



Waterloo News

Is Waterloo Home to the World's Largest Waterfowl?



This family of trumpeter swans may be the result of the first successful nesting of these magnificent birds in the Waterloo Recreation Area. The adults are on the left and the young on the right.

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Winter Building Schedule

The Discovery
center will be open
weekends only from
January 7 through
March 31.

Hours

Saturdays, 10 am to
5 pm and Sundays,
12 pm to 5 pm.

Building hours will
be expanded begin-
ning in April.

Weighing from 25-35 pounds when fully grown, the trumpeter swan is the world's largest waterfowl. When fully extended, their wingspan can reach nearly eight feet. The trumpeter is similar in appearance to other white swans, but their foreheads slope evenly to an all black bill. The more common and smaller tundra (whistling) swan usually has a yellow spot in front of its eye.

Trumpeter swans are unique among Michigan waterfowl. They normally do not breed until their fourth year. They also form strong pair bonds that can last for years. Their nests can be huge, at times reaching five feet across, and they are usually built among aquatic plants like cattails. They will often use the tops of muskrat houses for a nest base.

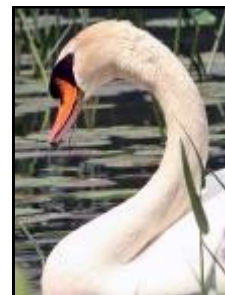
Historically, trumpeter swans were most likely abundant throughout the Great Lakes region, even in the southern Michigan marshlands. On his travels along the Detroit River in 1701, Cadillac compared the abundance of swans to lilies among the rushes.

Background information for this article from
Michigan DNR

However, with the settlement of America, the populations of trumpeters plummeted. Beginning in the late 1800s, European settlers cleared the land, draining and filling important marsh habitat, and market hunters took swans for their fine down and quills. By 1933, only 66 trumpeter swans remained in the continental United States, mainly in remote parts of the Rocky Mountains and Alaska. Nearly 100 years passed before trumpeter swans were seen again in the Michigan wilds.

The location of the nest site for this family is unknown, possibly Mud Lake or Little Mud Lake. Nests are usually well hidden among dense stands of cattails.

The non-native mute swan pictured on the right has an orange bill with a black base, and a forward curving neck. Most swans seen in Waterloo are mutes. Perhaps that will change some day.



Naturalist's Niche

Thank you

I'd like to thank each and every WNHA member I've met, for the warm and enthusiastic welcomes over the past few months. I'm truly impressed with the fantastic programs you provide each week. The WNHA sponsored life cycle exhibits and the stunning views from the lovely observation deck have been daily reminders to me of what your group has accomplished. I'm grateful for your dedication and continued support.

This past summer

My main focus was to get to know the park and provide daily programs at the Discovery Center and both campgrounds. In the midst of the camping season, we acquired kayaks, GPS units, fishing equipment, and recently a few pieces of archery equipment. I put together a schedule of programs that encourage the Parks Division's "Recreation 101" initiative, introducing visitors to new activities and ways of enjoying their State Parks and Recreation Areas. I also attended training workshops to effectively teach fishing, bow hunting, archery, orienteering, and beginner kayaking.

Currently

The DC is so quiet, now that school hikes have tapered off. I have plunged into program planning, meeting with various organizations, seeking funding sources for special projects and snooping around in an effort to learn more about the area.

I have been working to update the Eddy Webpage with the Marketing Department and nail down the list of school hikes and programs that we offer. In my spare time, I'm stalking Snowy Owls as I'm sure are many of you.

Winter Hours

From January 7 through the end of March, the Discovery Center will only be open Saturdays 10 am to 5 pm and Sundays 12 pm to 5 pm. Free, DNR staffed, programs will be held on Saturdays and WNHA programs are scheduled for Sundays.

Volunteers for Ice Fishing

You are all invited to the Ice Fishing Festival which will be held during the DNR's Free Fishing Weekend, on Saturday, February 18. The WNHA will be hosting the warming fire for the event. If you would like to help out in any capacity, please let me know at (734) 475-3170. Kids will be making a jig stick pole, learning to fish, ice skating, playing a game of snow snakes, and drinking hot cocoa. Parents will be happy with plenty of coffee, a warm fire, and family memories.

What I'm Planning

Next summer, the Recreation 101 initiative will continue in full force, along with regularly scheduled nature-based programming at the Discovery Center. My goals include; starting a "Learn it and Earn it" initiative for both campers and DC visitors, modeled along the lines of the Junior Ranger patch program, regularly scheduled Rec. 101 classes, a hiking club, and an emphasis on publicizing the Discovery Center in every community newspaper and watering hole in the area.

Thank you for supporting such an active and impressive organization.

See you on the trails!

Katie McGlashen
Park Interpreter



Female Snowy Owl

It's a Snowy Owl Year!!

The snowy owl is a predator of the open tundra of Alaska and Northern Canada. Mouse-like rodents called lemmings are its favorite food. When winter lemming populations are low, snowy owls are forced to fly south into the northern U.S. in search of food. There have already been several sightings of snowy owls in Michigan this fall. We can expect more this winter.

Where should one look in hopes of seeing a snowy owl? Being a bird of open country, they are most likely to be seen near large open pastures and grasslands. They prefer to roost on the ground, but will also utilize fence posts and the roofs of buildings.

In the Waterloo Recreation Area, the large restored prairie on Reithmiller Road opposite the Lutheran Church might be a good place to look. The male snowy owl is pure white. The female is larger and has dark barring on the body, wings and tail. To learn where snowy owls and other interesting birds are being sighted in the state, subscribe to birders@umich.edu, or se-mi-birdlist@umich.edu.

Waterloo Natural History Association Programs

January through March 2012 (Advance Registration Required at 734-475-3170)

Cost: \$2.00 per person, \$5.00 per family (Free to WNHA members)

WINTER ORIENTEERING

2-4 p.m. Sunday January 15



Challenge yourself to an afternoon adventure in the forest. Winter is a great time of year for learning how to find your way in the woods. Suitable for all ages and skill levels. Compasses will be provided or bring your own. Limited to 35 participants.

CREATURES OF THE GALAPAGOS

2:00 p.m. Sunday, January 22



Naturalist/educator Carol Strahler will share with us the unique animals of the Galapagos including, blue-footed boobies, giant tortoises and marine iguanas. Learn how ocean currents and geology and tourism affect the ecosystem.

THE NIGHT CREW

7-8:30 p.m. Saturday January 28.



Live owls from the Leslie Science Center will engage, educate and delight you. View these birds up close and learn about their lives in the wild. Afterwards expert birder Lathe Clafin will lead a search for owls near the Discovery Center. Bring your flashlight and warm clothing.

FISH, FROM HEAD TO TAIL!

2:00 P.M. Sunday February 5



Fish biologist Kevin Wehrly and technician Brad Utrup will bring live, Michigan fish to tell their finny stories. Learn about fishy adaptations, behaviors and structures that help them survive in Michigan lakes and streams.

CREATURE FEATURE

2:00-3:00 p.m. Sunday, February 12



Get acquainted with an exciting variety of live exotic animals brought by Dan Briere of The Little Creatures Co. In this engaging program you will learn about global wildlife conservation and about the lives and characteristic of the individual animals.

ANIMALS HAVE CLASS

2:00 – 3:00 p.m. Sunday, March 4



What do mammals have in common with fish, amphibians, reptiles and birds? We all have backbones! Join us for this hands-on interactive program as Science Alive brings live animals from each of these groups.

MAPLE SYRUP MAKING

1:30— 3:00p.m. Sunday March 11



It's time for that rite of spring – tapping maple trees. Naturalist Tom Jameson will share his techniques for do-it-yourself maple syrup making. Following the film "Maple Sugar Farmer," he will lead a walk into the woods to show how to identify and tap maple trees.

THE FIRST MICHIGANDERS

2:00- 3:00 p.m. Sunday, March 18



Michigan's earliest inhabitants hunted caribou, musk ox, and mastodon, in a world almost unimaginable to us. Dr. Henry Wright, renowned archeologist from the U-M, will tell their story. Bring your own Native American points for identification following the program.

BUILD YOUR OWN TELESCOPE

2:00—3:30p.m. Sunday March 25



The sky's the limit when you have a telescope to view our Milky Way galaxy and its millions of stars. Be a modern-day Galileo as you make your own telescope with astronomy buff Meg Gower. Supplies \$6 per scope. Limited to 20 telescopes.

DNR Sponsored Programs



Geocaching 101

2:00 p.m.

February 11 or March 10

Learn to use a handheld GPS unit to navigate park trails on a treasure hunt. GPS Units provided. Cost: FREE, bring a few small trade-able trinkets if you can.

Advance Registration Required, Call 734-475-3170



Ski and Sip

2:00 p.m.

January 14 and March 3

Ski the Discovery Center's trails through interesting glacial topography for a fun and active outdoor time. Warm yourself after in the Discovery Center with coffee or hot cocoa provided by the DNR. Cost: Free.



Winter Tracking

2:00 p.m.

Saturday January 7

The stories of winter animals are written in the snow for all to see. Hike with the park staff in search of critter tracks in snow or mud. Match up animal feet to their tracks, cast a track and take it home. Cost: Free.

Advance Registration Required, Call 734-475-3170

DNR Sponsored Programs (cont'd)



Feeder Birds 101

10:00 a.m.

Saturday January 21

Winter is a great time to begin learning common birds. Hike and learn to identify the common birds of winter by call, silhouette, and behavior. Cost: Free.

Advance registration is required, call 734-475-3170



Winter Ecology 101

2:00 p.m.

Saturday January 28

Find out what's going on under the snow and out in the open during the winter. Walk with the Park Interpreter to discover animal hiding places and learn to identify trees and shrubs without leaves. Cost: Free. *Advance Registration Required, call 734-475-3170*

Winter Survival 101

2:00 p.m.

Saturday, February 25

Could you survive if lost in the woods?

Build a snow quinzee, learn to start a fire in the snow, and get tips on how to stay warm outside during winter. Cost: Free.

*Advance Registration Req.
Call 734-475-3170*

Luck O' Waterloo Walk

2:00 p.m.

Saturday March 12

Nature is full of symbols considered lucky, a rabbits foot, four leaf clover, an acorn, and feathers all have a story. Bring your lucky pair of hiking shoes to the Discovery Center. Cost: Free.

*Advance Registration Req.
Call 734-475-3170*

Mother Nature's Tool Box

2:00 p.m.

Saturday March 24

Animals are born with the tools they need to do their work.

Walk and talk about these amazing adaptations. Cost: Free.

*Advance Registration Req.
Call 734-475-3170*

DNR Sponsored Programs (cont'd)



March Into Spring

2:00 p.m.

Saturday March 31

Bring a friend or your family to the Discovery Center and learn the harbingers of spring. Cost: Free.

Advance Registration Required, Call 734-475-3170



Ice Fishing Festival **Saturday, February 18** **10 am to 2 pm**



No License Required • DNR Free Fishing Weekend

Learn to ice fish • Drink hot cocoa • Drill holes in the ice • Play snow snakes • Warm up by the fire • Build a jig stick pole
Create memories • Roast a marshmallow • Ice Skate



Make a Fishing Jig Stick: Every hour 10 am to 1 pm

Try Ice Fishing: Every half hour 10:30 am to 1:30 pm

Snow Snake Competition: Every hour 10 am to 1 pm

Ice Skating: Any time, bring your own skates.

Dress warmly: all activities take place outside.
Parking at Mill Lake Boat Launch
I-94 to Pierce Rd. exit, left on Bush Rd.
left on McClure Rd.

Recreation Passport required. May be purchased on-site from DNR Rangers for \$10.

Don't Miss Out On This Fun Event!!!



The Waterloo Recreation Area is dipping its toes into the social media arena with their new Facebook and Twitter accounts. For those of you unaware of this news, read on.

Log into your Facebook page and search for "Waterloo Recreation Area". (Don't be fooled by the other listings for Waterloo - the official page has Chelsea as its location, not Fowlerville or Jackson - and has lots of Likes already.) Hit the "Like" button and you'll discover all kinds of interesting information about the park, the Gerald E. Eddy Discovery Center, and upcoming park and local area events.

It's the perfect place to post your favorite park pictures and share stories about the memories you've created while visiting there. Get the latest scoop on what's happening in and around the Chelsea area. You might be surprised who else likes the WRA and the Discovery Center as much as you.

But don't stop there ... share the page with your Facebook friends and "Join" the scheduled events to help spread the word about this fabulous resource we have right in our own backyard. And for those of you interested in getting real-time updates on park happenings right to your phone or iPad, become a follower of the park's Tweets. Subscribe now to the Twitter account: @WaterlooRecArea



Special Workshop for Educators and Youth Group Leaders



Saturday, February 4, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

At the Discovery Center (Lunch provided.)

Environmental Education Curriculum for Educators.

Registration by January 28 required. Cost: \$60.



These Great Guides are Included!

Filled with Educational, Fun Activities for Boys and Girls



This is a must workshop for teachers and youth group leaders! *Project Wild and Project Learning Tree* are the most widely used activity based environmental education materials for educators and youth leaders in the U.S. They include many easy and fun ways to teach complex environmental concepts.

This workshop will introduce participants to activities suited for youth of all ages. They include those appropriate for both small and large groups, and for indoor or outdoor environments. Some are fine motor, arts and crafts based while others are big muscle, energy burning recreation based. Many include role

playing activities that help boys and girls discover what it's like to be a species of flora or fauna trying to survive in the natural world. Participants will have so much fun they won't realize they are learning.

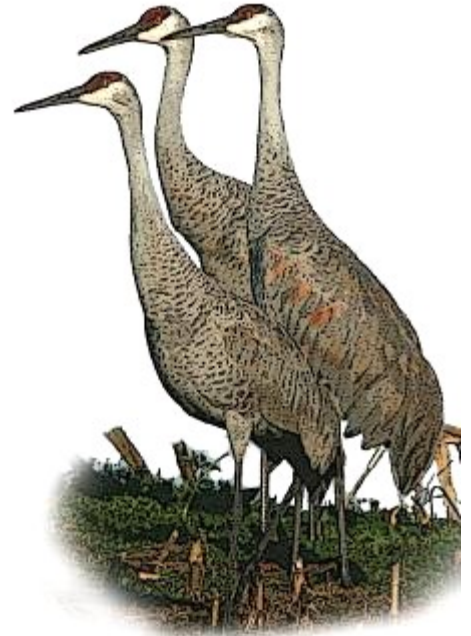
Whether you are a classroom teacher looking to complement your science curriculum or a youth group leader wanting to fill some meeting time with meaningful activities, Project Wild and Project Learning Tree materials will fill your needs.

To register, call the Discovery Center at 734-475-3170 by January 28.

Waterloo Natural History Association
17030 Bush Rd.
Chelsea, MI 48118



Official Newsletter of the Waterloo
Natural History Association



MEMBER'S CORNER

The Waterloo Natural History Association gratefully acknowledges the support of the following new members and those who have recently renewed their memberships:

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Peggy Liggitt & Rigel Bruening
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