

# GREENE VALLEY FOREST PRESERVE

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In its oak woodlands, savannas, and wetlands, Greene Valley boasts a collection of plants and trees not commonly found in other areas of the county. The preserve is home to many native birds, mammals and plants, and provides a spectacular display of spring wildflowers. In addition, management techniques such as prescription fires, reforestation and wetland restoration projects replace ecosystems lost long ago.

The wildlife at Greene Valley is plentiful: In the wetlands, waterfowl, shorebirds and aquatic life flourish, and toads and frogs can be heard during the spring breeding season; red foxes, coyotes, meadowlarks, and bobolinks co-exist in the meadows; and owls can be spotted in the forest. Hawk-watching from Greene Valley Hill is popular with birders in the fall. The 190-foot Greene Valley Hill provides an enticing scenic overlook and is open to the public on weekends from 11 a.m. until 6 p.m., spring through fall. A road leads from the base of the hill to a parking lot at the top, where visitors can get a bird's-eye view of DuPage County as well as the Chicago skyline. The introduction of native grasses and shrubs on the hillside combines conservational and recreational objectives, attracting native songbirds and wildlife while providing visual relief for preserve visitors.

**Camping fees:** This campground has 10 available campsites, all reserved for recognized youth groups. The following rates are for DuPage residents: \$100 for Site 1, \$25 for Sites 2-9 or \$75 for Site 10

**Activities in the park:** The Tricky-Tree-Trek is a self guided nature trail that gives visitors a chance to make their own leaf identification keys, identify trees while blindfolded, or solve a crossword puzzle using a tree finder. The preserve also maintains over 12 miles of marked multipurpose trails through a variety of ecosystems, including woodland, savanna, and wetland.

**Seasonal Information:** Cross-country skiing is allowed at the forest preserve, and the flatter ground is closer to the river. Skiers are asked to stay to the outside of the trail, leaving the inside area for hikers and other trail users. When conditions permit, trails are groomed for classical and skate-style cross-country skiing.

**Interesting fact about the park:** Greene Valley Forest Preserve used to be an old scout camp. While hiking through the preserve, you may even come across an old Order of the Arrow ceremonial ring. That is why we often hold our Brotherhood Conversion weekends at this forest preserve. See if you can find it the next time you visit!

**Must do before you leave:** Take the Tricky-Tree-Trek. It's an interactive way of hiking, and you get to hike through lots of different environments. Don't forget to take some time to stop and smell the roses!

*Authored by Dana Rick*

