

Autumn Open House to Highlight Local Nonprofit

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Calling all nature lovers! The Nature Institute (TNI) is opening its doors for their 2nd annual “Autumn Open House” on Saturday, November 16th, starting at 5 p.m. The public is invited to rediscover the history of TNI with the Board of Directors, staff, volunteers and members, with special appearances by the Alton based band Typsy Gypsy and the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, a nationally acclaimed program for protecting nature’s treasures.

The “Autumn Open House”, which is free and open to the public, will take place at TNI’s Talahi Lodge, located at 2213 South Levis Lane in Godfrey, Ill. The event will begin with a performance by Typsy Gypsy at 5 p.m. Dinner will be served shortly after, with Debbie Newman of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC) holding an informational presentation around 6:15 p.m.

Another performance by Typsy Gypsy will conclude the scheduled agenda of the evening. Along with these events, there will be a bonfire, various guided hikes in the preserves and TNI representatives to answer any public questions throughout the event.

Typsy Gypsy will entertain guests of the night with two sets. Forming in 2010, Typsy Gypsy is a six piece all female band based in Alton, Ill. Members include; Cara McGuire, lead vocalist, Valerie Baumann, bass and vocals, Sara McGibany, guitar and volunteer TNI Board Member, Sara Shewmake, guitar and vocals, Britney Molloy, drums and vocals and Jennifer Jarrett, violin and keyboard. Typsy Gypsy plays a wide range of songs, from the Dixie Chicks and Bob Dylan to Rock Mafia and Pink.

Newman, INPC representative for the metro-east counties, will be in attendance to give an informational presentation about the mission of the INPC and their partnership with TNI.

The mission of the INPC, according to the organization’s website, is to, “assist private and public landowners in protecting high quality natural areas and habitats of endangered and threatened species in perpetuity, through voluntary dedication or registration of such lands into the Illinois Nature Preserves System. The Commission promotes the preservation of these significant lands and provides leadership in their stewardship, management and protection.”

Newman will highlight a few of the private and public landowners in the Riverbend. She will also focus on the importance of protecting these natural areas, as well as discussing landowner and public benefits of INPC registered nature preserve properties.

According to the INPC, nature preserves like TNI, are, “private and public lands that have rare plants, animals, or other unique natural features.”

Preserves can be as small as one acre and without this protection over 900 endangered and threatened plants and animals would be forever lost.

The “Autumn Open House” will allow the public to learn more about TNI and its nearly 450 acres of protected land, such as the Olin Nature Preserve, the Mississippi Sanctuary,

the Kemp and Cora Hutchinson Bird Sanctuary and the Heartland Prairie at Gordon Moore Park. These natural areas provide unique places for the public to experience the diversity of the Riverbend area with its hardwood forests, prairies and wetlands.

Although the event on Saturday, November 16th is free and open to the public, TNI staff asks the public to call to reserve their spot before November 15th to help with event preparation. Reservations can be made by calling the main office at (618) 466-9930 or by emailing info@TheNatureInstitute.org.

Since its founding in 1980, TNI's Board of Directors and staff have worked to foster an awareness and appreciation of the natural world through preservation, restoration and education. Each summer TNI hosts a premier camp for children pre-kindergarten through 6th grade, this season's end marked 31 successful years of camp, and they welcome more than 8,000 students on field trips throughout the year.

For more information on the "Autumn Open House", or other upcoming TNI events, visit www.TheNatureInstitute.org.