



FROM THE TRAILS

OF THE PIONEERS PARK NATURE CENTER

JANUARY - APRIL 2012

REOPENING CHET



What's most important is out of sight; the foundation of the Chet Ager Building has been stabilized! However, the inside of the building has had a very noticeable facelift. Join us for a **grand opening** on Saturday, February 18th from

10:00 until noon and check out all the changes. Visitors can be involved with the Great Backyard Bird Count, there will be crafts for the kids, and refreshments for all. Then in the afternoon go on to the "Kid's Bird enCOUNTER Day" at Gere and Eisley Libraries. More information inside.

Chet looks a bit bare on the outside as much of the vegetation near the building had to be removed. There will be a lot of planting going on next spring!

WILDERNESS NATURE CAMP

Build forts, run through meadows, wade through creeks, explore the woods, meet new friends; these are weekly activities at WNC! This camp engages 6-12 year olds outside, where nature comes first. Look for Extreme Camp, when those 9-12 will have the chance to paddle and climb, Bike Camp, and a chance to get hands in the dirt in the Nature Center's new children's garden.

A Junior Counselor program for those 13 and older provides new challenges and leadership opportunities.

Brochures available by February 1st.

NATURE CENTER PRESCHOOL

Where Kids Explore



Open House:

Tuesday, January 17
10-11 a.m. or 1-2 p.m.
or by appointment

Enrollment for 2012-13
begins February 1st

NATURE EXPLORERS CAMP

Mad Scientists, March 12-16



Ages 6-12

8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

\$160

Extended hours
available

Be a science sleuth! Set out test plots, collect evidence, and piece together a complete picture. Shake up household stuff for real fun. This will be a week of messy, hands-on science activities - and a little gardening. Early drop-off (7:30 a.m.) and/or late pick-up (5:30 p.m.) only \$10 extra for the whole week.

SANDHILL CRANE TRIP

March 22, Thursday, Noon-11:00 p.m.

\$75/person, register by February 20

Experience one of our planet's most spectacular wildlife migrations! Visit the Nebraska Nature and Visitor Center, travel rural roads to see the cranes foraging and dancing in the fields, then watch and listen to them return to the Platte River at sunset from a Rowe Sanctuary blind. The fee includes van transportation, dinner and blind costs. Must have the ability to walk uneven trails in low light with a guide. Registration and payment required by February 20 for blind reservations.

PIONEERS PARK NATURE CENTER

Admission: Free

Location: 3201 S. Coddington (west end of
Pioneers Park) Lincoln, NE 68522

Hours: Monday - Saturday: 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Sunday: Noon - 5:00 p.m.

Phone: 402.441.7895

E-mail: nfurman@lincoln.ne.gov

Website: parks.lincoln.ne.gov/naturecenter

Mailing Address: 2740 A Street, Lincoln, NE 68502

PROGRAMS FOR EVERYONE

POETRY ON THE PRAIRIE

January 22, Sunday 2:00-3:30 p.m.
Prairie Building \$5 suggested donation

Think of a hot drink in a warm room with a beautiful view of prairie and pond. Now think about sharing nature poetry, your own, a favorite of yours by another poet, or just listening. Join us! *No registration necessary.*

GEOLOGY DAY

February 12, Sunday 1:00-4:00 p.m.
Chet Ager Building Donation

Learn about fossils, minerals, rocks, and gemstones through displays and demonstrations by members of the Lincoln Gem and Mineral Club. They can also help you identify your own specimens during this free drop-in program.

WALK WITH THE STARS

February 24, Friday 7:00-8:30 p.m.
Prairie Building \$8/person, \$15/family (2-4 people)

Hike under the brilliant stars of the Winter Hexagon, learn to find them in the night sky. Listen to their stories as you warm up with hot cocoa. We might even hear the sounds of the nocturnal animals around us. The program is suitable for those six years old and up. It will be canceled if the sky is cloudy. *Register by February 22.*

SCAVENGER HUNT

March 31, Saturday 1:00-3:00 p.m.
Prairie Building \$8/person, \$15/family (2-4 people)

Come and explore! Find new ways to learn about the Nature Center trails and exhibits by participating in our first ever Nature Center Scavenger Hunt! This fun activity for children, teens and adults will help you to hone your observational skills finding treasures that are "hidden" in plain sight. We will provide a scavenger hunt list and trail map; you identify the location where the "treasure" is found. The challenge is to find all the items on the list in 2 hours. Prizes will be awarded for individuals who complete the list in the allotted time! *Register by March 28.*

MOTHERS DAY BREAKFAST AND BIRDWALK

May 13, Sunday 8:00-10:00 a.m.
Meet at Chet Ager Building \$10/person

Treat your mother to a unique Mother's Day early morning birdwalk followed by a breakfast of rolls, fruit, and a beverage. Binoculars will be provided for those who do not have their own. *Register by May 9.*

CHILDREN'S GARDEN



It's a snowy world now, but when spring comes, the children's garden will be full of activity. If you would like to help, or if you have a group of young people that would like to be part of a garden club, call Becky at 402.441.8708.

PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH

NATURE'S POETRY - UNEARTHED!

February 18 and 25, Saturdays 1:30-3:30 p.m.
Prairie Building \$5/session

Here is an opportunity for youth ages 9 to 13 to explore nature (and nature poetry) with a writer's eye, collect impressions, and construct some poems both in a group and individually. Participants will also have a chance to share their work and get constructive feedback. The sessions will build on each other, but it is OK to come to just one. A snack will be provided. *Register by February 15.*

KID'S BIRD ENCOUNTER DAY

February 18, Saturday 1:00-3:00 p.m.
Gere and Eiseley Libraries Free

Celebrate the Great Backyard Bird Count! Sponsored by the Lincoln City Libraries, Wachiska Audubon and Wild Bird Habitat Stores, there will be hands-on and multimedia activities for children preschool to 5th grade and a chance to meet birds of Raptor Recovery Nebraska and Pioneers Park Nature Center. Partners for the event include Community Crops, Nebraska Game and Parks, Pioneers Park Nature Center and Spring Creek Audubon Prairie Center.

WOODPECKER PIZZA PARTY

March 3, Saturday Grades K-2 10:00-11:30 a.m.
Chet Ager Building \$8/child

It's going to be a rap-tapping good party! Join in the fun discovering the special things that allow woodpeckers to drum out a beat, dig holes in trees and slurp yummy insects from bark. We'll go for a walk, looking and listening for these beautiful birds and then make a suet pizza to attract them to your backyard. *Register by February 29.*

HAND IN HAND: SPRING SONG

Eight Mondays beginning March 19 (no class April 9)
Ages 2 1/2 - 3 1/2 with accompanying adult
10:00-11:30 a.m. \$65/8 week session

Explore the marvels of spring with your little one through hikes, games, and stories. Please dress for the weather as we will be spending a portion of each class outside. A snack will be provided. Prairie Building Goldenrod Classroom. *Register by March 12.*

CAMP DISCOVERY

Registration begins March 1st
Monday-Thursday 9:00-11:30 a.m.
Ages 3-6 \$65/child/session

Prairie Building Goldenrod Classroom

Outdoor exploration, crafts, puppets, games, and snacks
June 4-7: Green and Growing
June 11-14: Goin' on a Nature Hunt
June 18-21: Horns and Antlers
June 25-28: Polliwogs, Nymphs and Worms
July 9-12: Polliwogs, Nymphs and Worms

GIFT SHOP

Have you checked out the gift shop lately? One of the new items is a set of animal collector cards with pictures and great information on Nature Center animals. A fun present for someone young in your life.

SPECIALLY FOR SCOUTS

SCOUT HIKES

One hour naturalist-led hikes are available. Fee: \$3/scout/minimum 10. Call 402.441.7895.

BADGEWORK

The Nature Center rotates scheduled badges and try-its. Upon request, staff will work with leaders for other badge programming with the following fee schedule:

2 hours or less: \$7/scout/minimum 10

2.5-3 hours: \$10/scout/minimum 10

NATURALIST ACTIVITY BADGE FOR WEBELOS

May 5, Saturday

9:30 a.m. - Noon

Prairie Building

\$10/scout

Learn to identify the poisonous plants and animals of our area, search for the animals of our region, investigate food chains, bird flyways and the importance of wetlands! Nature Center staff will help you complete activities # 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11. Register by May 2nd.

JUNIOR NATURALIST SERIES

For Daisy, Brownie and Junior Scouts

Saturdays, March 17, April 14, May 19, June 16, July 21, and August 18

9:00-11:30 a.m.

Prairie Building

\$15/session/scout

Inspired by the "It's Your Planet, Love It" journey, go on an amazing outdoor adventure designed to help you learn more about nature and appreciate the crucial role it plays on our planet. A six month series, sign up for one day to all six. Fee includes instructor, supplies, snacks and recognition. Come dressed for the weather, we'll be outside for at least part of the time! Register through the Girls Scouts at girlscoutsnebraska.org at least two weeks before the program. Find registration information on page 9 of the 2011/12 Program Book. Register at least two weeks before each program.

March 17: Spring Explosion

April 14: More Than Just Feathers

May 19: Grow in the Garden

June 16: Grub in the Mud

July 21: Is Something Bugging You?

August 18: Portrait of a Prairie

BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Reptiles Rock, Insect Investigations, Nature's Scavenger Hunt, Amazing Birds, Marvelous Mammals or Grow in the Garden. Choose the theme that will make for an exciting birthday celebration. Available from 10-12 on Saturdays and 2-4 on Saturdays and Sundays, there is time for a nature hike/activity and your birthday activities. We provide the space, program, a favor bag for each child and a special gift for the guest of honor. You provide the refreshments. Available facilities:

Birthday House, \$75 for up to 10 children and 3 adults

\$7 each additional child, maximum of 15 children

Auditorium, \$100 for up to 10 children and 5 adults

\$7 each additional child

\$3 each additional adult

Call 402.441.7895 for reservations at least two weeks in advance.

PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS

PRIMITIVE PINE NEEDLE BASKETS

January 28, Saturday

1:00-4:00 p.m.

Prairie Building

\$10/person

Learn how to make coil baskets. Each person will begin a pine needle basket to finish at home. Recommended for people 14 and older. Register by January 25.

EATING WILD

April 7, Saturday

10:00 a.m. - noon

Prairie Building

\$10/person

Get acquainted with several spring wild plants that are good to eat. After some introductory information we'll hike out on a gathering expedition, and return for some tasty treats. Recipes included. Register by April 4.

WOMEN'S WELLNESS

It's coming back! Save April 28th for a morning set aside just for you. The day will include gentle yoga and a nature walk.

FRIENDS OF PPNC

FRIENDS ANNUAL MEETING

January 28, Saturday

9:30-11:30 a.m.

Prairie Building

Free

All are invited to the Friends annual meeting. Dr. DeAnn Currin, Principal of Sheridan School, will speak about the importance of bringing school children to the Nature Center. Find out more about the Friends and enjoy refreshments and good conversation.

NATURE'S MARKET

The artistic bird house designs are in! Look for them in area businesses in March and come out for the live auction on April 21st. Two rain barrels painted by artist Albert Maxey will be raffled, there will be craft and plant booths, food vendors and entertainment by the String Beans. It will be a great day to be at the Nature Center!

SCHOOL HIKES

Thanks to the Hugo A. and Thelma Aspegren Charitable Trust, 1,419 LPS 4th graders spent a full day discovering the rich history, natural diversity and peaceful beauty of the tallgrass prairie this fall. In addition, 67 school groups with 3,451 children came to the Nature Center for half day hikes. These hikes were funded by the Lower Platte South NRD and the Friends of the Nature Center.

We always enjoy receiving art work and thank you notes from the children. Cameron wrote "My fafriot part was when we saw the wooly bear caterpillar and my least fafriot part was when we saw the smasht one."



THANK YOU



Nature Center animals send their thanks to Open Harvest for special meat and fish treats.

Fishin' Freddie Guittar gave some yummy worms too.

Did you know that it costs over \$12,000 a year to feed us?

Another word of thanks to all those who gave generously to the Nature Center in memory of Edna Shields, a beloved member of our staff from 1973 to 1987. They are listed in the November electronic newsletter available at our website.

Thanks also to the volunteers and donors that made Howling Halloween a success and to Lyle Schreiner who donated books to the Nature Center library.

Have you seen the lovely new stone path that leads from the Prairie Building to the elk bridge? You can have your name inscribed on one of the stones as just one of the ways to donate to the Nature Center.

NATURE CENTER PRESCHOOL

The preschool classes studied elk and deer and then made pine cone 'reindeer' complete with twig antlers.

The pre-K classes again decorated a cedar tree with dried grasses and flowers from the prairie and milkweed fluff 'snow'. The children followed up by observing cedar leaves and tree cookies up close with a Magnifying lens as part of M week when they studied Many Mammals including Mice.

A new program this year was a Kids Winter Fun Day giving parents a welcome bit of 'free' time. The snow outside made for a great end to the day. Over thirty children attended.



The mission of the Pioneers Park Nature Center is to interpret the natural history of Nebraska and the central great plains; to promote the enjoyment, appreciation and awareness of our natural environment; to practice and foster a conservation ethic; and to provide a sanctuary for wildlife and a peaceful retreat for people.



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Pioneers Park Nature Center
Lincoln Parks & Recreation
2740 "A" Street
Lincoln, NE 68502