

# Knoch Knolls Nature Center offers winter fun



**SUE  
OMANSON**  
Naperville Park District

Whether or not we have snow on the ground, winter can be a season of discovery for those who venture out on the trails through the woodlands and prairie at Knoch Knolls Park. Providing drinking fountains, restrooms and a place in which to warm up, the new Knoch Knolls Nature Center can serve as a home base for a nature hike, bicycle ride or cross country skiing workout.

Of course, the Nature Center offers much more than shelter from the weather.

Open daily since Oct. 2, 2014, the center has seen more than 7,000 visitors and is adding new programs and opportunities each season to help people of all ages enjoy and learn more about nature. Admission to the Nature Center is free, and in addition to the permanent exhibits, including educational signs and a 900-gallon river aquarium, the Nature Center hosts free Sunday afternoon Discovery Days for families and twice monthly educational tours of the building.

Many other Park District programs take place at the center as well, including Toadstools and Pollywogs preschool, Eco-Explorers nature programs, adult seminars, and Scout programs. The Nature Center also is available for meetings and private rentals.

Knoch Knolls Nature Center winter hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and noon to 4 p.m. Sunday.

January Discovery Days will offer crafts and activities about wild animal tracks and scat. Participants will be able to touch animal pelts, match animals to their footprints, decipher an animal "story" by reading the clues and create their own track story. This



Knoch Knolls Nature Center featured evergreens in its December Discovery Days. January will feature activities about wild animal tracks and scat. | SUBMITTED



Knoch Knolls Nature Center will feature programming all winter long. Hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and noon to 4 p.m. Sunday. | SUBMITTED

free drop-in program will run from 1 to 4 p.m. each Sunday in January and on Martin Luther King Day from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Jan. 19.

In addition to overseeing the day-to-day operations of the Knoch Knolls Nature Center, manager Angelique Harshman arranges special presentations for the community about current issues and events that impact our environment. In November, she brought in Shane McKenzie, a researcher with the Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation, to discuss how to live with coyotes in an urban setting. More than 45 people

attended this informative presentation.

In February, adults will be able to attend a presentation by an Army Corp of Engineer fish biologist.

"He will be talking about the Army Corps' goals and objectives with Asian Carp and other invasive species as well as ecosystem restoration," Harshman said. The date for this presentation has not been set yet but will be posted at [www.napervilleparks.org/knochknolls](http://www.napervilleparks.org/knochknolls) when confirmed.

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Every month the Nature Center hosts Family Nature Nights on a Friday and Saturday evening. Upcoming themes include the science of snow, animal families and a first-day-of-spring night hike.

Kids ages 4 to 12 can even have a birthday party at the Nature Center. Winter

birthday party themes include fishing, dinosaurs or nature art.

School groups and Scout troops also can take advantage of the Knoch Knolls Nature Center in winter.

"For Brownies there's a Let's Go Hiking program and for Cadette Scouts our Life

of a Night Owl program," Harshman said. "Tiger Cub Scouts can take our Birds in Winter program, and for Bear Cub Scouts, we offer Sharing Your World with Wildlife."

For more information or to register for Nature Center programs, visit [www.napervilleparks.org/knochknolls](http://www.napervilleparks.org/knochknolls).