



RIVER PRAIRIE GROUP

This is a quick update during our current shutdown, and we hope it finds you well in this extraordinary time. In the near term we are not expecting previously scheduled meetings and events to proceed as planned, but we will keep you informed of any developments, including anything happening online. For now, we must all focus on personal needs and those of friends, family, and our communities.



Photo by Jeff Gahris

Some Good News

By Jeff Gahris

There was a nice story appearing in the Daily Herald on March 22 about the restoration of Salt Creek at the Preserve at Oak Meadows. This article, [Oak Meadows A Model for Restoring Salt Creek](#) , shows what can be done for Salt Creek and other streams in DuPage County. The restoration received national recognition, and was the winner of the 2017 [Green Star Award](#) from Golf Digest.

In addition, a number of old and obsolete dams located on other streams in DuPage County and elsewhere are being evaluated. Locally, this effort is led by the DuPage River Salt Creek Workgroup, which includes numerous parties such as The Conservation Foundation, the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County, and the Sierra Club. When streams are restored to their original condition and allowed to meander as nature intended, we find better water quality and habitat for mussels and other aquatic species. This has the added benefit of avoiding expensive upgrades to local wastewater treatment facilities.

Oak Meadows is currently closed for golf, but you can walk the paths. You can also visit a more recent project, the restoration of Spring Brook in the north end of St. James Farm Forest Preserve in Warrenville. Finally, watch for upcoming public meetings or on-line forums for the Salt Creek watershed.



Photo by Ed Max

Take a Hike

By Ed Max

OK, so now that we're all cooped up and getting a little stir-crazy, it's time to get out of doors on our own (or preferably with a partner) and experience the fresh air. It's both virus and stress free! So set down those Cheetos, get off the couch and...

Head over to Herrick lake:

Time to hike the many miles of trails through open prairie, woodlands, and meadows. You have a choice of several trails. Here are just a few:

I prefer to start at the west side lot (1/4 mile south of Rt. 56 on Herrick Rd). From there you can hike down to the lakeside loop trail. As it traverses the shoreline you will find trees such as wetland-loving alder (look for dangling catkins), bald cypress and maples (see the red blooms on top). It's the finest trail for birders right now with all the migratory water birds stopping over. And just a heads up, it's going to be an early spring for wildflowers.

Wetland plant species such as skunk cabbages and marsh marigold will soon be obvious between now and mid April. Woodland bluebells and bloodroot will be popping in a few weeks or less.

If you're up for a longer adventure on foot, head east from the parking lot and follow the crushed limestone paths clear over to (and under) Naperville Road to the Danada portion of the preserve and its equestrian areas, prairies and lakes. The heron rookery should be quite active on your right as you walk east from Herrick Lake.

All areas are well marked, and trail maps are present along the way to give you distances. So get those hiking boots laced up, hit this open space, or your nearby preserves, and experience a bit of this fleeting, colorful and vibrant spring!
