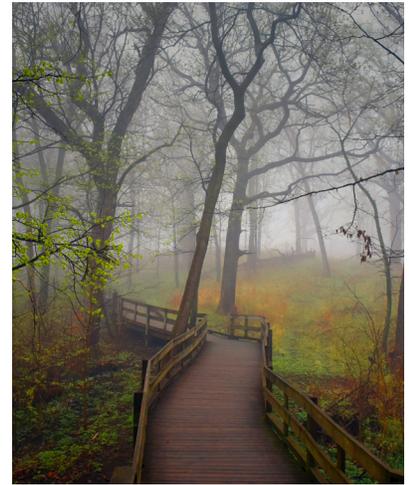




Leaflet

The Newsletter of Fontenelle Forest | fontenelleforest.org

Spring 2019:
The HEALTH issue



Downtown
Omaha

Fontenelle
Forest



Downtown
Omaha

Fontenelle
Forest

Fontenelle Forest has been impacted greatly by the "bomb cyclone" and flooding of the Missouri River. Learn more about the changes in programming and the future of the Wetlands inside.



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Fontenelle Forest

1111 Bellevue Blvd North
Bellevue, NE 68005
(402) 731-3140
fontenelleforest.org

Keeping the land and people healthy after a major flood

Fontenelle Forest has been a community treasure since before it received its name more than 100 years ago. More than just protecting the land, Fontenelle Forest actively engages our community to restore the Forest to full health. We provide 27 miles of hiking trails and over 2000 acres of forest, savanna, prairie, and wetlands at the doorsteps of our city for everyone in our community to experience and enjoy.

Fontenelle Forest is an educational resource for more than 40,000 students each year; we rescue roughly 600 birds of prey annually throughout the state and in Western Iowa.

Our impact continues to grow wider, and while recent flooding affects all areas and departments of Fontenelle Forest, we are ready to continue our great work for the community while recovering from one of the state's worst floods in 50 years.

The Hitchcock Wetlands Learning Center has experienced significant structural damage and long-standing programs like H2Omaha and Canoe Camp have been canceled indefinitely. Contaminated water has polluted the facility's main water supply. Educational, recreational, and historic materials and supplies that are essential to Fontenelle Forest's operations have been destroyed. Numerous popular hiking trails have been closed until our staff can clear debris, repair areas that have experienced mud slicks, and remove trees that present a hazard to the safety of our visitors.

With floods wreaking havoc across the state, closing roads and sweeping away the food supply for birds of prey, Fontenelle Forest's Raptor Recovery is expecting a serious increase in the need to rescue raptors as well as more difficulty relaying those raptors to our care facility in Elmwood, Nebraska.

Until the waters recede, we won't be able to determine the full extent of the damage that has been caused. What we do know is that the cost to repair facilities damaged by the floods of 2011 was in excess of \$30,000. We are bracing for the worst at this point and anticipate even more damage than we experienced in 2011.

Even so, we are grateful to be a part of a community that truly cares. Omaha Gives! is a 24-hour giving event each year that our community comes together to support the



From right: Merica Whitehall gives the 'thumbs up' after spending a hard day in the Wetlands Learning Center with Dennis Merkel, Michelle Foss, Dawn Jensen, and Dan Borgaila. The building has since been classified "uninhabitable" by the city.

important needs of non-profits in the Omaha Metro Area. Fontenelle Forest's goal is to raise \$25,000 during Omaha Gives!

For many in our community, Fontenelle Forest is the only place that they can really experience the quiet wild of nature. With your support we can:

- Implement Trail Repairs across our 2,000 acres at Fontenelle Forest and Neale Woods;
- Repair the Hitchcock Wetlands Learning Center and the Wetlands Gifford Memorial Boardwalk and so that programs can take place again; and,
- Conduct emergency land management for unsafe and downed trees that threaten hiker safety on the trails.

Will you help us guarantee that everyone in our community can experience the quiet wild of nature? Please make a donation to Fontenelle Forest for Omaha Gives! May 22.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Merica Whitehall', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Merica Whitehall
Executive Director,
Fontenelle Forest



Visit OmahaGives.org/fontenelle to support us before or during the 24-hour charitable challenge May 22.

Upcoming Highlights

Spring into the Forest for exciting events

As winter washes away, there are big things coming to the Forest, as well as old favorites. Come alive with the Forest this Spring!



MOTHER'S DAY AT THE FOREST - MAY 12

Enjoy Mother's Day with us at Fontenelle Forest, with High Tea and Talons, volunteering on the trails, Yoga on the Plaza, or a Forest Therapy Walk with mom!

At High Tea, you will enjoy tea and pastries while our staff bring in raptors and talk about their specific species. Fancy dress is encouraged. This year we are featuring a "Best Hat" contest, so wear your greatest high tea hat! Cost: \$5 + daily admission.

A Forest Therapy Walk is a relaxing, guided meditative practice that you can learn more about on page 10. Space is limited. Registration required. \$5 + daily admission.



BIO BLITZ & THE CITY NATURE CHALLENGE

This April 27 150+ cities will be competing against each other to document the most diverse urban wildlife ecosystems. Join us at Fontenelle Forest as we combine our annual Bio Blitz with this international City Nature Challenge.

Thousands of people from across the globe will get outside to look for nature in their cities! Results will be announced on May 6th. Visit fontenelleforest.org for more information as the date approaches! Free for members or with daily admission.



WORLDS APART: EMPATHETIC ELEMENT OF NATURE BY BARBER

Join us Saturday, May 4 at 6 p.m. to meet the newest exhibiting artist in the Baright Gallery series. "World Apart" are works that speak to my experiences in North Omaha and that juxtaposition to Nature, like at Neale Woods. There is no better place to juxtapose these particular experiences than Fontenelle Forest," Barber said.

Barber will use Neale Woods for inspiration and as a studio through August and will hold open studio hours for the public to meet him and learn more. This exhibit opening is free for members or with daily admission.



MAY 18 - SEPTEMBER 2

FREE FOREST ENTRY FOR ACTIVE MILITARY FAMILIES

Fontenelle Forest is a proud Blue Star Museum, thanking the military with FREE entry this summer. Take in everything the Forest has to offer from children's programs, yoga, group hikes, lectures, and more.

Purchase a year-long membership to Fontenelle Forest and receive a military discount!



2019 Member Appreciation Week - June 8-15

Thank you for your membership to Fontenelle Forest! Did you know with your annual membership fees you are supporting the following:

- **Protect 2,000+ acres** of forest, savannas, wetlands, prairies and waterways
- **Maintain miles of walking trails**, wheelchair accessible boardwalks, and hands-on exhibits, and our Raptor Woodland Refuge
- **Rescue and rehabilitate more than 600 birds** of prey throughout the state of Nebraska and Western Iowa
- **Annually serve more than 40,000 school children** with curriculum-based natural science education
- **Offer public education** programs for all ages throughout the year

That is why we have a special week every year just to celebrate your favorite things at Fontenelle Forest. Here are some of the offerings this year:

June 8: Night Hike

June 9: Sunday Morning Yoga

June 11: Free WILD Summer Days

June 12: Evening Yoga on the Plaza

June 14: Lunch and Learn with Spiders

June 15: Native Plant Sale



Check fontenelleforest.org or on Facebook for more Member Appreciation Week events and times.



Raptor Recovery

Nebraska's raptor health

If we receive nestlings into our recovery program, like these Great Horned Owlets, they may be fostered by Owlberta, an adult Great Horned Owl, at our Fontenelle Forest Raptor Recovery program.



What health risks will Nebraska raptors face in 2019? Though no one knows for sure, a reliable indicator will be those risks that have occurred in the past will most likely occur again.

The biggest risk factor for not only raptors but all wildlife is weather. Tornadoes, severe thunderstorms, high winds, floods, and extreme droughts can cause widespread morbidity and mortality both directly and indirectly; after the event itself, indirect consequences such as loss of prey (think insects, small rodents, loss of vegetative base), can contribute to extinguishing

vulnerable populations of wildlife. Prolonged brutal cold, such as we experienced this winter, along with weeks of deep snow cover, makes hunting extremely difficult for raptors. Starving raptors the face the final insult of exposure and death.

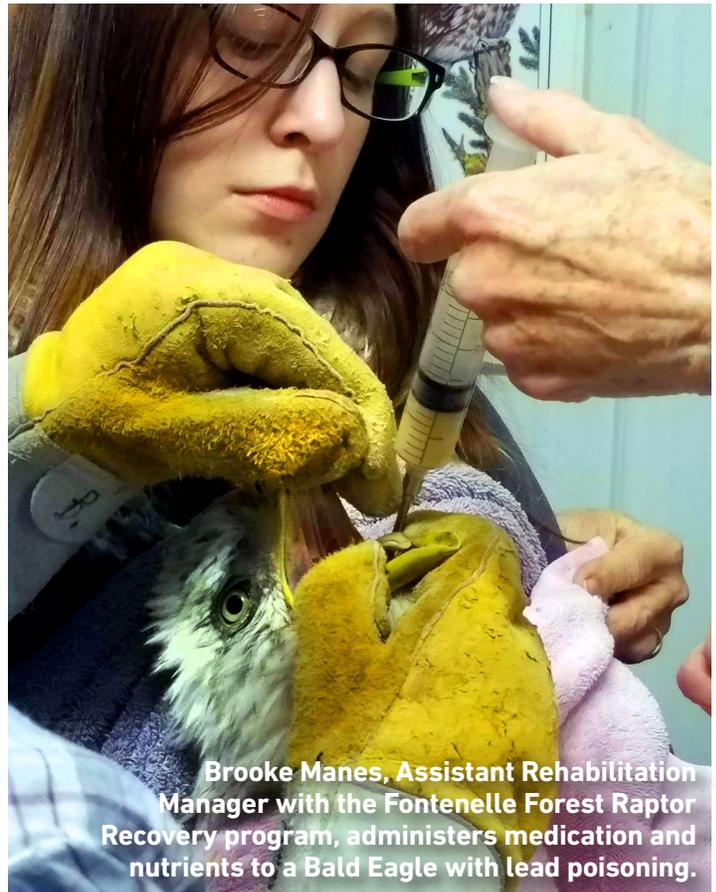
Habitat loss is always a risk in every season: trees are cut down; prairies and wetlands plowed; housing developments displace raptors everywhere across the country. When this habitat loss occurs in the nesting season, the next generations are lost. Many raptors do not re-nest that season.

Habitat loss is the main struggle affecting Nebraska's raptors after the March flood. While our Raptor Recovery program has not been inundated with cases of injury or abandonment because of the Flood, yet.

"This is nesting season, and I worry about the cavity nesters," said Denise Lewis, Director of Raptor Recovery at Fontenelle Forest. "If you nest in fallen trees or on the ground, like many of our native owl species, their nests may be gone, and they may not nest at all this year. We will just have to wait and see."

Probably the most serious disease facing raptors in Nebraska is the West Nile Virus. WNV swept across the entire country in 2002, devastating bird populations. The main vector for transmitting WNV is the mosquito; however we have another, perhaps more sinister, culprit for spreading the disease- a hippoboscid fly that sucks blood from growing feathers. These "flat flies" look just like that - a flattened version of the housefly, and can live in cracks of buildings for months, awaiting the arrival of a feathered host! It's hard to see which insects cause more revulsion to raptor rehabilitators- flat flies or maggots! And though you may not think of wounds as a health risk, they can lead to serious infections and septicemia. In warm weather, open wounds attract flies and heavy infestations of maggots with deadly consequences if not treated.

Lastly, lead poisoning is a serious threat in the entire food chain, but especially with eagles. Bald and Golden Eagles are the largest and most visible of our



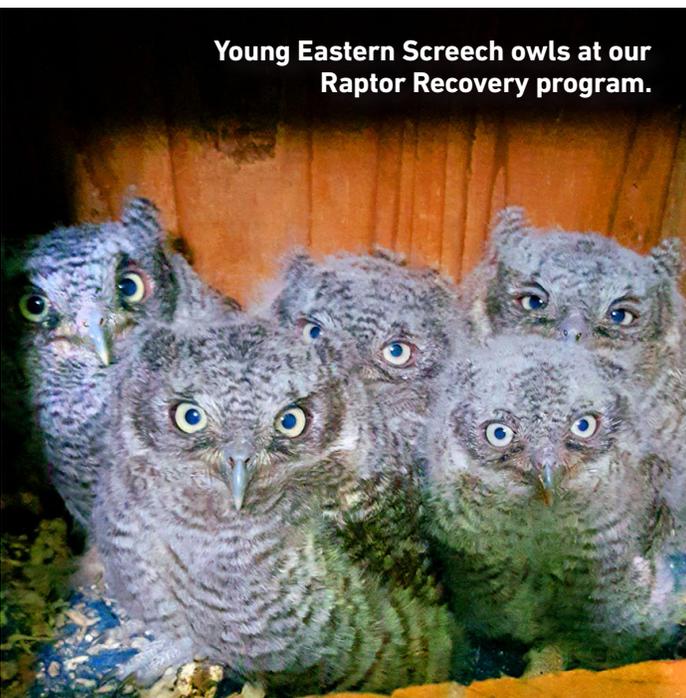
Brooke Manes, Assistant Rehabilitation Manager with the Fontenelle Forest Raptor Recovery program, administers medication and nutrients to a Bald Eagle with lead poisoning.

avian patients. Watching an eagle suffering from lead poisoning is heartbreaking. Ingestion of lead can cause convulsions, paralysis of legs, head tremors, paralysis of the gut, and an agonizing death.

If found in time, lead poisoning may be treatable. Birds are given injections of a chelating agent that binds to the lead excretes it through the kidneys. It is incredibly time sensitive, and when we rescue them we have a long road ahead of two injections per day into their muscle, rest for two days, and then begin the entire protocol again for weeks until the lead levels have decreased or the bird succumbs to the poisoning and dies.

We monitor their lead levels with an in-house monitor (try taking blood from a suffering, angry, wild Bald Eagle!) The medicines are incredibly expensive, the work administering it to each lead-affected bird is complex and takes multiple people's strength to give one bird one shot. But, the time, expense, and energy are all worth it when a recovered Eagle goes free.

- Betsy Finch, Manager of Raptor Rehabilitation



Young Eastern Screech owls at our Raptor Recovery program.

Land Stewardship

Wetlands Learning Center March 14

State of Emergency Hits Home

Updates on Fontenelle Forest and Neale Woods after a Bomb Cyclone tore through the Missouri River Basin in March

The “bomb cyclone” that swept through Nebraska in mid-March started with heavy rainfall and rapid snow melt on top of frozen ground. It caused catastrophic flooding across the Missouri River Basin, and three-fourths of Nebraska’s 93 counties declared an emergency, including Sarpy County. Nebraska’s governor estimated that more than 2,000 homes and 340 businesses were damaged or destroyed by the flood, at a cost of \$85 million. Fontenelle Forest and Neale Woods were not spared, and majority of the Forest’s trails were damaged.

The Land Stewardship team estimated that it may be summer before cleanup can begin, and estimations of damage got underway at the end of March when flooding receded. The Gifford Wetlands Memorial Boardwalk as come apart in places.

The trails may not look the way they did before, as the

Stream Trail tree bridge has pushed into the Marsh, and land itself may grow to look completely different. Only time will tell.

Staff went to the Wetlands Learning Center after the water receded March 31, only to note that the current of the water in the building had knocked things over that staff had secured on higher shelves weeks before.

The flood waters potentially brought in new invasive plants and animals, chemical contamination, and the water benefits the current invasive plants, as well as the native plants. If there is a high level of contamination, experts are concerned with it moving up in the food chain to larger animals.

All education programs that took place in the Wetlands from canoeing to summer camps have been moved to other areas of the Forest and the Education team has



A picnic table floated over from the Gifford Wetlands Memorial Boardwalk during the flood to our



Members of the Forest's Leadership Team conducted a survey of the Wetlands March 31. Due to contamination risk, everyone had to wear full protection.



Four staff members waded through flood waters March 14 to secure picnic tables and benches and move items in the building to higher levels



re-organized camps. See more about that on page 11.

Some of the good news:

- All canoes and kayaks are more or less still there!
- Most kiosks/trail signs near the railroad tracks are still standing
- Ecologically, flood waters are neutral to the land, and generally benefit the Wetlands flora, if not contaminated

Neale Woods was affected in the following ways:

- The Missouri River Ecology Trail is still under water
- Mud slides closed the road to Neale Woods earlier in March, but the road is open for now

With trails still under water and more flooding risks this spring, the Land Stewardship team is making plans for cleanup and recovery this summer.

Michelle Foss, *Manager of Stewardship and Research*



from Gifford Farm Gifford Wetlands which is in pieces.



Visit OmahaGives.org/fontenelle to support us before or during the 24-hour charitable challenge May 22.

Education

Say 'Ommm.' Getting healthy in the Forest



Julie Mckeone, ANFT Certified Forest Therapy Guide and Forest Yoga teacher leads groups in Shinrin Yoku or "Forest Bathing"

Nature writers such as Richard Louv and Henry Thoreau have long held the idea that time spent in nature offers physical and psychological benefits. You may also have noticed that after time spent in the forest you feel more relaxed and more mindful of the present moment--that your worries and cares seem to have melted away. Current research into the physiological and psychological benefits of forest bathing and time spent in nature, have begun to unveil the "why" behind these intuitions.

Dr. Qing Li, of Japan, has declared "forest medicine" or shinrin-yoku--known in the U.S. as forest bathing or forest therapy--a new medical science. Dr. Qing Li's studies have shown that the practice of forest bathing can decrease the body's stress response and bring the body into a more relaxed and easeful state. In addition, time spent in the forest has been shown to decrease cortisol levels, lower heart rate and blood pressure, decrease levels of inflammation, and boost the immune system. For many people, a regular practice of forest bathing can be one way that we help ourselves lead a life that is happier, healthier and more connected to the world around us.

During a forest bathing walk, participants connect with nature through the senses with simple invitations, such as noticing what is in motion or noticing the sounds or smells of the forest. This brings about a more mindful way of being and allows the body and mind to access the practice's numerous health benefits. According to



Julia Plevin, author of *The Healing Magic of Forest Bathing*, "It's about awakening all our senses, tapping into your wildness, and luxuriating among the trees." The simplicity of the practice helps the body and mind slow down and engage more fully in the present moment. Quite the opposite way of being that our busy lives can demand.

April 27
May 12
June 1
TIMES AND
LOCATIONS
DIFFER.
PLEASE CALL
OR GO ONLINE
FOR MORE INFO

Forest bathing is a practice that people of all levels of physical abilities and ages can participate in. One forest bather shared, "No matter your age or situation, the experience gives you a pause in your life. The forest gives you whatever you need." Even though you are with a group, everyone's experience and insights can be different. The Association of Nature & Forest Therapy



CAMPS HAVE CHANGED!

Have you seen these NEW and updated camp listings?

OFF THE GRID | AGES 9-12
JUNE 3-7 OR JUNE 24-28 OR JULY 15-19

This camp offers all of the classic summer activities we love and so much more! We will spend the week off the grid, learning how to navigate the forest without technology and what gear to bring on longer backpacking styled hikes. Campers will also practice outdoor cooking and immerse themselves in nature through games like Capture the Flag and Eagle Eye.

*Originally scheduled as Canoe Camp

FANTASTIC BEASTS
AGES 6-8 | JULY 22-26
AGES 9-12 | JULY 22-26

It is time to discover what creatures lie deep in the Forest and what lies deep within you. Will you be sorted as an adventurous Thunderbird, a healing Puckwudgie, a Wampus cat warrior, or a Horned serpent scholar? What secrets will you discover and write about as we work together to create a Field Guide to the Fantastic Beasts of Fontenelle Forest? This magical adventure will be filled with hiking to catch a glimpse of a blue-tongued skink, staking out the oak savannas in search of serpents, and roaming the wetlands for signs of the elusive Bigfoot.

WILD ONES: NATURE AWARENESS FOR ALL
AGES 9-12 | JUNE 10-14

What is nature awareness? A process of sharpening our senses to perceive more about what is going on around us. Are you looking to build strong friendships while exploring the outdoors this summer? This will be a week of team building, hiking, playing games, and practicing skills all designed to increase your wilderness awareness and develop your friendship with the forest. Be prepared to discover your connection to nature and delve into all the fun that the Forest has to offer!

NEW! AFTER CARE 3-5:30 P.M. MON - THURS

\$50 per child per week Fontenelle Forest is excited to offer after camp care! Campers can play games, draw, read and participate in other activities supervised by summer camp staff.

For complete camp guide and to register, visit fontenelleforest.org/camps

Guides & Programs embraces the belief that the forest is the therapist, offering what each walker needs in that moment, and the forest therapy guide opens the door.

Forest bathing is not a hike or a form of physical exercise. Most of the walk is done at a slower pace; other times you may find yourself in periods of stillness. The slower pace offers you a chance to more fully connect with the natural world. As another forest bather stated, "You see so much more and feel so much more and notice so much more that you usually do. I feel more relaxed now, and happier." Most walks last from 2-3 hours, giving you a chance to fully immerse in the healing benefits of practice.

Forest bathing not only re-establishes our connection to the natural world, but also to each other. Built into the forest bathing walk is circle time where participants are invited to share what they are noticing. Tea and a light snack are served at the end and everyone is invited to share final thoughts or experiences from the walk. Forest bathers have enjoyed not only sharing their experiences, but also holding space and deeply listening to others.

If you would like to join us on a forest bathing walk, check Fontenelle Forest's website for scheduled times and forest locations (locations may vary). Walks are offered throughout the spring, summer, and fall (weather permitting).

"Try it. Just try it, and then you'll understand why," said a 2018 forest bathing participant.

Walks are guided by Julie Mckeone, ANFT Certified Forest Therapy Guide. (natureandforesttherapy.org).

Forest News

Check out the progress we made in 2018 and more great news from the Winter

A brief snapshot of Fontenelle Forest's 2018 Annual Report

5,376

Memberships sold

32,000

People attended educational programs

437

Acres burned

3,512

People participated in the public library partnership

17,000

Students visited the Forest

65

Acres treated for Invasive Species

1,743

Donations made to the Forest

5,500

Seniors had Forest education brought to them

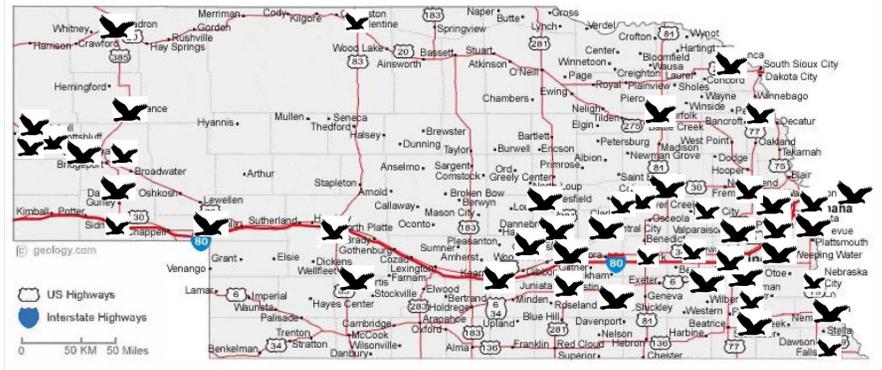
43

Acres of selective thinning

VOLUNTEER RAPTOR TRANSPORTER PROGRAM

Transport Volunteers live in 50 cities in Nebraska and Western Iowa:

Alliance	Crab Orchard	Kearney	Plattsmouth
Ashland	Curtis	Lincoln	Papillion
Auburn	Dalton	Malcolm	Ponca
Aurora	Dannenberg	Minature	Raymond
Bayard	Denton	Missouri	Rosalie
Bellevue	Elkhorn	Valley IA	Salem
Bennett	Elmwood	Mitchell	Scottsbluff
Brule	Farwell	Nebraska City	Sidney
Central City	Firth	Norfolk	Seward
Chadron	Fremont	North Platte	Silver Creek
Columbus	Gering	Omaha	Tecumseh
Council Bluffs	Grand Island	Pacific	Silver Creek
Clay Center	Hastings	Junction IA	Valentine
			York



597 birds of prey rescued in Nebraska in 2018 by **130** volunteer transporters. More than **20,000** people experienced public raptor programs and more than **1,000** saw a release.

2018 Non-Profit of the Year Award

from the Sarpy County Chamber of Commerce

2018 Nebraska Passport Destination

Fontenelle Forest was chosen as the only stop to represent Bellevue, Nebraska by the Nebraska Tourism Commission.

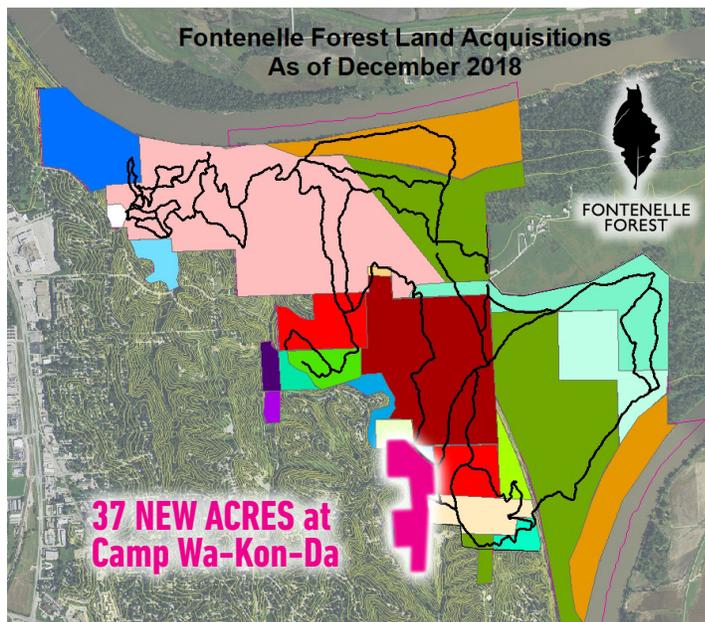
2018 Best of Omaha

Awarded one of three top Children's Attractions in the Omaha Metro by Omaha Magazine for 2018 and again for 2019.

A brief snapshot of Fontenelle Forest's 2019 winter season

CAMP WA-KON-DA IS OFFICIALLY PART OF FONTENELLE FOREST!

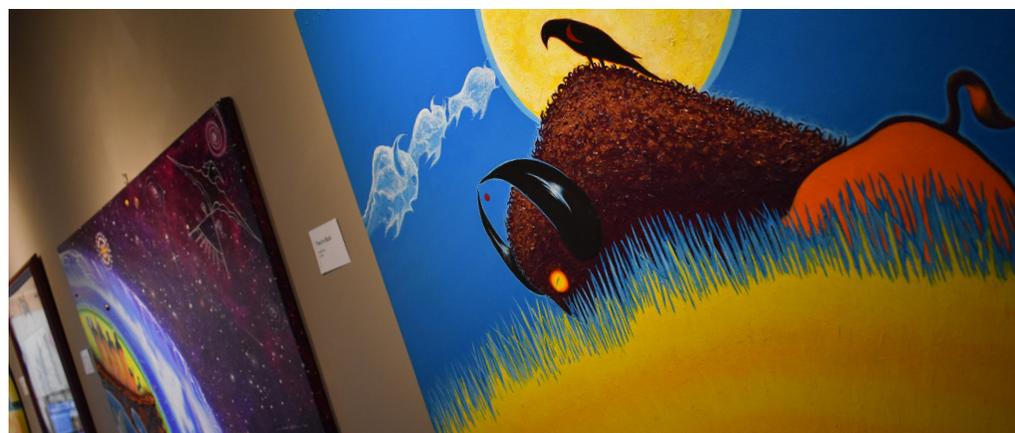
An acquisition more than 70 years in the making, the Mid-America Council of the Boy Scouts signed over ownership of the 37-acre property for the cost of \$1. We are assessing all facilities at Camp Wa-kon-da that Fontenelle Forest will begin utilizing this year, and the Boy Scouts will continue utilizing.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Catherine Kuper served as an educator at Fontenelle Forest for 12 years before becoming a part-time volunteer archivist for the Forest, combing through more than 100 years of information about our collective history as an association, and hundreds of more years before The Fontenelles ever came here.

Last year, Catherine was the driving force behind an archaeological exhibition and lecture series focusing on the people who lived in this forest roughly 1,000 years ago. In her personal life, she remains an environmental advocate, securing an easement of 22 acres along the Platte River forever protects the land and its native flora and fauna.



STRENGTHENING THE CIRCLE The Baright Gallery was bright with color with the first exhibit of 2019 "Strengthening the Circle: Revitalizing Ancestral Teachings" featured art of a variety of mediums - hand-made dolls, carved marble eagles, painted shields, pencil drawings, and more. We were honored to feature the works of Donel Keeler, Steve Tamayo, and Paul High Horse.



WINTER TRAILS This winter Fontenelle Forest saw a huge up-tick in snowshoe rentals. With great snowfall this year, Guest Services instituted a reservation system to keep up with demand. This is the first year in many years to have perfect snowshoeing snow on the ground for several weeks in a row. So, while many people were hibernating at home, there was still plenty of activity on the trails.

Regular Programming



Mud Pies & WILD Summer Days

Looking for a unique setting in which to have fun with your child while learning about the natural world? Mud Pies is a drop-in-and-play program that encourages interaction between adult and child. Each week, a natural science topic is explored through station-based activities and free play. Come discover the joy of sharing nature with your child!



Land Stewardship Volunteer Days

The volunteer Land Stewardship crew meets on selected Saturdays mornings to work on various projects from 8:30 a.m. to around noon.

Interested in joining our land volunteer crew? Contact Michelle Foss at mfoss@fontenelleforest.org or give us a call at 402-731-3140.



Homeschool Science

Fontenelle Forest's Homeschool Science program introduces students to a different natural science topic each session. The content focuses on interaction and inquiry. This program is the perfect way for children to connect with nature at an early age. Registration is required. Space is limited so register early. Call 402-731-3140 or visit fontenelleforest.org to register.



Seniors Understanding Nature

Many seniors grew up in a time when nature was a big part of everyday life; SUN (Seniors Understanding Nature) programs enhance that experience. Join us to learn about a different topic every month. Refreshments are served for the presentation, and a nature walk follows for all who are interested.



Yoga in the Forest

Join us for an hour-long Vinyasa style yoga class, surrounded by nature, designed to de-stress and relax you. This class is for all levels, from beginner to experienced, and will feature the sounds of the forest as your soundtrack as you move towards complete wellness. A meditative walk and tea will follow the class for those who can stay.

Mud Pies

Mon - Thurs
9:30 - 11:30 A.M.
Ages 5 & younger

WILD Summer Days

Mon - Wed
Beginning June 1
9:30 - 11:30 A.M.
Ages 11 & younger

Monthly 8:30 a.m. -12 p.m.

April 20
May 18
June 1- National Trails Day

Monthly

See website for dates, times, and themes

2nd Tuesday of Each Month

9:45 - 11:30 A.M.

Sunday Mornings

9:00 - 10:30 A.M.
& **Wednesday Evenings 6-7 P.M.**

Calendar Highlights

**3rd Tuesday
of each month**
7 PM
AT THE
NATURE
CENTER

Bird Club

May 2 – “A trip to the Arctic Circle”
June 6 – picnic at Camp Brewster
Prospective members may attend any meeting as our guest. Annual dues for Fontenelle Forest Photography Club are \$12 per person and \$20 for a family.

**3rd Thursday
of each month**
7 PM
AT THE
NATURE
CENTER

Photo Club

Monthly programs and activities include presentations, hands-on workshops, annual competitions, and periodic field trips. Prospective members may attend any meeting as our guest. Annual dues for Fontenelle Forest Photography Club are \$12 per person and \$20 for a family.

April 26
7 PM
AT THE
NATURE
CENTER

Audubon Birding Lecture

In 2015, bird nerd Noah Strycker of Oregon became the first human to see more than half of the planet’s bird species in a single, year-long, round-the-world birding trip. This humorous and inspiring presentation will leave you appreciating the birds and birders of the world. Free to the public.

April 27
ALL DAY AT
THE NATURE
CENTER

City Nature Challenge

We will attempt to find out what animals are stirring on cold winter nights, contradicting the poem! We will try to identify any animals we observe and what they are doing. If we are lucky, we might get the chance to see winter survival in action! Dress for the weather. Ages 15+, please.

May 4
6 PM
AT THE
NATURE
CENTER

Exhibition Opening and artist talk

Hear about Barber’s work from performance art to collage and everything in between. Enjoy refreshments, music, and be the first to see the new exhibition ***Worlds Apart: empathetic element of nature***. Here you can learn more about his open studio hours at Neale Woods.

**April 27
May 12
June 1**
TIMES AND
LOCATIONS
DIFFER.
PLEASE CALL
OR GO ONLINE
FOR MORE INFO

Forest Bathing Walk

We will be taking a slow walk in the woods (only half a mile overall) and taking in our surroundings through our senses. This practice has been shown to reduce stress and improve mood. This hike is for members 18 and older. We will be hiking off the boardwalk, so appropriate shoes should be worn.

**May 11
June 8**
7 P.M.
AT THE
NATURE
CENTER

Night Hike

We will try to identify any animals we observe and what they are doing along this 3-5 mile hike. Participants **MUST** bring water, a flashlight, and insect repellent, dress appropriately for the weather conditions and wear proper footwear. There are no bathrooms available. Ages 15 and up.

May 12
1-3 P.M.
AT THE
NATURE
CENTER

Mother’s Day High Tea & Talons

Enjoy tea and pastries while you see and learn all about raptors. Our staff will bring in raptors and talk about their specific species while you enjoy your high tea. Fancy dress is encouraged. This year we are featuring a “Best Hat” contest, so wear your greatest high tea hat! Cost: \$5 + daily admission.

May 18
ALL DAY

National Armed Services Day - Beginning of Blue Star Museums

Fontenelle Forest is a proud Blue Star Museum, thanking the military with **FREE** entry this summer. Take in everything the Forest has to offer from children’s programs, yoga, group hikes, lectures, and more. Purchase a year-long membership to Fontenelle Forest and receive a military discount!

May 22
ALL DAY
ONLINE

Omaha Gives!

Will you help us guarantee that everyone in our community can experience nature? Please make a donation to Fontenelle Forest for Omaha Gives! at omahagives.org/fontenelle



Calendar Highlights

* Due to contaminated flooding in the Wetlands, all canoeing has been canceled until further notice

June 1
ALL DAY

National Trails Day

June 1 is National Trails Day! Get out and enjoy some earth beneath your feet. You can register for a Forest Therapy Walk on this day, drop in to volunteer on trail restoration or take a self-guided hike down one of your favorite trails. Please check the website or with Guest Services to see if/what trails are still closed due to flooding.

June 8
1-2:30 P.M.
AT THE
NATURE
CENTER

Edible Plants Hike

Curious about foraging for your own food? Whether for survival or just for fun, differentiating between edible and harmful plants is an important skill. Come learn examples of edible plants and how to identify them so that you can forage in your own backyard or neighborhood. Ages 10+

June 15
9 A.M. -12 P.M.
OR WHILE
SUPPLIES LAST

AT THE NATURE
CENTER

Native Plant Sale

Nebraska Statewide Arboretum and Fontenelle Forest have teamed up to hold a native plant sale to promote the use of native plants in landscaping and horticulture uses. Using native plants minimizes the spread of invasive species into the Forest where removal and control are costly and time-consuming. Invasives in our forest disrupt and out-compete native plants and animals and reduce sustainability.

This event also includes opportunities to ask experts about using native plants in landscaping and how you can help Fontenelle Forest and Nebraska restore native ecosystems, like our oak savannas and woodlands.

June 14
12-1 P.M.
AT THE
NATURE
CENTER

NEW

MEMBERS ONLY Lunch & Learn with Nebraska's Creepiest Creatures: Spiders

"When you learn, you understand. When you understand, you care."
Denise Lewis, Director of Raptor Recovery at Fontenelle Forest

There is no greater way to spend your lunch hour! Rather than eating at your desk, come enjoy your brown-bagged lunch at Fontenelle Forest for a This drop-in lunch and learn program focuses on a local animal topic to bring new understanding to those creatures people often stigmatize. One of our animal care technicians will give a brief lecture about a species, answer questions, and bring out a live animal to observe.

This year's theme is "Lunch with Nebraska's Creepiest", so whether you want to face your fears or simply learn more about a well-love animal, this lecture series should leave you with new knowledge of species you have seen before.

All lectures will be in the Forest Room at the Nature Center at 12 p.m. Choose a seat, pick up a beverage, and unpack your lunch. We'll bring the education, conversation, and new people to meet with an interest in Nebraska's local fauna.

*This drop-in program is \$5 with your membership. Pack your own lunch; beverages will be provided

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