

## ELGIN PUBLIC MUSEUM

*Of Natural History & Anthropology*

# COLLECTIONS

*Learning Through Adventure*



### OUR PURPOSE

*To promote an understanding and appreciation of the natural world and other cultures, both past and present; and to increase our awareness of the decisions human cultures have made.*

### EPM Hours

#### Memorial Day to Labor Day

Tuesday thru Sunday 12 - 4 pm

Closed Mondays

#### Labor Day to Memorial Day

Saturday & Sunday 12 - 4 pm

#### Dec. 21st through Dec. 31st

12 - 4 pm - Touching on Traditions

For additional information or to register in advance for an event or program please call : 847-741-6655  
Visit our website for more information at [www.elginpublicmuseum.org](http://www.elginpublicmuseum.org)

### New Temporary Exhibit Coming in June

### Elgin's Natural Treasures *Trout Park and Bluff Spring Fen*



*Marsh marigolds were abundant this spring*

EPM is presenting three lectures this summer centering around some of the historic and natural history of our own neighborhood. (See our program schedule) Supplementing these programs we will be displaying pictures and text depicting two unique habitats here in Elgin.

## ILLINOIS: THE *former* PRAIRIE STATE

by Michael McGrath

*According to the Illinois Natural History Survey, an organization affiliated with the University of Illinois since 1858, prior to settlement, more than 60% of Illinois, approximately 22,000,000 acres, were covered with prairie. Today, just over 2,000 acres remain, less than one-hundredth of one percent.*

When most people drive the interstate highways of Illinois and adjacent states, they are in a rush to get from here to there. They view mile after mile of corn fields, soy bean fields and the like and think, this is prairie. And they say to themselves: **BOORING**. But what they are looking at is not a prairie ecosystem. The natural prairie, before the introduction of John Deere's plow in the early 1800's, was a rich, diverse landscape.



*Lost in the tallgrass prairie.*

By 1800 European settlers were pushing into Illinois territory looking for farmland. What they encountered was the tallgrass prairie. With grasses like big bluestem (Illinois state grass) and Indian grasses that grew up to 10 feet tall, they encountering a landscape like no other. Even more daunting to a farmer was what was below the surface (and it scared them to death). To survive, grasses and forbs grew extensive and complex root systems that reached down to a depth that was as deep as they were tall. The tools farmers brought with them from the East could not plow these soils to produce a livelihood; until John Deere invented the self-scouring, steel-blade plow in 1837. Then, within a short period of 50 years the tallgrass prairies were gone.

As monotonous, boring, and dull as it may appear to the eye, the tallgrass prairie is considered by ecologists as one of the richest natural ecosystems in the world. In the simplest of terms, a prairie is an inland sea of grasses and other non-woody plants called forbs. But it's much more complicated than this, for a prairie ecosystem is the result of the interactions between the precipitation and temperature of a region, the landforms, how quickly water drains from the soil, fire, plants and animals. Each plays a crucial role in the establishment of a prairie.

As the Pleistocene glaciation started to recede about 18,000 years ago, it scoured the land and the most recent North American ecosystem started its development. By about 7,500 years ago, the climate was warmer and drier, most of the forests had died out, prairie spread over the land. A prairie ecosystem includes living components – plants and animals – the non-living elements – sun, water, fire, soil and nutrients.

The Illinois tallgrass prairie is divided into 14 natural divisions, based

*continued on page 3.*

## *From the Director - Margaret "Peggie" Stromberg*

**2010 is proving to be a good year.** Although funding continues to be a huge concern, we have had some wonderful programming and have plenty more planned. We have developed a partnership with Elgin Climate Change Organization, and continued our partnerships with the Elgin Area Historical Society, Hawthorn Nature Center and many other local groups. Collaboration is the key to providing more services with less money.

I am really looking forward to the Members, Donors and Volunteers picnic to be held June 23. This will be our 4th annual and the Museum will be open that evening for the occasion. Our members have been renewing in good numbers this year and even adding donations where they can. Special thanks to all of you who support us because we can't do it alone.

Our summer prairie, butterfly and bee series is coming along nicely and we are also pleased to have Dr. Cathy Bird coming back in November. Her program last fall was one of the best attended that we have held recently. She is a working archaeologist who lives here in Elgin.

Family Science Nights have been a phenomenal success. We have been particularly pleased to see Councilmen John Steffen and Mike Warren attending with their children. Held monthly, more than 300 people have enjoyed these educational, hands-on evenings. Our volunteers again came to our rescue with these programs, including Alan, Amanda, Phil, Mike and Elgin Rocks and Mineral Society. Regulars Mike and Marge have helped Sara a great deal as well. Sara always comes up with great activities! We have received a grant from the Grand Victoria to partially fund this program.

We have over 300 fans on Facebook and really appreciate that support and feed back. It is a great tool for getting out the word. If you are on Facebook, please become a fan. If you haven't seen our new website, please check that out as well at [www.elginpublicmuseum.org](http://www.elginpublicmuseum.org).

I urge all of our members to visit Elgin's great museums. We have a wonderful Fire Bran Museum and the Elgin Historical Society Museum. Additionally we have the Lords Park Zoo which is nearly a museum in itself. Established 115 years ago, the zoo is struggling to stay alive and the baby farm animals will not be back this year. To see how you can help, please visit their website at [www.Lordsparkzoo.org](http://www.Lordsparkzoo.org) Congratulations to Laurie Faith Gibson-Aiello who won a Mayor's Award for Historic Preservation based on her work to save Elgin's zoo. Elgin is fortunate to have these cultural attractions.

Please let me know if there is anything you would like to see us do. We are currently working on a strategic plan and suggestions are welcomed!

### **EPM STAFF**

#### **Executive Director**

*Margaret "Peggie" Stromberg*

#### **Museum Coordinator**

*Michael McGrath*

#### **Education Coordinator**

*Sara Russell*

#### **Educator**

*Marge Fox*

#### **Museum Attendant**

*Rachel Camacho*

*Diana Beltran*

#### **Collections Supervisor**

*Elizabeth O'Toole*

### **EPM BOARD MEMBERS**

*Martha Yochum*

*Gilbert Nore*

*Dwight Armistead*

*Mark Havemann*

*Clare Ollayos*

*Diane Ramsey Shedd*

*William Barnes*

*Sal Camacho*

*Don Quillman*

## **MUSEUM GOLD**

**A special THANKS to all those who support our mission. We couldn't do it without you!**

### **New and Renewed Membership**

Gill & Mary Nore

Dorothea Poulos

John & Elizabeth Marston

Joseph & Darlene Steffen

E. C. Greenwald

Amy Bouque Hunt

William & Margarete Schmoldt

Paul & Amelia Andresen

Patrick & Carol Gieske

Irene & David Wedemeyer

Laurie Faith & Tony Aiello

Debra Summers

### **Donors**

Wayne & Jeannette Russell

William & Margarete Schmoldt

Paul & Amelia Andresen

Irene & David Wedemeyer

Grand Victoria Foundation

## **CONGRATULATIONS!**

### **To William and Margarete Schmoldt on their 60th Wedding Anniversary.**

William and Margarete have been members of EPM, supporting this institution for the past 20 years. Not only do we wish them well in the years to come but our Elgin community is grateful for their continuing support.

The Elgin Public Museum is a public institution whose purpose is to enrich the lives of the people within our community. Your membership and donations are vital ingredients in the success of our mission. Because of your support and generosity we are able to present programming either free or at reasonable rates for all, in the hopes all our citizens can greater understand and appreciate the complexity of the world around them.

**THANK YOU!**

## The 4th Annual Members, Donors and Volunteers Picnic.

Wednesday, June 23rd.  
6 - 8 PM at the  
Elgin Public Museum



*Gary Vierck, like all boys at heart, enjoys preparing a fire.*

We are all looking forward to getting together for the members, donors, staff and board annual picnic June 23 at 6:00 at the Museum. The hotdog roast was a big success last year, so we will do it again, only this time we will be at the Museum, north side, with a fire pit. We will provide food and drink. If you have hotdog forks, pie makers, and lawn chairs, you might want to bring them. Please be sure to RSVP by June 21 so we get enough food!

## Nature Walks at Bluff Springs Fen and Trout Park

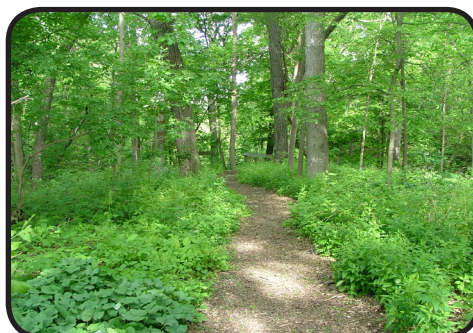
Want to see what the Elgin area might have looked like hundreds of years ago, before extensive settlement by Europeans? Take a walk through the Bluff Spring Fen or Trout Park. Dedicated individuals have been working for decades restoring these unique habitats to their original natural grandeur. What is particularly striking is the transformation of these areas on a monthly, if not weekly basis, throughout month of the year. The paths may become familiar but the flora and fauna are constantly changing.

If you want to get the most from our summer lecture series we're partnering with Friends of the Bluff Spring Fen and Friends of Trout Park for guided nature walks through these unique habitats. Experiencing these environments with an expert will make the lectures much more fulfilling.



*The Bluff Springs Fen in mid May. This landscape changes weekly.*

The Friends of Bluff Spring Fen will be conducting a Prairie Walk on July 17th at 10:30 am highlighting the Yellow Coneflower and Culvers Root. There is no charge for the tour, but reservations are required several weeks in advance. You can call 847-464-4426.



*Entrance to the botanical jungle at Trout Park*

Plans are being made for a September walk through Trout Park with Susan Bohne. This fen, like that at Bluff Spring, is the result of glacial deposits from the last Ice Age, 10,000 years ago. The calcareous springs support unique flora. But unlike the prairie and savannas found at Bluff Spring, there is a dense oak-hickory landscape at Trout Park.

**Watch for more information.**

## FOX VALLEY GARDEN WALK

June 12 the Elgin Area American Association of University Women will hold their Fox Valley Garden Walk featuring East side gardens. One stop will be the gardens on the west side of the Museum. There will also be artists at our location, along with food service. Hours are 9 am to 3 pm. Tickets are \$12 in advance/\$15 day of walk. Tickets are available at the Museum.



*Native plants from 6" tall to 6' tall adorn our gardens.*

### *prairie cont.*

on topography, glacial history, bedrock, soils and distribution of plants and animals. There are six classifications within these divisions; like black soil prairie, sand prairie, hill prairie, etc. Yet a further division is based on soil moisture and Illinois has 23 prairie types. The biodiversity within the tallgrass prairie includes such communities as sedge meadows, savannas, kames, marshes and fens to name but a few. In our region some distinctive prairie vegetation can be found in very wet alkaline fens such as Trout Park and Bluff Spring. This is not a boring landscape by any means.

Walk through your manicured lawn and you'll encounter a couple of species of grasses and several species of weed. Walk through the same size area of the pre-settlement Illinois prairie and you'll encounter a few hundred species of flora not to mention the abundance of animal life.

**Want to learn more? Visit our website for links to local prairie restoration efforts and how you can become involved.**

## WHAT'S NEW IN EDUCATION PROGRAMING

# LADYBUG RELEASE

By Sara Russell

*“Ladybug, Ladybug, fly away home. Your house is on fire and your children all gone.”* This children’s nursery rhyme is thought to have originated as a gentle warning to our spotted insect friends. By whichever name you know them, ladybugs, ladybird beetles or lady beetles are wonderful pest controls for farmers and gardeners alike. These hungry insects will eat upwards of 5,000 aphids in its life-time. Also on the menu are other small insects such as whitefly, mealybugs, scales, mites, bollworms, broccoli worm, tomato hornworm and cabbage moth. They indulge in the eggs of some insects like moth eggs. Some lady beetles eat pollen and mildew.



*Ladybugs are not bugs, but beetles, and they’re precious to the natural gardener.*

Farmers of the past realized that the lady beetle’s diet helped keep tiny pests at bay. At the end of the growing season, farmers would often burn their land to rejuvenate the soil. Not wanting to harm the insects that had helped them all summer long, the farmers would sing the nursery rhyme urging the lady beetles to move on to safer lands. Or so the story goes. In the 1800’s the orange and lemon trees of California were in danger of being overrun with Australian scale insects. They were destroying whole groves, threatening the livelihood of the farmers. The solution? The farmers imported Australian lady beetles and released them into the orchards. Within two years the orchards were scale bug free – the orange and lemon industry was saved thanks to the lady beetle.

After the lemon tree incident, raising lady beetles for pest control became big business as farmers began to use the insects in larger numbers. During the 1960’s and 1990’s, the U.S. Department of Agriculture attempted to utilize the Asian lady beetle to control agricultural pests of apples and pecans. The Asian lady beetle – native to China, Russia, Korea, and Japan – was released in large numbers in several states including Georgia, South Carolina, Louisiana, Mississippi, California, Washington, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and Maryland. The results were mixed. The Asian lady beetles eradicated most of the pests, but anyone dealing with lady beetle home invasions understands the unintended consequences.

Gardeners today are turning to lady beetle species, like the convergent lady beetle, as an organic alternative to pesticides. Gardeners hoping to attract lady beetles plant flowers including dill, cilantro, yarrow, wild carrot, cosmos, geraniums, marigolds, and even dandelions. These flowers produce pollen that lady beetles use as a food source.

Besides being wonderful pest control, lady beetles are just fascinating insects. They are legendary for their defense mechanisms. Bright colors and spots suggest to predators that they taste awful and lady beetles are indeed poisonous to some birds and insects. They also produce a foul-smelling rust colored secretion from their leg joints to repel predators (and humans). This is called reflex bleeding. If all else fails, the lady beetle plays dead, falling from a leaf to the ground below or dangling from a branch.

There are over 300 lady beetle species in the United States, including the infamous Asian lady beetle. Not all have spots, nor are they all red. They come in many shades of yellow, orange, red, pink, and black; some even have red spots on black shells.

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## Ladybug Release Party, Friday, July 16, 7 PM

Elgin Community Garden Network and the Elgin Public Museum will host a Ladybug Release Party in Lords Park. Learn more about these insects from ECGN’s Lead Gardener Donna Askins and how they can improve your garden. Then as a group we will release hundreds of ladybugs to help control the Park’s insect pests. Please remember that while releasing the ladybugs, a few may land on you. Light refreshments provided, but feel free to bring a picnic to share with your family before the release. Children will receive free ladybug hats while supplies last. Please call the museum or email [elginladybugs@gmail.com](mailto:elginladybugs@gmail.com) to register.

## A Children’s Outdoor Bill of Rights

1. **Discover Wilderness – prairies, dunes, forests, savannas, and wetlands.**
2. **Camp under the stars.**
3. **Follow a trail.**
4. **Catch and release fish, frogs, and insects.**
5. **Climb a tree.**
6. **Explore nature in neighborhoods and cities.**
7. **Celebrate heritage.**
8. **Plant a flower.**
9. **Play in the mud or a stream.**
10. **Learn to swim.**

*from “Chicago Wilderness”*

# UP COMING EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

## BUBBLEFEST

**Saturday, June 5th, 12-2 p.m.**

Bubblefest has been a staple of the Elgin Public Museum's family programming for many, many years. Make a bubble blower, shake hands in a bubble, stand in a bubble and make your own bubble art. Slippery fun for kids; it doesn't get any better than this.

**Admission \$2 per child  
Parents - FREE.**

## Jr. Girl Scout Outdoor Badge Bonanza

**Saturday, June 12th, 1:30-5 pm**

Elgin Public Museum and the Hawthorne Hill Nature Center staff will take you outdoors for hiking, canoeing, pond exploration and other fun activities to complete Plants & Animals and Water Fun badge requirements. Space is limited, so register early.

**Fee \$15 per Scout  
Reservations required.**

## The Initial Evaluation of the Illinois Prairie, 1815-1840.

**Thursday, June 17th, 7 p.m.**

Thanks to the Illinois Humanities Council Roads Scholars speaking program, we are able to present Dr. Norman Moline, a Professor of Geography at Augustana College, who will be joining us to talk about what early European settlers expected to encounter when they came to settle in Illinois. Accustomed to wooded environments in the Eastern United States, this was a different world and very frightening.

**A FREE program  
but seating is limited.  
Reservations Required**

**F - Family Program**

## Science Night Schedule

Our monthly hands on education experiences for children.

### CSI: Elgin

**Monday, June 14th, 6-8 pm**

Finger printing, biological evidence, ink identification and more. Kids and their parents can follow the chain of evidence throughout the Museum, discovering different forensic techniques, during CSI: Elgin.

### Mad Scientists

**Monday, July 19th, 6-8 pm**

Wacky experiments, weird facts . . . are you a mad scientist at heart? Different stations dedicated to fun experiments will be set up around the Museum where you will learn the science behind them.

### Mammals

**Monday, August 23rd, 6-8 pm**

Different stations will be set up around the Museum for kids and adults to conduct experiments, experience demonstrations and take part in discussions about this month's topic: **Mammals!**

**Admission \$2, Members FREE.  
A drop in program, no reservations required.**

## DINO CAMP!

**Monday, July 12th, through  
Thursday July 15th, 9 - Noon.**

Exploring the world of the Dinosaurs has never been so much fun! During this four day camp, kids can learn about these ancient animals and the people who study them through crafts, games, and hands-on activities. The camp is run through Elgin Community College's Kids' College and will take place there. Call ECC to register at 847-622-3036.

**Fee \$89 per Child**

**A - Adult Program**

## Bring Them Back Alive: *The Return of the Swamp Metalmark Butterfly to Illinois.*

**Thursday July 22nd, 7 pm**

Doug Taron from the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum in Chicago is learning to breed this species in the laboratory, and they are attempting to reintroduce the population in the restored prairie at the Bluff Springs Fen.

**Admission \$7, Members \$4  
Reservations Required.**

## The Secret Lives of Honeybees

**Thursday August 19th, 7 p.m.**

Most people are not fond of bees if they invade their space; however, life would be a lot duller without bees.

Honeybees, bumblebees, wasps – what's the difference? Discover the answer from beekeepers Wes and Jill Nelson! Using tools of the trade for demonstration, they will explain the ins and outs of caring for beehives and honey collecting and pollination.

**Admission \$7, Members \$4  
Reservations Required.**

## Webelo Cub Scout Jamboree

**Saturday, August 21st, 1-4:30 pm**

Have fun completing Forester and Scientist pin requirements with our team from Elgin Public Museum and Hawthorne Hill Nature Center! Take a hike in the woods, discover amazing plants, catch all sorts of bugs and apply the laws of nature in cool science experiments!

**Fee \$15 per scout  
Reservations Required.**

***There's More - See Page 6***

See the next page for even more. And, continue to check our website for the latest in

*Learning Through Adventure.*

[www.elginpublicmuseum.org](http://www.elginpublicmuseum.org)

## CONTINUING PROGRAMS

### Earth's Changing Climate Lecture & Discussion Series

**Wednesday, June 2nd, 7-8:30 p.m.**  
Impacts of Climate Change & Energy and Climate

**Wednesday, June 16th, 7-8:30 p.m.**  
Energy - Resources and Alternatives &  
Sustainable Futures?

Join us as we continue to investigate climate change. Running every other week, The Elgin Public Museum will partner with the Elgin Climate Change Organization (ECCO) for a lecture and discussion series at the Museum. The programs will be based on the lectures from the Great Learning Series, with ECCO moderating a coffee and discussion time.

### Adventures in the Park

On the 2nd and 4th Saturday of the summer months we're bringing back Adventures in the Park. Stop by and see us at this FREE hands-on learning experience.

#### The Schedule

**Saturday, June 12th, 12 - 2 pm**  
**Bison or Buffalo?**

**Saturday, June 26th, 12 - 2 pm**  
**Birds of Prey**

**Saturday, July 10th, 12 - 2 pm**  
**Camouflage**

**Saturday, July 24th, 12 - 2 pm**  
**Moths & Butterflies**

**Saturday, August 14th, 12 - 2 pm**  
**Tremendous Trees**

**Saturday, August 28th, 12 - 2 pm**  
**Skulls and All**

### Bison Feeding

The Bison Deer and Elk are Hungry!

#### Please Help

An up close and personal experience with the largest herbivores this side of the Mississippi.

June 19th, July 10th and August 14th  
Programs start with an introduction  
at the Museum at 7 AM

**\$2 per person, \$5 per family**  
**EPM members FREE**

## the ELGIN ROCK AND MINERAL SOCIETY lends us a hand.

On Friday, April 23rd the Elgin Rock and Mineral Society conducted their monthly meeting here at the Elgin Public Museum. An ulterior motive of ours was to entice them to help classify rocks and minerals, both in our collection and recent donations. President, Mark Kuntz, lead several members with an enthusiasm for this subject that was unparalleled. We're hoping to have them join us again; besides rocks we have plenty of fossils that need identifying. When a date is finalized we'll send out an email to invite any amateur Geologist who might like to help and learn more about ERAM.



**Magnetite.** Looks like a piece of lava until you place a magnet next to it.



### ARE YOU AN AMATEUR ?

In 1957 Freeman Tilden wrote a bible for the National Park Service titled *Interpreting Our Heritage*. This timeless piece is still required reading for anyone pursuing a career within the National Parks. One chapter of the book is "The Happy Amateur," and here is what Tilden wrote: "I am not sure just at what period the fine old noun was perverted for common usage. To most people now it means a dabbler, a bungler, a producer of something inferior. What a pity! For this word once described a person who could not be otherwise than happy, since he was doing something for the love of it; not for material gain, not for fame or pre-eminence: he or she simply gave the head and heart, and rejoiced. A Hobby? No, more than a hobby; though a good hobby has often added years to life. No; something of higher meaning, more satisfying to the soul."

Can you relate to this? Are you an amateur? Do you know of any amateurs with a love in the disciplines of zoology, botany, ecology, anthropology? If you know someone who would like to share their passion with our community, have them give us a call. We love talking to Amateurs.

### New Faces at the Museum

Rachel Camacho has been our solid desk attendant on weekends from the beginning of last summer. This summer Rachel will be handling desk attendant duties from Tuesday through Friday. Come June 5th we are pleased to have Diana Beltran taking on the responsibilities of that position on Saturdays and Sundays. Diana is a recent graduate of Elgin High School and is planning on continuing her education in International Studies and Psychology this fall in London. If you're enjoying the park this summer don't forget to stop by and say Hello.

### Volunteers

We continually strive to present to our public quality programs and exhibits. This would not be possible without the help of volunteers like Phil Steder, Mike Sureus, Amanda Wolf and Theresa McFadden to name just a few. Whether it's upgrading computer programs for the tech illiterate like myself, to developing work stations and manning them at Science Nights or working on organizing our collections, these individuals are as precious to us as many objects in our collection. Thank you all. We love each and every one of you.

**Want to help - Give us a Call**