



Woodcock at Wolf Rd. Prairie by Mary Cray

# The Prairie Society

Ideas, Notes, and Happenings at Wolf Road Prairie

## COMING EVENTS

### Everything Deer

Join us at 7 pm on Wednesday, March 26 for a presentation by Cook County Forest Preserve naturalist Yvonne Woulfe who will discuss the deer's life cycle, eating habits, strategies for survival, and their effect's on the County's preserves. Time for questions and refreshments will follow.

LaGrange Park Library  
555 N LaGrange Road



### Woodcock Viewing

We are celebrating spring by welcoming the return of the woodcocks. Our perennial male woodcocks perform their courtship ritual in March and April. So join us on the deck of the Prairie House, as our veteran spotters help us locate the males on the ground and in flight. Wolf Road Prairie is one of the few preserves that have displaying woodcocks. Because of their presence, we attract visitors from far and wide every spring. So join in the fun. What better way to welcome the season.

7 pm

Saturday, March 29; Friday, April 4;  
Saturday, April 5



### EARTH HOUR Your Light Switch Ballot

Some people dream big - such are the organizers of Earth Hour. It is their goal to send a unifying message to the whole world with the help of thoughtful citizens from around the world. Please join in by mindfully reducing your carbon footprint while simultaneously lessening the light pollution that obscures millions of stars from our viewing. Dream Big!

To participate, all you have to do is turn off your lights between **8:30 and 9:30 pm** on Saturday, March 29. Go one step further and encourage friends and neighbors to switch-off too. Visit [earthhour.org](http://earthhour.org) to learn more.

## THE EYES OF A DEER

If you are a frequent visitor to Wolf Road Prairie, you may have encountered deer at close range, allowing you to stare right into the deer's large unblinking eyes as they stare right back at you.

Scientific studies on the eye's of deer have revealed a few major differences between human eyes and the eyes of deer. According to an article in the *New-York-Times* by John Tierney, researchers have discovered:

- >That while we have three color receptors, deer have only two. Their ability to see color is similar to that of someone who is colorblind - unable to see red and green.
- >Their vision is 20/40, not as clear as our own.
- >Their eyes are more receptive to light at the blue end of the light spectrum than our eyes.
- >Because their eyes are oriented more to the side, they have a field of vision that covers 270 degrees.

So why do deer freeze when caught in the glare of headlights? Being corpuscular, they are most active at dawn and dusk. To better function in the fading light, their eyes become fully dilated during this time. Anyone who has had his eyes dilated as part of an eye exam, knows that it is almost impossible to then look towards light. So deer, caught in the headlights of a car with eyes fully dilated have been temporally blinded, and respond by not moving.



## September Prairie Fest

Mark your calendars for Saturday, September 27. Save The Prairie Society is gearing up for another fest. It is our opportunity to attract the public to the Prairie when it is alive with the yellows and golds of its autumn flowers.

We are announcing the date early to accommodate those crafters and artists who participate in the craft show circuit, and need to plan ahead in order to book as many shows as possible. Please share this date with any friends and family members who might want to participate in the Fest. For more information, call 708-354-5512.

Factoid: Opossums which tend to be nocturnal have had a particularly rough time this winter. Look for signs of frostbite on their tails and ears.

## BUCKTHORN BE GONE

In February and March, Nazareth High School volunteers, and scouts under the leadership of Eagle Scout candidate Jordan Chinchillia worked with STPS volunteers and FPDCC naturalists to eliminate the prairie's invasive buckthorn, giving native plants a chance to thrive.



On a day made for hibernation, the scouts tackled a wall of buckthorn and created an enlarged vista, making visible a large expanse of prairie.



After cutting the buckthorn, volunteer students collected branches and twigs to be burned in brush piles.



It took a lot of muscle to bring down some over-grown buckthorns, and the Nazareth Academy volunteers were up to the task.

Photos by Lawrence Godson