

The Nature Institute Hosts Two Owl Prowl Events

by Ramona Pollard
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GODFREY - The Nature Institute will host two Owl Prowl events to give the public a chance to learn more about owls and hear them in the preserve. Great-horned owls and barred owls are the two common owls in Illinois. During the winter these owls build nests, find mates, and defend their territory. Since owls are active and vocal when defending their territories, it gives us a chance to consistently hear them in the wild.

Treehouse Wildlife Center will bring several owl species to The Nature Institute on two occasions this winter. The Valentine's Day Owl Prowl on February 14th is designed for adults. This program will be a unique event with learning, appetizers, and wine for

groups of friends and couples to enjoy together. The Treehouse program will start indoors with the live owls and snacks, then we will head outside to call and listen for wild owls.

On February 16th, Treehouse will return for a family oriented program. Families will learn about owls, and meet the owl ambassadors then continue outside for an owl prowl hike.

Prior to Owl Prowl, The Nature Institute will host a Winter Tree ID program to help nature enthusiasts learn about native trees and gain an understanding of how to identify them using bark, buds, and branching. This program is ideal for adults and older students on January 20 at 1pm. Registration is limited.

For pricing and registration for these events and to find other programs at TNI, contact The Nature Institute at info@thenatureinstitute.org or (618) 466-9930. All program registrations are available at www.TheNatureInstitute.org.

As we enter 2024, The Nature Institute continues to offer Birthday Parties. A birthday party at The Nature Institute includes a one hour nature program followed by a time to open presents, eat snacks, and play on the playground. Families can even choose to have a campfire and smores as an add-on to the party. All birthday party bookings in January 2024, will receive \$50 off the price of a birthday party.

In other news, High school seniors looking for scholarships should check out The Nature Institute's scholarship program. TNI will give away up to two \$2500 scholarships to graduating seniors from our community paid directly to their accredited college, trade program, or university of choice. Application information can be found at thenatureinstitute.org/collegescholarship. Only applications fully completed by April 3, 2024 will be considered.

Finally, The Nature Institute will be hiring a few part-time seasonal positions to start this spring. TNI will hire a seasonal environmental educator with a desired start date in mid-March and a seasonal stewardship technician with a desired start date in early-April. Both job postings will be available on the website.

Remember TNI trails are closed for public use to allow the nature preserve to rest from foot traffic. With no visitors on the trails, TNI staff can heighten restoration efforts, such as prescribed burning, and cutting dangerous trees. Trails will open back up for public use on April 1, 2024. Learn more at TheNatureInstitute.org.