



Lake View's Nature News

Newsletter of the Lake View Nature Center

Winter
2005

LVNC garden walk wins Native Landscaping award

Lake View Nature Center was a recipient of a Conservation and Native Landscaping Award for our Garden Walk at LVNC. These awards are presented annually by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5 and Chicago Wilderness to recognize outstanding efforts to use native plants and conservation development practices within the Chicago region.

The award was presented at special awards ceremony at the Morton Arboretum on December 6. Park District Commissioner Bill Cizek, and Becky Lambert and Deanna DeChristopher from LVNC accepted the award.

The LVNC Garden Walk features four garden areas connected by a pathway. Each garden uses a selection of native plants to focus on a different theme.

The Butterfly Garden showcases plants that produce brightly-colored flowers and nectar to attract insects. The sights, sounds, and smells of a garden are the focus of the Sensory Garden. The Teaching Garden will demonstrate the value of using native plants in gardens and landscaping. And the Water Garden, which is still under development, will exhibit plants that grow in wet soils or in shallow water.

For more information about this award, and to see pictures of the gardens and the award presentation, go to: <http://www.epa.gov/ginpo/greenacres/awards.html>.

Chicago Wilderness is a consortium of more than 180 public and private organizations that work together to protect,



The award plaque is an engraved green glass disk made from recycled glass bottles.

Look inside for...

Featured animal:
Sandhill crane

Special pull-out section for kids

Winter classes and programs

LVNC Notes...

If you haven't picked up your Thanksgiving Coloring Contest pictures yet, be sure to stop in. Remember, every entry received a participation ribbon.

Ice skating is allowed on the lake whenever the mapboard signs read "Skating OK." The ice is checked on weekday mornings for safety and a skating area is cleared of snow if needed.

Bring your own skates and be sure to stop in to the Nature Center to warm up.

The Nature Center will be closed:

December 23-26
December 31
January 1-2
April 14-16

We are also closed the first Monday of each month.

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Fall Open House

Saturday, November 19, 2005



More than two hundred people took advantage of the mild November weather to come out to LVNC's Fall Open House. In addition to exploring the Center's exhibits and animals, such as the Wentzscope (upper left) and the friendly fox snake (lower left), visitors enjoyed a number of special activities.

Little artists created a special Thanksgiving

decoration by tracing a turkey onto copper foil and decorating it (middle). George the rabbit posed for pictures (with a little carrot bribery!) in honor of his one year anniversary at the Nature Center (upper right). And the winners of our annual Thanksgiving Coloring contest received their ribbons and prizes (lower right).

Award (cont. from p. 1)

restore, study, and manage the natural ecosystems of the Chicago region. LVNC and the Oakbrook Terrace Park District have been a part of Chicago Wilderness since 1998.

For more information about Chicago Wilderness, visit the group's web site at: <http://www.chicagowilderness.org>.

Some of the other 2005 Conservation and Native Landscaping Award recipients include:

The Village of Villa Park for their new "green" Police station that incorporates a green

roof, permeable paving in the parking lot, and native plant landscaping.

The St. Charles Park District for a demonstration garden project along the banks of the Fox River.

The Morton Arboretum for the Meadow Lake restoration project designed to reduce flooding and improve water quality.

The Chicago Botanic Garden for a project to restore more than two and-a-half miles of critically eroding shoreline.

Commonwealth Edison, for their Prairie Program which started in the 1990's and has restored more than 150 acres of land to native prairie habitat at thirteen sites in northern Illinois.

Manager of the Year!

Becky Lambert, Supervisor of the Lake View Nature Center, was named Nature Center and Museum Manager of the Year by the Facilities Management Section of the Illinois Parks and Recreation Association.

The Nature Center has a new special exhibit coming in February: "The Three Bears." Don't miss it!

Creature Feature: Sandhill crane (*Grus canadensis*)

There was an unusual visitor to Terrace View Park this past November when a sandhill crane (*Grus canadensis*) stopped by for a couple of days. Although we often see some unusual birds during the spring and fall migrations, this is the first time that a sandhill crane has been seen in the park.

The coloring of the crane's plumage (feathers) indicated that this was a young bird, not an adult. It spent only a day or two here before continuing on its way.

There are fifteen species of cranes in the world but only two are found in the United States: the sandhill crane and the endangered whooping crane.

Cranes resemble herons and egrets in general body shape but are easily distinguished from the more common great blue heron by the presence of a red patch on the top of the head. (Since "our" bird was immature, it did not have the red cap.) Cranes also hold their necks straight out when they fly, while herons and egrets hold their necks in an "S" shape.

The sandhill cranes from our area spend

their winters in southern states such as Georgia and Florida. In the spring, often as early as February or March, they start to return to their

nesting areas in the north.

Although some sandhill cranes do nest in Illinois, they prefer remote, inaccessible wetlands that are more common in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Canada.

Nests are built in or near a lake or pond using vegetation collected nearby. The nests may be up to three feet in diameter and rise three to five inches above the water level. Two eggs are typically laid. Both parents share in the duties of incubation, defending the

nest, and raising the young.

As summer ends, and the young birds can fend for themselves, sandhill cranes become less territorial and become highly social. They gather in groups, often very large ones, in so-called staging areas prior to migration. At Jasper-Pulaski State Fish and Game Area in Indiana, as many as 30,000 sandhill cranes have been seen during the peak of migration in early to mid November.



Some things you can do to help wildlife in your yard over the winter.

- ◇ If you put out bird feeders, make sure to keep them filled. Birds rely on finding food in predictable places each day.
- ◇ High-energy foods like suet can be especially important for insect feeders like nuthatches or woodpeckers in cold weather. Consider letting the squirrels join in as well.
- ◇ Finding water in freezing weather can be more difficult for wildlife than finding food. Heated bird baths or pond heaters are available that can keep water open.
- ◇ Landscape with plants that produce seeds or berries. Leave the plants standing all winter rather than deadheading them so wildlife can use them as a food source.
- ◇ Evergreen trees, branchy bushes, and brush piles can provide shelter from the elements and protection from predators.
- ◇ Dead trees can be left standing to provide safe cavities for wildlife. (Be sure they are in a safe location if they were to fall!)



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Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181

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Hours

Lake View Nature Center
Monday to Friday – 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
(Closed the first Monday of each month)
Saturday and Sunday – Noon to 4:00 pm

Terrace View Park
Open sunrise to 10 pm

For more information

Lake View Nature Center (630) 941-8747
Heritage Center (630) 627-6100
Fitness Center (630) 574-0420

www.obtpd.org

Staff

Becky Lambert Supervisor
John Stoddard Naturalist
Liane Knight Program Coordinator
Liane has been with the district for 10 years!
Congratulations!

Karen Ritter Environmental Educator
Deanna DeChristopher Environmental Educator
Shawn Hrabacka Program Assistant

Fees

The Nature Center is free to the general public.
Donations are appreciated

School and Community Groups

The Lake View Nature Center is an excellent place to explore the natural sciences. We offer programs for all ages and grade levels. Check our web site at www.obtpd.org for more details.

Fees for these in-house programs are as follows:
\$4.50 per participant
\$45.00 minimum group charge

Call the Nature Center at (630) 941-8747 for more information or to schedule a program.

If you no longer want to receive this newsletter, please call us at (630) 941-8747.



Lake View Nature Center

Winter 2005

George's Gossip

It's Cold Outside!

Cold weather often means two things to kids - snow and snow days (school is cancelled!)! Scientists who study snow storms are called meteorologists or weather forecasters. Weather forecasters know that snow falls when warm moist air (from the Southern States like Texas) meets cold dry air (from the Northern States like Minnesota).

How Do You Stay Warm?

I, George, the bunny, am a mammal and have very thick fur and some fat to keep me warm when it is cold. Circle the things you need to stay warm in the winter.



Warm Up With These Treats!

Snowman Soup

1. Place a microwave safe mug filled with 8 ounces of water in the microwave and heat (do not boil).
2. Have an adult remove the mug from the microwave.
3. Add 1 package of hot chocolate mix.
4. Add 2 mint flavored chocolate kisses.
5. Add 5 mini marshmallows.
6. Stir with a candy cane.



Make Your Own Snowman

Make a miniature snowman and place it in the freezer. When there is no snow take it out and read *The Summer Snowman* by Gene Zion (available at The Nature Center or your local library).

Pancakes

The key to fluffy pancakes is not to overmix the batter. it should be lumpy, not smooth. Adapted from a recipe found at <http://www.marthastewart.com/>

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
 - 2 teaspoons baking powder
 - 1 teaspoon baking soda
 - 1/2 teaspoon salt
 - 3 tablespoons sugar
 - 2 large eggs , lightly beaten
 - 3 cups buttermilk
 - 4 tablespoons unsalted butter , melted, plus 1/2 teaspoon for griddle
- Makes about 9 six inch pancakes.
- Optional - Blueberries, strawberries, or cranberries (fresh or frozen, drained and dried)

1. Heat frying pan or griddle to 375° (low-medium). Mix together flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and sugar in a medium bowl. Add eggs, buttermilk, and 4 tablespoons butter; add fruit if using and mix to combine. Batter should have small to medium lumps.

2. Pan is hot when a few drops of water placed into the pan bounce and spatter. Using a pastry brush, brush remaining 1/2 teaspoon of butter.

3. Using a spoon or measuring cup pour out about 1/2 cup. Pour pancake batter, in pools 2 inches away from one other. When pancakes have bubbles on top and are slightly dry around edges, about 2 1/2 minutes, flip over. Cook until golden on bottom, about 1 minute.

Check Out These Cool Web Sites About Snow

<http://www.its.caltech.edu/~atomic/snowcrystals/>

<http://www.kathimitchell.com/snow.html> - lots of snow-related links