

Way of the WILDS

Celebrating our wilderness connections in the Chicago Region

Complimentary • WINTER 2011

The Restless Sleep

Designing Your Native Landscape

Cross Country Skiing

Animal Tracks in the Snow

“I am never alone in this wild forest,
this forest of elders, this forest of eyes.”

—Richard Nelson



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Educate • Engage • Enjoy

Don't miss our Spring issue! Distributes in Mid March.

Headwater streams and water as source will be the focus of our next quarterly magazine. We'll highlight flowing water in the region and the creatures that live in and around our streams and rivers.

Discover the best places to kayak and go maple sugaring— and learn about some of the most attractive native shrubs and trees to plant in your own garden.

If you have a local business It's a great time to get your ad in and let people know how to find you! Email kerry@wayofthewilds.com

*Distributed in March for free at a nature loving location near you – or sign up for a subscription and have *Way of the Wilds* mailed to your home or business at www.wayofthewilds.com!*

Photo by Hank Erdmann





WAY OF THE WILDS

This free magazine educates and informs through articles written by local experts, offering ideas for experiencing and taking ownership and pride in the earth and its processes around them. We are dedicated to providing local photography and information of interest to those involved in local stewardship as well as pieces of interest for everyone interested in conservation, recreation and their families.

Publishers:

Kerry Leigh, Debbie Mackall

A portion of every issue of *Way of the Wilds* is donated to support our natural resources.

To place an ad in *Way of the Wilds*, please call Kerry at 847-609-1292, visit www.wayofthewilds.com, or email kerry@wayofthewilds.com for information and ad rates.

Thanks to our sponsors!

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Editorial

Please send your editorial suggestions or other correspondence to kerry@wayofthewilds.com.

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Welcome!



I'm wondering what this winter will hold for us. Last night the weatherman said that each season in 2010 had consistently broken records for high temperatures. Perhaps it will be snowier than usual, or shorter like last year when the plants were all 2 weeks ahead of the usual schedule.

Many of us find comfort in the tempo of the seasons, knowing that all is as it should be, yet with a keen awareness that these seasons are changing their rhythm. We invite you to enjoy the winter and its delicious gifts with us as you explore places to play and discover winter's hidden treasures.

I hope you enjoy this issue. We've done our best to provide material for everyone who appreciates the beauty, incredible natural diversity and recreational opportunities in our region.

—Kerry Leigh, Publisher

Thanks to Everyone Who Participated in our Fundraiser Launch Party!



Bill Kurtis and Donna LaPietra generously hosted a launch party at their home for the premier of *Way of the Wilds* magazine on October 3. We had great attendance, a beautiful day and so much support.

We're planning to have events throughout the year—"Wild Parties" where we share information, support local environmental efforts and much more.

We'll keep you posted—sign onto our facebook page and receive *Way of the Wilds* nature info and information about upcoming events of interest.

Just go to www.facebook.com/wayofthewilds and click on the box called "Like" at the top of the page. We'd love your comments!



The Restless Sleep...

By Mike Redmer and Chet Ryndak



As our Midwestern winter sets in, some of our familiar wildlife species are seen less often. For many birds, if they cannot find adequate food, dealing with winter is as simple as migrating southward to more hospitable climates. Some mammals such as deer, gray squirrels, foxes and coyotes remain active all winter and tough out a living on whatever food they can find. For others, winter is spent conserving energy through some sort of dormancy. Most people just call this dormancy “hibernation.”

There are different types of winter dormancies. The woodchuck spends several months each winter in true hibernation, meaning that it retreats to its den, and slows its metabolism and body functions for the duration. Indeed, woodchucks can slow their heart rates to a few as 4-5 beats per minute. Some other mammals, such as chipmunks, raccoons, and skunks are not true hibernators, but can spend extended periods of time sleeping in dens. They rely on stores of body fat to get them through their slumber, though they may wake up from time to time to move around in or out of their dens.





Chipmunks may even wake to eat nuts that they cached in their dens before they retired in the fall. Many of our local amphibians and reptiles spend cold winters in a state of dormancy known as *brumation*. As “cold blooded” animals, they have body temperatures that are close to that of their surroundings, so they have little choice but to slow down as winter sets in. During brumation, the physiological processes may speed up a bit with moderate temperatures, or slow to the point of nearly stopping as temperatures approach freezing. For most of these creatures, it is critical that they find refuge in a burrow, crevice, or some other kind of den where the temperature is likely to remain above freezing during the winter.

Several species, including the wood frog and spring peeper take dormancy to extremes. These species take refuge under leaf litter or in shallow soils above the frost line. When temperatures approach freezing, these species circulate a type of antifreeze through their blood. As temperatures drop below freezing, the antifreeze protects the blood cells and tissues from the formation of ice crystals that would otherwise kill them, thus allowing these animals to effectively spend part of the winter frozen, but without lethal effects.

Our climate is changing

Our world is becoming warmer with winters of shorter duration and the warmest several decades on record. A number of greenhouse gasses, principally carbon dioxide, have dramatically increased, accompanied with a corresponding increase in temperature over the last 50 years.

How will climate change affect the restless sleep?

While we simply don't know, one thought is that local winters will experience greater temperature fluctuations, and instead of having prolonged periods when the ground is frozen, we will experience more freeze-thaw cycles over the course of our winters. Perhaps woodchucks, chipmunks, skunks and other mammals may actually benefit from the need to store less food or fat in order to survive shortening winters. But the wood frog, one of the most widely distributed amphibian species in the world, has a range that lies primarily north of our latitude, and is already very uncommon over most of the Chicago area. It is quite possible that climate change will push this and other northern species away as winters shorten, or as freeze thaw-cycles become more volatile.

To my surprise, this year, a more southerly bird, the Carolina wren has been seen and heard singing in my backyard. How it will fair with the milder winters and, more importantly, amount of snowfall remains to be seen.

The distinguished anthropologist, Margaret Mead, once said, *“The atmosphere is the key symbol of global interdependence.”* *

Mike Redmer is a Wildlife Biologist with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Chicago District. Chet Ryndak is currently adjunct professor at the College of Lake County.

For More Information:

- Local wildlife protection: www.WildlifeActionPlans.org
- The Chicago Wilderness Climate Action Plan for Nature Executive Summary: www.chicagowilderness.org
- The Chicago Wilderness Biodiversity Recovery Plan is currently being revised to include potential climate change impacts and concerns. The revised plan is anticipated to be available by summer of 2011 at www.chicagowilderness.org



Coyote, deer, chipmunk and raccoon photos by Brian Tang. Fox photo by Richard Fisher.



Hackmatack – A Vision for the Future

Creating the first National Wildlife Refuge in the Chicago Region

by Lenore Beyer-Clow

We are still only at the beginning and invite you to become a 'Friend of Hackmatack' and Join the Dream! You can see our beautiful brochure and find out more information at: <http://www.hackmatacknwr.org>

Photo by Ray Mathis

Five years ago, our small group of volunteers and professionals began dreaming of a large conservation area and started the journey of bringing our vision of creating a *National Wildlife Refuge* to life. We now call ourselves *The friends of Hackmatack*.

After five years of hard work, we convinced the US Fish and Wildlife Service to do a study of an area that encompasses 350,000 acres and spans the Illinois-Wisconsin border!

Our History

We are fortunate to live in an area of beautiful streams, woodlands and prairies, and take full advantage of them for hiking, biking and kayaking. We share our love of these natural areas by working on clean-up days, leading birding walks, counting cranes, teaching classes and planning trails. Bringing our children, we look for butterflies and identify wildflowers. Working or volunteering for conservation organizations, we restore prairies and wetlands, protect our streams from soil erosion and sedimentation, and advocate for good land use planning and groundwater protection.

We started meeting, casually at first, and talked about what we were currently doing and how we could use all of our efforts to work together for something bigger, something significant.

Everyone in our group was aware of the constant threats of fragmented landscapes and unplanned development.

We reached out to others and the idea of a bi-state project grew as we brought in groups from Wisconsin and made some new friends. Some designed attractive brochures, others started talking to legislators, a few went on the road with a presentation, some talked about t-shirts and bumper stickers, and others were concerned about process and organization. We gradually expanded who we approached with the idea and became more sophisticated in our presentations.

We realized that gateway communities could become hubs for nature tourism. This could potentially generate \$356 million per year in economic activity based on the Chicago area bird watching market. A wildlife refuge would expand other outdoor recreational activities and link existing protected natural areas into a large mega preserve with huge benefits to wildlife and people. *

Lenore Beyer-Clow is a Friend of Hackmatack and Policy Director at Openlands

Hackmatack: Another word for the Tamarack tree, used by local Native Americans.

The area has been named Hackmatack because there are only a few remaining stands of the American Tamarack left in this region. They represent relics of a time in the geologic past. This tree has become our standard bearer for the wildlands of the bi-state region.

Winter Wildlife

To Feed or Not to Feed?

One of the great joys of winter is watching wildlife unhindered by the leaves of summer. Nothing is better than sharing this joy with friends and family right in your own back yard. Even in urban areas we can create inviting spaces that provide the basic essentials for all living creatures – food, water and shelter. Downy woodpeckers love suet racks, and the lovely blue and white tufted titmouse with its pointy cap can be a frequent visitor to feeders, being a social bird. It loves to turn upside down to search for spiders and insects under leaves and twigs. You may also attract little flocks of winter visitors, the American Tree Sparrows, which also love to visit backyard feeders, or the song sparrow which is here all year.

The Blue Jay was one of the hardest hit by the West Nile Virus a few years ago, but they are making a slow comeback, so look for them in your yard.

Bird feeders are a great option for just about anyone. The top four bird foods that will bring in a great diversity of birds are black oil sunflower in any feeder, Nyjer thistle in a mesh sock, millet on a platform or sprinkled on the ground

and suet in an upside down feeder. Keep your feeders clean and replace old seed that becomes moldy.

Try to place your feeders near some cover – close to shrubs or evergreens if possible. This is a great use for your Christmas tree after the holidays – prop it up in the back yard and sprinkle millet near or under it. Cooper's and Sharp-shinned hawks have become quite adept at hunting birds off of feeders, and this may help you avoid that. A clean source of water is also important for birds and other wildlife.

Squirrels and Deer

There are many options of baffles and feeder types to help keep squirrels out; I like the long cylinder type baffle that is placed about four feet above the ground on your feeder pole. The squirrels will still be foraging below the feeders for any dropped seed, but they tend not to like millet.

What to do when the flock of starlings or grackles has found your feeders?

Bring in your sunflower seeds for a few days. They don't seem to like the thistle or millet and they cannot hang on an upside-down suet feeder so you can leave these out.

Deer can be enchanting, but attracting them to your yard with food or salt licks can transmit disease and cause headaches in spring when they start eating the new buds on the shrubs you just planted!

Be sure to take the kids out to find tracks after a new snow. What has been visiting your yard when you weren't watching? See page 10 to help you identify them. ❄️



Jennifer Hammer works for The Conservation Foundation in Naperville, is Co-Steward with her husband at Salt Creek Woods Nature Preserve, enjoys exploring nature with her two children and has seen over 100 species of birds in her back yard in Lisle.

Deer photo by Joan Sayre





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Waterfall Glen Forest Preserve,
DuPage County



Site Features

- 2,482 acres: mesic woodland, pine plantation, marsh, mesic prairie
- 755-acre contiguous oak woodland
- 740 native plant species, representing 75% of all native species in DuPage County
- 300 species of mammals, birds, fish, amphibians, and reptiles
- 9.5 mile loop trail
- *Recreation:* Trails, Picnicking, Fishing, Youth-Group Campground, Orienteering Course, Model-Airplane Field, Wildlife Watching, Cross Country Skiing

Waterfall photo by Manuel Diaz
Chickadee photo by Rob Visconte

Exploring Winter's Gifts *by Scott Meister*

Don't let winter pass you by without an outdoor exploration! Why not embark on a journey through *Waterfall Glen* and experience the panorama of rich history and diverse wildlife communities this unique preserve has to offer.

While plants have gone dormant for the season, many birds have flown south and much wildlife is deep in hibernation, active birds are facing winter head on. As you begin your expedition, whether on foot, snowshoe, cross-country skis or sled, why not do a scavenger hunt to view our feathered friends.

Though *Waterfall Glen* may be known for its towering oaks, hundreds of acres of pine plantations scattered throughout the preserve afford opportunities for glimpses of wildlife. Planted in the 1950s by officials from the neighboring Argonne National Laboratory, these pines offer winter refuge for pine siskins, brown creepers, and other bird species that spend their summers in the North Woods.

One of the most common birds that you might encounter is the black-capped chickadee. This black and white creature bustles about constantly scooping seeds for energy to stay warm during the winter. On the coldest of nights, chickadees can lower their body temperature and slow their heartbeat, a regulated hypothermia, to help conserve energy.

As you make your way around the southeast side of the preserve, stop at the constructed waterfall which may be frozen in its flow. In the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps assembled

a spillway dam on Sawmill Creek creating the cascade. Stream corridors are often used as transportation routes for wildlife, and the waterfall is a must-see destination for any visitor.

Be on the lookout and listen for owls as you continue your journey. Great horned owls, with their classic owl "hoot" may be seen at tree tops surveying their territory for prey, especially at dusk. *Waterfall Glen* is one the few places in DuPage County where barred owls can be found, which are easily identifiable by their "who cooks for you, who cooks for you all" call. Eastern screech-owls and the occasional northern saw-whet owl will inhabit Waterfall Glen during the winter, but their calls will be more subtle to avoid being noticed by great horned owls, which will attack these smaller relatives.

As you adventure along the southern stretch of trails, you'll discover the stone foundation remnants of the former Lincoln Park Nursery. The Chicago Park District's predecessor used this area to nurture young trees that would soon be planted in the city. Dark-eyed juncos, a bird easily identifiable by its white outer tail feathers, can be found here searching for seeds left from the summer plants. *

Check us out at: http://www.dupageforest.com/Recreation/ActivitiesAndFacilities/Winter_Activities.html

Scott works as the Natural Resource Management Coordinator for the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County.

Places to Play

by Mike Konrath

Slide and Glide at Sagawau Nordic Ski Center

Once winter settles in and the white stuff covers the ground it is time to look to winter sports as a way of staying active and enjoying the season.

Cook County's Nordic Ski Program at Sagawau Forest Preserve began as a simple indoor seminar and one day of ski lessons. There was such a demand that our program has evolved into a full season of sliding and gliding for all levels of skiers.

Skiers will enjoy gliding across wooded uplands to open savannas and prairies with ancient oaks guarding the trails edge. A variety of birds, white tail deer, coyote and red fox are all active during the winter and are regularly seen along the trail. Winter ecology is fascinating, and skiing is a great way to enjoy it.

Five or six inches of snow allow us to open the trails. Both classic and ski skating lanes are regularly groomed on our 6.5 kilometer trail. The trail traverses a variety of terrain offering beginners and casual skiers much scenic beauty and the opportunity to have fun without feeling overwhelmed. More advanced skiers also enjoy the varied landscape and find our trail a great place to train for races.

The Nordic Center offers indoor restrooms and a cozy lodge room for warming. Put your feet up and take a break while viewing ski videos and races from around the world. ❄️

For more details including ski rentals, check out: www.fpdcc.com

Mike Konrath is the Director of Sagawau Nordic for the Forest Preserve District of Cook County. He is a Certified Level III Instructor in Nordic Classic, Nordic Skating, and Nordic Downhill Skiing.

More regional skiing info:

McHenry County Conservation District
www.mccdistrict.org

Forest Preserve District of Kane County
www.kaneforest.com/recreation

Lake County Forest Preserves
www.LCFPD.org/activities

Forest Preserve District of DuPage County
www.dupageforest.com/Recreation

Forest Preserve District of Will County
www.reconnectwithnature.org

Photo by Sagawau staff



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Field Guide

Young Wild Explorers

by Nan Buckardt

Winter is the perfect time to discover your backyard neighbors. Go exploring for tracks after a light dusting of new snow. Why not take photos or sketch the tracks if you want to finish your adventure first.

To help identify who visited you, take note of the general size of the tracks, the footprint pattern, the distance between tracks (both side to side and front to back) and the number of toes on each foot. All this will help you to identify the tracks.

Follow the trail to see if you can figure out what the animal was doing. With a little practice you can determine what direction the animals were going, whether they were moving quickly, slowly or if they stopped to look around or even dug a tunnel into the snow to hide.

Winter is a terrific time to learn more about the animals in your area. Take a walk and look carefully, you never know what you will discover! *

Nan Buckardt is a long time track explorer with the Lake County Forest Preserves.

Skunk photo by Richard Fisher



Tracks in the Snow

White-Tailed Deer



The point of a deer track tells you what direction it is moving

Gray Squirrel



The distance between prints lets you guess how fast the squirrel was moving

Crow



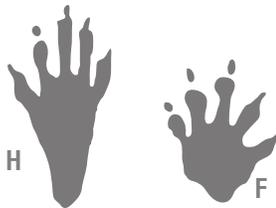
This common bird is easy to identify by its long toes

Red Fox



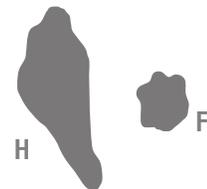
Each red fox track forms nearly a perfect circle

Raccoon



The "finger like" toes of a raccoon make them easy to identify

Cottontail Rabbit



The large hind foot of the rabbit helps with its long leaps

Striped Skunk



Skunks wander around and often leave a maze of tracks

Opossum



Opossums have opposable thumbs on their hind feet to help them grip branches and climb

Key: F = Front Foot. H = Hind Foot.

Outdoor Neighbors

by Denise Collins



Did You Know?

- *Great Horned Owls* will occasionally hunt an animal two or three times heavier than itself and even save a meal for later by stashing it in a tree?
- You can play a recording of an owl call and curious owls will fly closer to investigate?
- There are about 162 different species of owls in the world today including a burrowing owl?
- In our area *Screech Owls* and *Great Horned Owls* stay all year round, but we also have *Long-Eared* and *Short-Eared Owls* that just stay for the winter. Though far less common, there's a chance we might even see *Barn Owls*, *Barred Owls* and *Snowy Owls*.
- You can learn more about Illinois owls on the web at: www.owlpages.com and even hear their different calls at: www.allaboutbirds.org

Owls, left to right: Barred Owl, Great Horned Owl, Barn Owl, Red Screech Owl
Owl photos by Richard Fisher

Have You Ever Seen an Owl?

Listen quietly on a winter's night and you just might hear the Great Horned Owl call hoo – hoo. These nighttime flyers become very active in the fall and winter months and most often hunt after the sun sets. Great Horned Owls mate for life. Though they live alone most of the year, the same pair will call to each other during the mating season to find each other again. When it comes time to lay their eggs they won't build a nest for themselves, instead they'll use abandoned nests made by other birds or squirrels.

All through the coldest temperatures of winter, the mother and father will take turns sitting on their eggs to keep them warm. After they hatch they'll keep the fluffy baby owlets warm the same way.

It will be late spring by the time the owlets are ready to fly away and hunt for themselves. By then other animals will have raised their young so there

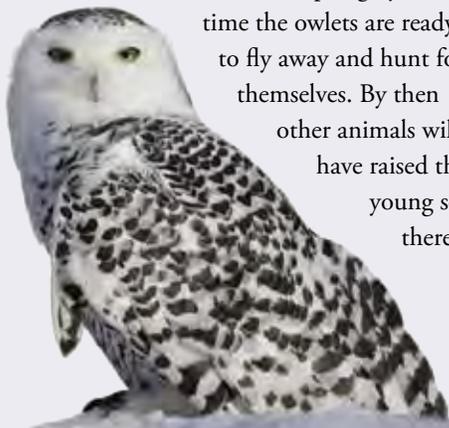
will be many more mice, squirrels and skunks to eat.

Owls are silent hunters; they are able to swoop down on their prey quietly because their feathers have soft fluffy edges to muffle the sounds of flying through the air. Humans are able to look in any direction without turning our head because our eyes roll. An owl's sharp eyes are only able to look straight ahead so they must turn their head to look around.

Owls also have very keen hearing so even if they're perched high in a tree they can still hear the rustle of a mouse scurrying across the ground. Seeing and listening to the world around them tells them exactly where their prey is so they can silently swoop through the air to catch the mouse before it's even aware the owl saw them. *

Denise Collins is an author of several novels and children's books and is a keen observer of the natural world. She lives at Glacial Park with her husband Ed.

Left: Snowy Owl



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Meet Michael Howard

by Kerry Leigh



Years ago Michael spent a lot of time in the woods during his military training. One day, a loud, sharp ‘craacck’ made him instinctively grip his rifle. Although every muscle was on high alert, he relaxed his breath and lowered his weapon as he gazed upon one of the most beautiful sights of his life. What he’d heard was a beaver rapping a warning on the water. The animal was swimming into its den near the trees at the edge of a crystal clear lake. He felt connected again in a way he hadn’t felt since he was a young boy sitting in a summer cotton field after a long day of picking, listening to the silence and the peace.

Michael grew up on the south side of Chicago, and as a young boy travelled south for his summer vacations to work on the family farm where they lived in a shack with a potbellied stove. There was no indoor plumbing, electricity, or running water, but there was a feeling among the sharecropping families that life was rich and full. The family ties became broken as people gradually moved up north to the cities, and Michael understood that the more you’re connected to the land, the more you connect to each other.

Later, when living in the western suburbs, Michael and his wife Amelia would often visit the south side neighborhoods where they grew up and were saddened by the changes. Finally, they moved back to Amelia’s former community, Fuller Park, and saw an opportunity to reconnect people to nature. This involved taking a 3 acre block of land, an unofficial dump site that was formerly a part of the Chicago stockyards, and turning it into an urban nature center. They founded a Community Development Corporation to support their vision. It took the community over 5 years to remove the 40 tons of debris from the site. Eden Place Nature Center was born.

They partnered with many not-for-profit groups and received grants to install eco-systems and educational work-shop areas.

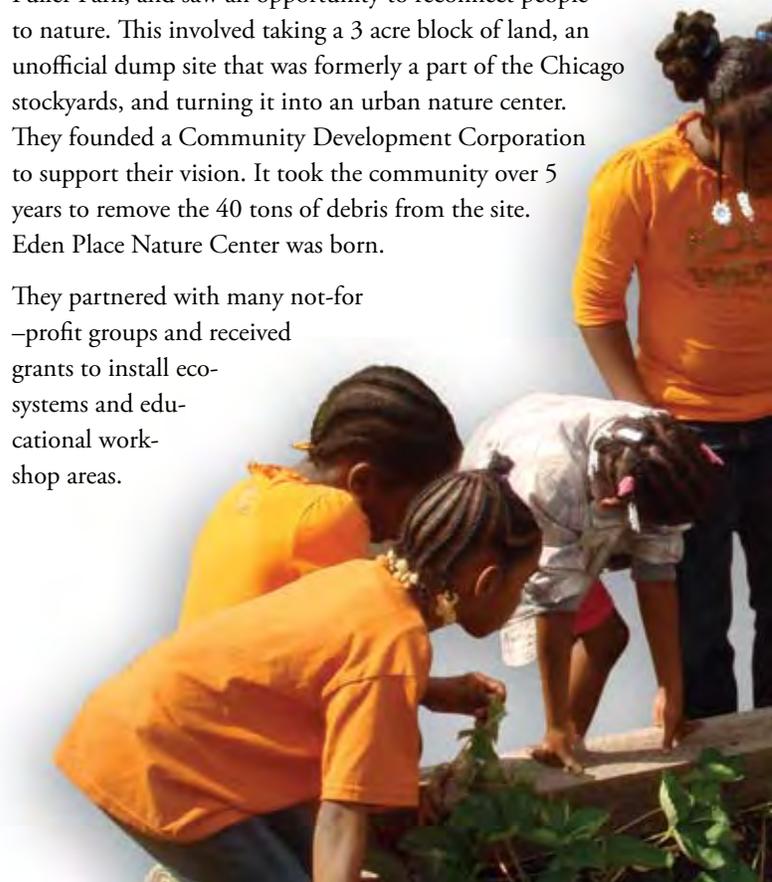
Michael learned this poem as a young boy and it affected him deeply. He lives his life by this code, and we would like to share it with you.

Invictus

By William Ernest Henley

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.
In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.
Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds and shall find me unafraid.
It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

Photos courtesy of Eden Place



The seniors in the community said they wanted pretty flowers, and Michael was devastated when the first crop of flowers was destroyed by flooding. He went back to school so he would never disappoint people again. He is now a master gardener, a treekeeper, a licensed raptor handler, and a beekeeper. Michael has been honored with many awards, and Eden Place has been featured in TV documentaries and magazine articles.

Michael also founded Southpoint Academy and brought it to the south side to take what he calls the “hard core unemployed” and train them to become property maintenance technicians, sharing his skills in the trades. With the training center in Midwin National Tallgrass Prairie, he saw another opportunity to show people who are so disconnected from nature that they can be masters of their fate by connecting.

Modeling discipline and focus, he takes the construction trainees camping and fishing as he learned from his father. He sees nature calm the rage, making them better husbands, fathers and citizens.

Michael observed a man standing on the street corner day after day. One day he walked over to him and asked him what he was waiting for... the man said that he didn't know. Michael offered him a place at the Academy. The man was waiting for Michael. *

Please connect with Michael at www.edenplacenature-center.com, and check out the winter programs.



Wild Things

A Chicago Wilderness Conference for People and Nature

March 5, 2011
University of Illinois at Chicago

A day-long conference bringing together the region's best experts, most dedicated volunteers and anyone interested in nature.

Keynote Speaker:
Curt Meine
The Legacy of Aldo Leopold in the Chicago Region

Register early (Dec 8-Jan 30)
\$28 at www.habitatproject.org
For questions contact:
chicagowildthings@yahoo.com
or 847-328-3910 ext 21



A Gathering of our Region's Nature Conservation Community

Bridging Science and Art

by Kerry Leigh



Doug DeWitt received a Master of Arts degree in painting from Illinois State University and currently works as a restoration ecologist for Tallgrass Restoration LLC.

Science has been described as a language of explaining, and art as a language of belonging. Scientists and artists alike have traditionally seen these as exclusive efforts, rather than as complementary. Doug DeWitt is one of those unique individuals whose work recognizes an inherent integration between the two disciplines. Scientists themselves are beginning to recognize that artists are “the new naturalists” and that artists working within a landscape restoration context have the power to bring us to interesting ideas. The evolution of DeWitt’s training came from a traditional art and humanities degree, to landscape design, and ultimately to restoration ecology, or what can be defined as restoring our natural world to a state of health and resiliency. Most people working in restoration ecology come from a scientific background, so DeWitt’s journey into creating art and the activity of restoring the natural world as one integrated process resonated with me on a deep level.

expansive horizontal land lines that are joined to the sky by chunks of wooded islands and man-made structures. Each piece becomes physically, rather than visually, literal because the materials are those that make up his experience with the landscape instead of simply his view of it.

Dancing with Nature: Melding the Explaining with the Belonging

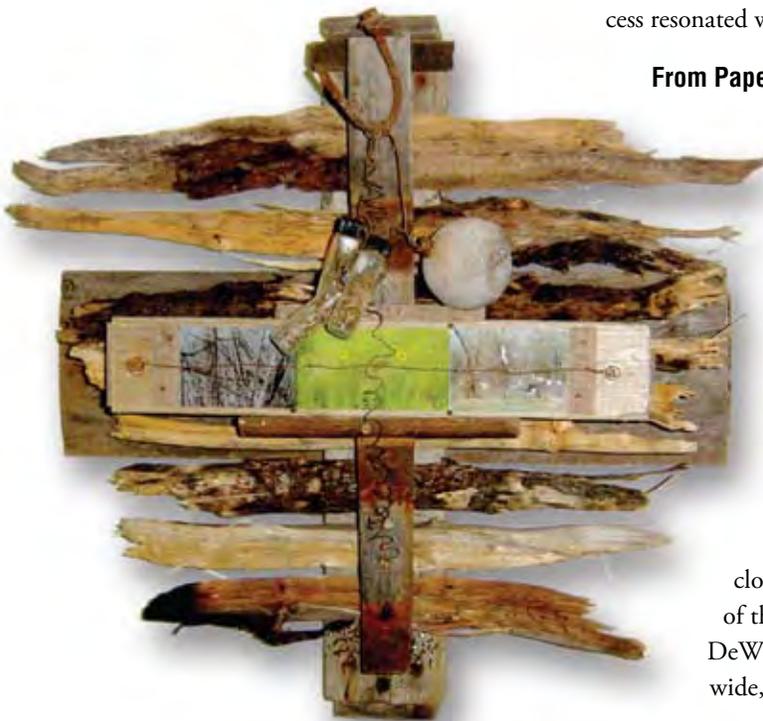
DeWitt’s work has evolved into a series of outdoor events and actions that cause changes in the landscape— these can be both dramatic and subtle. This process is more commonly known as ecological restoration, where we assist a natural system to regain its health. Anyone working intimately with restoring our natural world can understand the need for both explaining and belonging. Manipulation and responsiveness are essential— facilitators carefully dance between the edges of scientific knowledge and intuition.

DeWitt sees the removal of invasive species as stretching the canvas and starting the process. Existing and reintroduced native plants provide the texture and color palette. Light, wind, soil, fire, water, creatures and time all combine to create the composition, or work of art. These become a dynamic and evolving composition in Doug’s hands. His purpose is to support the idea that ecological restoration is assisting art-making in the landscape.

I know there is a deep longing within many of us for belonging to and with nature. I love that Doug DeWitt has found a way of fulfilling that need. *

From Paper and Canvas to Constructions

Originally portraying landscapes with drawings and paintings, DeWitt became aware that these two dimensional depictions diminished his connection with the landscape. He began using found-object materials in an effort to relate his experience closer to the expression of the landscape itself. For DeWitt, these pieces suggest wide, subtle horizons; layers of





Reading the Landscape

A Deeper Look at Nature from 5,000 Feet Up

by Jack Broughton

There is an exciting new tool that's allowing a deeper look at nature than has ever been possible. An aerial imaging camera that can provide high-resolution, multi-spectral photos of our landscapes.

The camera itself is not exactly new technology, but until now, it has never been used for ecological or conservation purposes. So... how deep can we go... and why would we want to? We could fly over the UP in Michigan to see remote stands of wild rice, we could locate all the ash tree species in a community at risk for Emerald Ash Borer... if you were so inclined, you could pick out an individual clump of little bluestem grass in an oak savanna!

What if we could track ecological changes happening on the land, and provide important information for detecting the effects of climate change on plants? Well, it looks like now we can.

Sixty years ago, Aldo Leopold, the famous naturalist, started studying plant and animal life cycle events and how they are influenced by annual variations in climate. So this October, the Leopold Reserve near Baraboo Wisconsin commissioned a flight of the Reserve, which may be the first of many carefully timed low cost imaging flights, to detect ecological changes over time.

Other types of projects that could benefit from this technology include invasive species mapping and monitoring, critical habitat surveying for special-status plants and animals, erosion in riparian corridors or shorelands, monitoring conservation easement properties, and planning for green infrastructure.

The Technology

- Medium format multi-spectral mapping camera, mounted on the underside of a twin-prop airplane.
- Six "sensors" or lenses collect full-color imagery using red, green, blue and near-infrared bands.
- Images range in resolution from 24-inch/pixel to 2-inch/pixel, with natural resources projects using six to 12-inch pixel sizes. *

Jack Broughton works as the Business Development Manager for Applied Ecological Services, Inc.

Chicago Wilderness



Photo by Brian Jelonek

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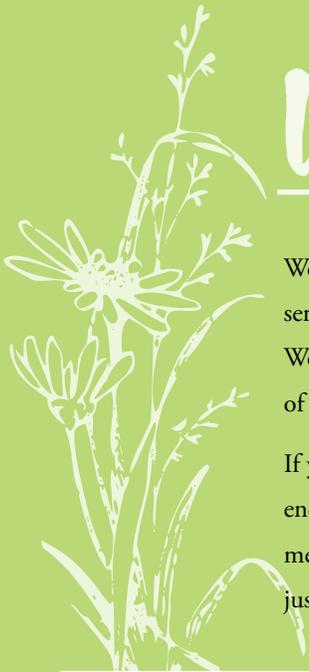


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Nature's Second Chance



This page-turner for nature lovers will captivate readers who have harbored fantasies of moving back to the land and who will appreciate its mingling of environmental theory, policy prescription, and vivid personal anecdote." —*Publishers Weekly*

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Garden Dreaming on a Winter Day

by Patricia Hill

Cocooned in our homes, winter is a time for dreaming, for imagining and remembering the freshness of a spring day, the warmth of a summer afternoon and the beauty of a fall day. Winter is the perfect time to imagine transforming your yard into a seductive outdoor living space that celebrates all the seasons, including winter. Yes, this is a good time to begin planning your garden and using hardy native plants.

Do you like to relax and read in the shade? Do you crave privacy? Do you want to hide an ugly view or bring a beautiful one into your line of sight? Creating a comfortable, elegant garden begins with good design and a vision. How you would like to use your outdoor space to fit your personal lifestyle is the beginning. Working with a designer can help you realize your vision, or help you create a new one. Meet Patricia Hill, who takes us through one of her recent processes.

Creating A Courtyard

I met with my client, Sue, shortly after she moved into a brand new, small house before the lawn was installed. The first thing I noticed was that while the house was small, the garage was large and hid half of the house. I decided to take advantage of that situation by creating a courtyard.

We planted hedges and designed criss-cross paths. A bench was placed in front of the large living room window and Sue installed a decorative arch at the center of the garden where the paths crossed.

This little front garden achieves two things. It takes the eye away from the dominant garage facade to a lovely, colorful courtyard area. It also gives Sue a place to sip her morning coffee or an evening glass of wine while she chats with her neighbors, or simply watches the birds and butterflies that the garden now attracts in profusion.

Pergolas and Patios

There was a small concrete patio attached to the back of the house—

not a very appealing place to hang out. Sue had a pergola installed and we extended the patio to the bay window. Shrubs were then planted around the corners of the patio, providing privacy, but still saving a view. Now she can dine and entertain there, visit with the adjoining neighbors, curl up with a book, or again, simply watch the flitting butterflies.

Many of Sue's neighbors wondered why she did so much landscaping on her small lot. If one looks upon it as only landscaping, it could be considered extravagant; but the design draws Sue outside and provides two extra rooms at a fraction of the cost of building an addition to the house.

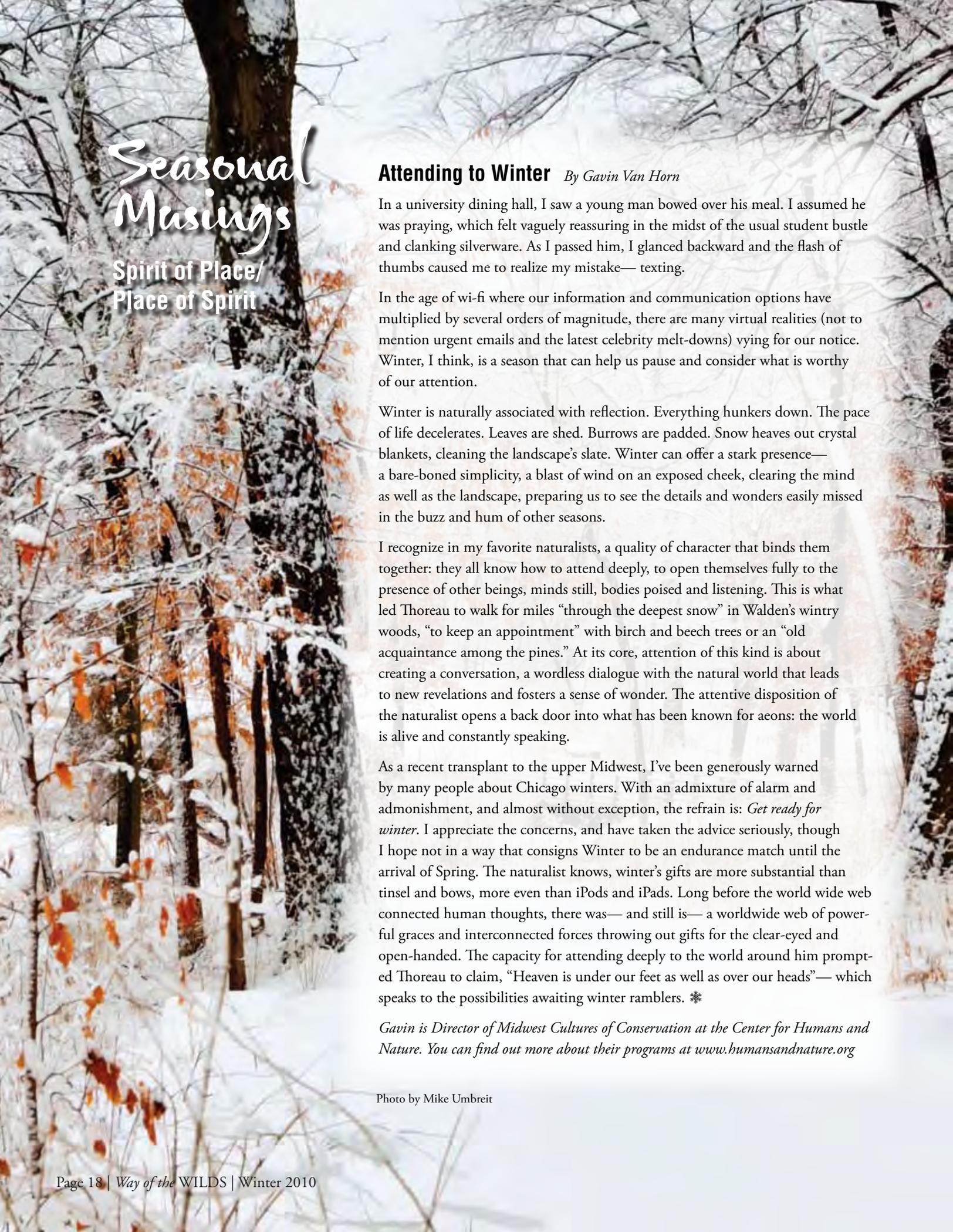
Most of us intuitively know how our lives are greatly enriched when we have access to nature. How perfectly delightful to have nature immediately available and inviting us to open our doors and step into the world outside. *

A professional landscape designer for more than 25 years, and author of 'Design Your Natural Midwest Garden' Patricia has devoted the past decade to designs featuring native species. You can read her blog at www.NaturalMidwestGarden.com

Photo by Patricia Hill



*In the photo above, featured plants are the native Prairie Aster (*Aster oblongifolius*) and Little Bluestem grass (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) shown here in its late summer copper foliage.*



Seasonal Musings

Spirit of Place/ Place of Spirit

Attending to Winter *By Gavin Van Horn*

In a university dining hall, I saw a young man bowed over his meal. I assumed he was praying, which felt vaguely reassuring in the midst of the usual student bustle and clanking silverware. As I passed him, I glanced backward and the flash of thumbs caused me to realize my mistake— texting.

In the age of wi-fi where our information and communication options have multiplied by several orders of magnitude, there are many virtual realities (not to mention urgent emails and the latest celebrity melt-downs) vying for our notice. Winter, I think, is a season that can help us pause and consider what is worthy of our attention.

Winter is naturally associated with reflection. Everything hunkers down. The pace of life decelerates. Leaves are shed. Burrows are padded. Snow heaves out crystal blankets, cleaning the landscape's slate. Winter can offer a stark presence—a bare-boned simplicity, a blast of wind on an exposed cheek, clearing the mind as well as the landscape, preparing us to see the details and wonders easily missed in the buzz and hum of other seasons.

I recognize in my favorite naturalists, a quality of character that binds them together: they all know how to attend deeply, to open themselves fully to the presence of other beings, minds still, bodies poised and listening. This is what led Thoreau to walk for miles “through the deepest snow” in Walden’s wintry woods, “to keep an appointment” with birch and beech trees or an “old acquaintance among the pines.” At its core, attention of this kind is about creating a conversation, a wordless dialogue with the natural world that leads to new revelations and fosters a sense of wonder. The attentive disposition of the naturalist opens a back door into what has been known for aeons: the world is alive and constantly speaking.

As a recent transplant to the upper Midwest, I’ve been generously warned by many people about Chicago winters. With an admixture of alarm and admonishment, and almost without exception, the refrain is: *Get ready for winter*. I appreciate the concerns, and have taken the advice seriously, though I hope not in a way that consigns Winter to be an endurance match until the arrival of Spring. The naturalist knows, winter’s gifts are more substantial than tinsel and bows, more even than iPods and iPads. Long before the world wide web connected human thoughts, there was—and still is—a worldwide web of powerful graces and interconnected forces throwing out gifts for the clear-eyed and open-handed. The capacity for attending deeply to the world around him prompted Thoreau to claim, “Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads”— which speaks to the possibilities awaiting winter rambblers. ❄️

Gavin is Director of Midwest Cultures of Conservation at the Center for Humans and Nature. You can find out more about their programs at www.humansandnature.org

Photo by Mike Umbreit

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