



# The Nature Institute Announces Upcoming Spring Events

by Ramona Pollard  
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GODFREY - The Nature Institute's (TNI) hiking trails, located at 2213 South Levis Lane in Godfrey, Ill, may be closed until April 1, but staff members of Illinois' largest privately owned nature preserve are inviting the public out for some new opportunities as well as old favorites.

A new weekly hike, "Spring Wildflower Hike" led by outreach director Ramona Pollard, allows visitors to explore the preserve and identify the spring ephemeral wildflowers as they arrive this spring. The first scheduled hike will occur on March 21 at 9 a.m. These hikes will continue each Tuesday morning until May 2 giving opportunity to see these short-lived flowers while they are here.

The second installment of Family Discovery Day: Right on Target will return on Saturday, March 18 at 10 a.m. This program is designed for families with children 8 years of age and older. Adults and children attending the program will learn how to shoot a bow and arrow safely and will have some time to practice while they are here. Registration is limited and the program costs \$5 for members and \$7 for non-members.

Two guided hikes coming up in late March and early April include Pokemon Go for a Hike and Nonsense Nature Hike, both which require registration. Pokemon Go for a Hike is scheduled for March 23 at 5:30 p.m. This app based game is perfect for families and groups of friends. Tickets are \$3 for non-members and free for TNI members. The newly developed Nonsense Nature Hike will occur on April 1, NO JOKE! This leisurely hike will be full of dad jokes and is a fun way to explore the preserve.

April 1 is also the day that The Nature Institute's trails open to the public. With the opening of our trails we are inviting people to join the 1st annual Hike-a-Thon. It will serve as a fundraiser for The Nature Institute and encourages everyone to get outside and hike where they are. Prizes will be awarded to hikers that log the most miles and to hikers that raise the most money. You can register for Hike-a-Thon today to be ready for the April 1 start date. Register by March 15 to get the Hike-a-Thon t-shirt.

## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

Not only does TNI have many educational programs scheduled for this spring, we also have some volunteer opportunities coming up. The Nature Institute is partnering with other local organizations to remove as much honeysuckle as possible. The Honeysuckle Sweep will occur on Friday, March 17, and Saturday, March 18. Work will begin at 9 am each morning and volunteers are welcome to work until noon or however long they can stay. Bring water and your garden gloves. The Nature Institute will provide a short training for identifying honeysuckle and tools for its successful removal.

Following the honeysuckle sweep, local children and adults will help The Nature Institute clean up trash along the Great River Road. This opportunity occurs on Saturday, March 25 starting at 9am. The Nature Institute will provide all needed items to safely pick up trash, but you will want to bring a water bottle and maybe a pair of work gloves.

To register and learn more about these upcoming events, visit [www.TheNatureInstitute.org](http://www.TheNatureInstitute.org). People interested may also reach the TNI office at (618) 466-9930 or [info@thenatureinstitute.org](mailto:info@thenatureinstitute.org).