

Trackings

Volunteer Newsletter of Eastman Nature Center



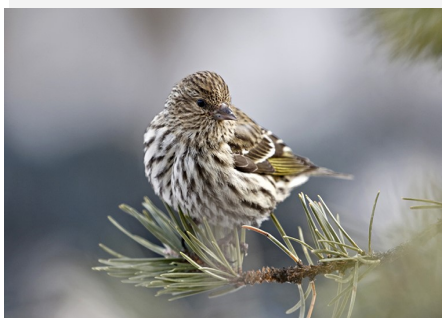
Spring 2024

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The mission of Three Rivers Park District is to promote environmental stewardship through recreation and education in a natural resources-based park system.



Yes, maple sap is flowing but ENC has not yet tapped trees since we have to schedule programming so far in advance. We are still looking for a few more volunteers. Contact: anne.jaeger@threeriversparks.com.



Pine siskin



What Feeders Can Tell Us

Bird watching has been a popular past time for hundreds of years. It's because of early birders like [John James Audubon](#) and [Florence Merriam Bailey](#) who had a passion for watching birds that we have so much information about different species and their unique characteristics. While it continues to be popular as a hobby, many birders have taken their skills to the next level with Project Feeder Watch (PFW). FeederWatch is a winter-long (November-April) survey of birds that visit feeders in nature centers, community areas, and even peoples personal backyards. Here at Eastman we have a long history of participating in PFW with support from many volunteers. We caught up with Christy Bishop, Naturalist at ENC, who coordinates our PFW to learn more...

How many years has Eastman participated in PFW? This is our 25th year! This quarter century dovetails nicely with ENC 50th Anniversary.

That is an amazing commitment. What statistics has ENC logged?

In that 25 year span, we have entered 283 total counts, with a total of 40 different bird species, and countless hours invested by our awesome dedicated volunteers.

While we can guess some of the usual winter bird "suspects" like chickadees, juncos and blue jays, what have been some of the prizes?

It's been fun to see Common Redpoll, Pine Siskin, Purple Finches, Northern Shrike, Sharp-shinned hawk and Common Flicker.

Even though Eastman has plenty of volunteers for PFW already, can other volunteers participate on their own from home? Yes! Anyone with some birdfeeders can participate. The Feeder watch website has great training info for bird ID and data collection. www.feederwatch.org

What do you think people should know about PFW that they might not know? It's a great introduction to citizen science. It's very flexible, a fun way to learn more about birds, while contributing to an important data-set of bird distribution and abundance in North America.

Seasonal Reflection

A **Winter Bust** could be the 2024 theme in our region. Last year we were pushing 50" of snow, tracking with each new snowfall and got over 1200 people out on snowshoes! This year its like winter didn't feel like showing up at all. That has meant many alternative programs and some programs with record numbers (due to warm temperatures), and still others we had to skip entirely like snowflake preservation. As our climate continues to be less predictable, we always plan for contingency. A **BIG WIN** with volunteers was the solstice luminary walk in December. Our thanks to those who staged, lit, and cleaned up hundreds of luminaries.



Not a single snowshoe has been rented, but the Sunday Fires have continued to be popular. Thank you volunteers for continuing to put these on for us each Sunday!



Our newest snake Terra is almost ready for public display. The animal care volunteers ensure it is adapting and growing well to ENC.



The Winter Solstice hike had no snow, but record breaking attendance with nearly 600 people on trail.



Little Free Library— Last summer the ENC Little Free Library (LFL) was added to the front yard. One of our volunteers, Dick Campbell, designed and built it. It is slowly catching on with park visitors. All books are natural history focused and are staged for both youth and adults. Check it out next time you come to Eastman.

Some of you have contributed books to our LFL— thank you! If you or someone you know has nature books to donate, bring them to the ENC front desk and build our backstock. We review all books for content and accuracy. When possible, the best books for the LFL are for local natural history, but we take fictional chapter books with a nature setting, children's book, field guides, and books about nature from other countries. (Shout out to that *All About Giraffes* book found in there this winter!)

Sometimes local public libraries have sales or purges; keep your eyes out!

Save the Dates for Eastman Nature Center 50th Anniversary— While the current nature center is only 12 years old, there has been a center at our location for 50 years. The staff at Eastman will have several ways to celebrate this awesome milestone in 2024. Start by joining us for the Volunteer Breakfast Saturday **April 20th** at 7AM for a Naturalist led bird walk then stay for meal and social at 9:30AM. RSVP to front desk.

We will have a large public event on Saturday **September 21st** in the afternoon and special staff/volunteer event in the evening to celebrate. This place, this land, has supported and touched thousands of lives for thousands of years; let us acknowledge those relationships and energize ourselves for the next 50 years!

Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

Earth Day Event

Sundays April 21st 1-3 PM

Contact: elaine.tucker@ThreeRiversParks.org

Celebrate Earth Day in the parks with trail clean-up! Stop at the nature center to adopt a section of trail for the day and complete your trash pick-up any time before or after. Meet with a live ambassador animal as our thank-you. Help prep guests and support wildlife in the parks.



Woodcock Stalk

Dates March 25, April 11, 12, 22; 7-9:30PM

Contact: elaine.tucker@ThreeRiversParks.org

Support our public programs with this evening walk to see the timberdoodle. Starts during daylight and ends in the dark. Some walking off trail on uneven surfaces.



Spring Fest

Saturday May 18th 10AM—3PM

Contact: Vicky.wachler@threeriversparks.org

Come help us celebrate all the excitement of spring firsts and fun. Volunteers needed for hikes, crafts/projects, education stations, and more!



Monarch Larvae Monitoring Project

Dates throughout spring and summer

Contact: Elaine.Tucker@threeriversparks.org

MLMP is summertime citizen science (1 or 2 two-hour visits per month). Participants check milkweed in designated site for monarchs and record the life-stages they find. Learn more: <https://mlmp.org> Training required.



Maple Syrup Training and Support

Saturday March 2nd Training 1-4PM

Contact: anne.jaeger@ThreeRiversParks.org

We still need a few more volunteers for this season especially for Maple Syrup Festival Saturday March 23rd.



We Need Stuff...

Deliver anytime between now and April

Drop off at Front Desk

We are looking for the following items at the ENC:

- Swim goggles
- Large, dry, pine cones (red or white pine)
- Nature books for Little Free Library

Phenology in Focus



Fun bird sightings from the Feeder Watch Program....

- 12/28** Pine Siskin
- 1/5** sharp Shinned hawk
- 1/6** Flicker
- 2/2** Red- Breasted Nuthatch
- 2/8** More than 25 Wild Turkeys
- 2/16** sharp shinned Hawk (Pictured here)

Other note worthy events...

- 2/10** The big maple tree #1 in the front yard was dripping sap on our Kits & Cubs pre-schoolers.
- 2/26** Air temperature was 65 degrees F (new record high for Twin Cities airport).

Art & Culture

Creating Your Climate Story is a powerful way to connect to the land we all share. Hope Flanagan, a member of the Seneca tribe, is a storyteller and guides others in creating their own climate story. She was here at Eastman this winter hosting an event and the 200 participants were not disappointed!

During the 2024, Three Rivers Park District is celebrating the Big Year of Bugs. Hope is presenting at Silverwood Park on Indigenous Relationships with Insects.

There are bug (arthropod class) programs throughout the year and throughout the district for all ages.

Visit our website www.threeriversparks.org to get a flavor of programs and events. Also know that we will be looking for volunteers here at Eastman for some of these events.



March 17th 2-3PM; FREE, registration required.
Indigenous Relationships with Insects Learn about indigenous perspective on bugs. Hope Flanagan helps restore health and well-being in the Native community by recovering knowledge of and access to healthy Indigenous foods, medicines and lifeways.

Spring Cleaning!

Remember, this is the time of year to clean out our houses and reduce, reuse and/or recycle old things. You never know what you may find. For example Vicky, Volunteer Coordinator at Eastman, decided to clean out her office and found a hummingbird behind her cabinet that was dead so long, all that was left were the bones and some feathers. Get a good deep clean in this year folks. Side note, Vicky is very happy about her new Hummingbird skull! Stop by the office to see it... and Vicky.

