct to Lake Michigan



SCAN HERE to use an  
interactive map or visit  
[outdoordiscovery.org/project-clarity](http://outdoordiscovery.org/project-clarity)







## A Nature Play Park in Downtown Holland

We invite you to help us bring more WOW to Holland's downtown where residents and tourists love spending time. The ODC Network has designed a new multi-age, family friendly, state-of-the art, nature play area for Window on the Waterfront Park (WOW) located on 6th Street. This space is just two blocks from downtown 8<sup>th</sup> Street shopping!

The WOW Nature Play Park has been designed in partnership with the City of Holland and GMB A/E. Nature play parks like this are designed according to national best practices and provide children with health benefits and improved social-emotional well-being. The ODC has been hard at work fundraising to support the project development to accomplish these plans. We are so grateful for the support we've already received that has provided more than 70% of our needed funding. To secure the last \$100,000, the

Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) has approved a matching grant of up to \$50,000. Every dollar raised between now and July 19 will be matched by the MEDC. Please help us meet this goal and support this needed project. You can make a gift online through our crowd-funding page at [patronicity.com/wowplaypark](http://patronicity.com/wowplaypark) or you can give by check using the included envelope.

We will keep you updated on all the progress and the opening date. What's most important to ODC, though, is that you play, create and learn at the WOW Nature Play Park in the months and years to come.

For additional giving options or to learn more, reach out to the ODC Network Development Team: Dave ([david@outdoordiscovery.org](mailto:david@outdoordiscovery.org)) or Ashley ([ashley@outdoordiscovery.org](mailto:ashley@outdoordiscovery.org)) or call 616-201-7858.



SCAN HERE with your smartphone's camera

[patronicity.com/wowplaypark](http://patronicity.com/wowplaypark)



## Wilderness Survival (Keppel Forest)

Improve your outdoor skills while at this exciting program. Participants will learn how to make a shelter, read a map, build a fire, and more—this is a great program for 8-14 year olds.

**Monday, July 12 • 10:30 AM–12 PM**

*Registration required • Fee: FREE - sponsored by Park Township*

*Program Location: Keppel Forest, 2117 Lakewood Blvd, Holland*



## Up Close & Wild (Littlejohn Lake)

Learn about the reptiles, amphibians, and birds that can be found in Michigan with this family-friendly presentation that is great for all ages.

**Monday, July 19 • 11 AM–12 PM**

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

*Program Location: Littlejohn Lake County Park, 3540 113th Ave, Allegan*



## Women in Nature—Dune Hike (Shore Acres)

Get in your steps after work and hike some of Michigan's beautiful dunes. Learn about the largest freshwater dune system in the world. Bring a friend along as we hike through the different dune zones to Lake Michigan and back.

**Tuesday, July 20 • 6:30–7:30 PM**

*Registration required • Fee: \$6 per person*

*Program Location: Shore Acres Township Park, 6602 138th Ave, Holland*

## Blueberry Fields Forever (Huysen Farm)

Bring collection buckets to take home some free blueberries from the u-pick, organic blueberry patch!

**Thursday, July 22 • 11 AM–12 PM**

*Registration required • Fee: FREE - sponsored by Laketown Township*

*Program Location: Huysen Farm Park, 4184 64th Street, Holland*

## Michigan Animals (Ridge Point Community Church)

We are partnering with Ridge Point Community Church to teach you about the reptiles, amphibians, and birds of Michigan. We will bring live animals for participants to see up close as they learn about their natural history! It's bound to be a wild time. Stick around after the program for snacks and playtime hosted by Ridge Point's wonderful staff.

This drop-off style program is for children 5-12 years old. Animal program from 6-7, snack and playtime from 7-8.

**Monday, July 26 • 6–8 PM**

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

*Program Location: Ridge Point Community Church, 340 104th Ave, Holland*

## Family Kayaking (New Richmond Bridge)

Paddle the Kalamazoo River with naturalists from the ODC Network. Kayaks, paddles, and vests are provided. The group will launch from the New Richmond Bridge Park and paddle up river into some marshy areas and forested river sections. Then we will turn around and paddle back to the park. This river has a slow current making this an ideal paddle for an inexperienced paddler or someone looking for a relaxed paddle.

**Saturday, August 7 • 9–11 AM**

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

*Program Location: New Richmond Bridge Park (north entrance), 5750 Old Allegan Rd, Fennville*

## River Encounter (Wade's Bayou)

We are partnering with the Kalamazoo River Watershed Council to offer this fun, family-friendly kayak paddle. We will look local wildlife, floodplain plant species, and learn about our Kalamazoo River Greenway project and what efforts are being taken to protect the Kalamazoo River and Watershed.

**Saturday, August 14 • 10 AM–12 PM**

*Registration required • Fee: \$25 single kayak, \$35 double kayak, 25% discount for members*

*Program Location: Wade's Bayou Memorial Park, 52 Bayou St, Douglas*

## Amazing Insects (Ridge Point Community Church)

Don't you want to learn about the most abundant and diverse group of animals on the planet? Insects are amazing and all around us. Come and catch insects in the meadows of Ridge Point Community Church. Stick around after the program for snacks and playtime hosted by Ridge Point's wonderful staff.

This drop-off style program is for children 5-12 years old. Animal program from 6-7, snack and playtime from 7-8.

**Monday, August 16 • 6–8 PM**

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

*Program Location: Ridge Point Community Church, 340 104th Ave, Holland*

## Up Close & Wild (Former Airport)

Learn about the reptiles, amphibians, and birds that can be found in Michigan with this family-friendly presentation that is great for all ages.

**Tuesday, August 17 • 6–7 PM**

*Registration required • Fee: FREE - sponsored by Park Township*

*Program Location: 1269 Ottawa Beach Rd, Holland*



## Knee-deep in a Wetland (Farview Park)

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.

**Monday, August 23 • 4–5:30 PM**

*Registration required • Fee: FREE - sponsored by Laketown Township*

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

## Women in Nature—Nature Hike (Rabbit River Preserve)

The nature hike will be led by one of our naturalists who will guide the group through the Rabbit River Preserve. We will see beautiful wildflowers and hopefully some great wildlife.

**Thursday, August 26 • 6–7 PM**

*Registration required • Fee: \$6 per person*

*Program Location: Rabbit River Preserve, 44011 135th Ave., Hamilton*



## Explore with Your Senses (Shore Acres)

Use all of your senses on this walk through Shore Acres Township Park. Touch, feel, smell, see, and taste your way along these dune trails with one of our naturalists. Learn how you use your senses different than many of Michigan's native animals. This program is perfect for adventurous 4-9 year olds.

**Thursday, September 14 • 4–5 PM**

*Registration required • Fee: FREE - sponsored by Laketown Township*

*Program Location: Shore Acres Township Park, 6602 138th Ave, Holland*

## Birds & Brews (Saugautuck Brewing)

Join the ODC and Saugautuck Brewing Company as we pair specialty beers with a live birds of prey show.

**Thursday, September 23 • 6–8 PM**

*Registration required • More details at [saugautuckbrewing.com](http://saugautuckbrewing.com)*

*Program Location: Saugautuck Brewing Company, 2948 Blue Star Hwy, Douglas*

## Fall Evening Paddle (Lake Macatawa)

Paddle on 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 along the shore looking for wildlife.

Registration required - boats limited. If you are registering for a double kayak please only register one boat (we do not need both attendee's information).

**Thursday, September 28 • 6:30–8 PM**

*Registration required • Fee: FREE - sponsored by Park Township*

*Program Location: South Side Kayak Launch, 1671 South Shore Dr, Holland*





## Stepping Into the Wild

We are thrilled that our 2021 summer program season is here! The Education Network's goal for this summer is to reignite kids' love for learning. We will be going to local schools and offering unique and innovative learning opportunities for children. It has been a challenging school year and we know that everyone has been through a lot. Our Education Network's summer school camps provide a great opportunity to get kids excited about learning again, all while getting them outside to enjoy and explore nature! Study after study shows that learning outdoors aids child development and it also reduces levels of anxiety and stress. Plus, who doesn't want to be outdoors in the summer!

We are bringing camp programs to 3500 students at Allendale, Fennville, Hamilton, Grand Haven, Paw Paw, Grandville, and Jenison. Ask your child's teacher if there is

a program available at your school. We are working directly with teachers, administrators, and community leaders to create meaningful learning experiences this summer. These camps provide hands-on experiences that connect the children with nature while reconnecting them with their love for learning. Come explore and step into the wild with us! If you would be interested in bringing an ODC Education Network Camp to your school next summer, email [Bob@outdoordiscovery.org](mailto:Bob@outdoordiscovery.org).





# Cultural History Trail

The cultural history exhibit has seen many changes over the last year, so we wanted to give an update on the progress. These structures are part of our trail system and can be accessed by the public whenever they are not in use for scheduled programs.



**The Summer Village:** Indigenous groups in the Late Woodland period gathered together during the summer and shared communal gardening and food-preparation spaces, but had their own living quarters. The tall building is our cookhouse, (though ours is taller than normal to accommodate school groups), made of Osage Orange trees that are extremely long-lasting even with exposure to the elements. Our village also has 2 domed houses, called Waginogans, which are covered in bark, typically from White Cedar or Birch trees for natural insect and water repellency. Though it is just blank soil at the moment, our Three Sisters garden will be a place for students to see corn, squash, and bean plants grow in the same space, complementing each other instead of competing.



**The Winter House:** Winters were more isolated than summer, with individual families following the animals that sustained them through the cold months. This active lifestyle required that their homes be portable, which was achieved with a three-pole house. Three main poles supported the house, and mats made from cattail reeds created a double-layered outside wall to insulate families from the weather. Families may have had a single conical house or extended it to have two connecting structures if more space was needed. We chose the larger form to accommodate the volume of students expected to learn about Indigenous people through our programs.

**The Fur Trading Outpost:** This station along the trail demonstrates a point where fur traders and Indigenous people alike would have gathered to negotiate deals and resupply their consumable goods. Some examples of desirable items would have been cast-iron pots, guns, and other metal items that Indigenous people would not have had access to otherwise.



# Meet Our Newest Bird of Prey

A new bird has brought a reminder of winter's chilling beauty to the Outdoor Discovery Center. As spring blew in, so did a young snowy owl (*Bubo scandiacus*). Snowy owls measure between twenty and twenty-eight inches in length, and between three- and seven-pounds in weight (usually the weight of a half-gallon of milk!). Wingspans can reach fifty-seven inches long. Snowy owls are more likely to be active throughout the day and night, as opposed to most owls that are nocturnal, meaning they are awake at night. These birds are easily spotted by their snow-white plumage, the perfect cloak for the tundra they hunt and breed in. The females can be identified from the males by the dark markings that cover the length of their bodies. Their yellow eyes, another feature unique to these owls, are described as "cat-like." Snowy owls summer north of the Arctic Circle and travel south in winter. Their diet consists largely of the small mammal known as lemmings, and migration patterns often align with lemming population cycles. Though they can travel as far south as Florida, these birds typically don't travel beyond the Midwest in winter.

This snowy owl had a broken wing and now has a fused wrist, making it incapable of adequate flight. These are serious injuries for any bird but especially for snowy owls, which rely on successful flight for hunting as well as migration. This owl was deemed incapable of surviving in the wild. However, this makes it the perfect addition to our family! All the



The Snowy Owl escaping summer heat in his special air-conditioned room.

birds of prey housed with the ODC are unable to return to nature, and instead are taken care of by our team of naturalists and educators. We are working to make sure this new bird's needs are well taken care of; as a migrator, it has a specially designed, climate-controlled enclosure to protect it from hot Michigan summers. We are licensed by the Michigan DNR and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to care for incapacitated animals and use them in educational programs. Our educational programs are meant to show visitors how best to respect and care for the beautiful wildlife we all share the planet with, and we are delighted for this snowy owl to join the cause!



The Snowy Owl in his new enclosure near the Visitors Center at the main entrance of the Outdoor Discovery Center.





# And Our Newest Mammals

Among the many improvements currently taking place, we now have a Mammal Exhibit along a trail just behind our Visitor's Center. The first mammals to join us are a red fox and an opossum!

## Red Fox

We purchased our fox from a licensed breeder that provides animals for zoos and nature centers in hopes of dispelling myths surrounding this amazing animal!

Our red fox lives in an enclosure within the same building as the snowy owl. This indoor-outdoor hybrid space has plenty of places for her to nap and play.

Red foxes are extremely adaptable and are native to most places in the Northern Hemisphere. As omnivores, they eat both plants and animals, changing their diet throughout the year based on availability. Their incredible hearing and agile movements help them hunt.



## Opossum

Our opossum was taken from the wild as a baby to be a family's pet. He cannot live on his own after imprinting on humans, so he will live with us and help teach the many reasons to love this misunderstood animal!

The opossum lives next to the building that houses the red fox and snowy owl in one of three octagonal cages. (Eventually we will have animals inhabiting all three!)

We are excited to have North America's only native marsupial on-site (though because ours is a male, he does not have a pouch). His hands, feet, and prehensile tail make him a great climber. Though he cannot see the best, his whiskers, ears, and nose help keep him alert to his surroundings while hunting at night.

These mammals will be on display in their homes and join our naturalists in classes on-site.

During your next visit, check for new animals along this trail, as well as other additions to the Eldean Play Area!



## Why Opossums Are Great

Their ability to eat almost anything! They can eat animals that can be pests or otherwise carry diseases including:

**Ticks**—a single Opossum can eat 5,000 ticks every year

**Cockroaches, rats, and mice**

**Slugs and snails**—protect your landscaping & gardens

**Venomous snakes**—Opossums are resistant to venom and can therefore safely eat these animals

**Roadkill/dead animals**—clean up decomposing animals from our environments

**And** Opossums have a body temperature too low to carry rabies



4214 56th Street • Holland, MI • 49423

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