

Outdoor Adventure Center

JANUARY – FEBRUARY 2021

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Convenient online registration

The online registration system will facilitate registration for all programs offered at the OAC. At <https://secure.rec1.com/MI/michigan-dnr/catalog>, you will find all options that are available for online registration. In order to register, you will need to create an account using your email address and a password. This will allow you to securely check out once you register. You will also be able to view past registrations and activities. If you have any questions about this site, please email [DNR- OAC@Michigan.gov](mailto:DNR-OAC@Michigan.gov).

Annual family membership

During the COVID-19 closure, we have been in contact with our member families. All membership expirations have been extended to reflect the months that the OAC has been unavailable to our members. We value your membership and look forward to seeing our members in the building again. Once we reopen, members will be notified for a special “members-only” event!

While we are closed, online purchasing has been paused. Once we reopen, annual memberships can be purchased online at <https://secure.rec1.com/MI/michigan-dnr/catalog> for \$50 for up to five members of the same household. For an additional \$25, you can bring up to two guests any time you visit the OAC.

Benefits of membership include:

- Free admission for one year from the date of purchase.
- \$30 discount on Lodge birthday packages.

- Exclusive, early admission to select special events.
- First glance (before the general public) at all newsletters.
- Members-only adventure packs (for use during your visit).
- Special pricing or early registration for select events.
- Early seating for popular programs.

Educator's Corner

Returning to the woods

By Natalie Cypher

Let's face it, 2020 was not the best of years.

However, as many of us have seen firsthand or read in the news, many folks spent more time in the outdoors this past year, whether it was due to restrictions on indoor activities, or just having more time on their hands. This was also reflected by the increase in hunting and fishing license sales in many states, including Michigan. Well hey, let's keep it up through 2021 and beyond! I know I plan to, and here is why ...

When I was young, I went along on many hunting adventures with my dad and other family members, including duck hunting, pheasant hunting and deer hunting. I shot my first deer when I was 16 during youth season. I was sitting in a blind with my dad, and after a few years of not seeing any deer during our hunts, I finally saw one walk into the open and start feeding. This was it – finally. My heart started racing.

I raised my rifle to my shoulder and aimed through the scope. I quietly said, "Dad?" And he responded, "Go ahead." So I did – a perfect shot. That was a moment in time that my dad, especially, cherished for years – the opportunity to be there with his daughter when she shot her first deer. The continuing of a family tradition.

Well as the next few years went on, life just got in the way – I went to college (twice), started my career, and I did not take the time to go hunting again for many years. I was certainly spending time outdoors birding, canoeing, camping, hiking – still with my dad but also with my (now) husband Paul. In talking with my dad, Paul expressed interest in deer hunting with our family for a few years. Finally in 2019, Paul and I joined other members of my dad's family for the annual Ray family deer hunt in northern Michigan. Sadly, my dad passed away in March 2019 unexpectedly, so there was an empty spot in a deer blind – and in our hearts – that season.

On opening day that year, I sat huddled in the blind alongside my husband. It was cold, windy, and there was somewhere between 12 and 18 inches of snow on the ground. We sat quietly in the dark, sipping hot coffee from our thermos, waiting for sunrise and the start of shooting time. I thought of my Dad and how proud he would be that Paul and I were hunting there together. Perhaps he was with us, or we were just lucky. Not long after sunrise, we noticed two deer in the low area to our left. I had told Paul that he was the priority, in terms of shooting a deer, since it would be his first. We watched them move through the trees, neither of us daring to make a sound, waiting for the opportunity for a shot. My heart started beating a little faster, just as it did when I got ready to shoot my first deer many years ago. I held my breath and watched as Paul raised his rifle and took the shot at the doe.

She went down immediately. Now I understood the excitement of being there with someone getting their first deer. Paul and I both stood up and looked at each other, with ear-to-ear smiles, and I said "Let's go get her!"

We were not quite as lucky in 2020, with neither of us getting a deer. However, memories were still made. We spent time with our family and with each other.

As I sat early one morning in our blind, looking up at the stars and experiencing the quiet stillness of the woods before sunrise, wondering what the daylight would bring, I thought, "Why did I not do this for so many years?"

If you are like me and haven't been hunting in a while, or if you've never hunted and want to give it a try – what are you waiting for? You can start by visiting Michigan.gov/Hunting to learn about species to hunt, licenses, regulations, places

to hunt and much more. If you are new to hunting, you will first need to take a hunter safety education course – you can visit Michigan.gov/HunterEducation to learn more.

Be sure to check out the [Learn to Hunt](#) section of the website, which provides information specifically for those new to hunting.

The opportunity is there – get out into the woods, harvest your own meat, and most importantly, make great memories with family and friends!

OAC programming: Virtual programming

Join us online this winter for public programming in January and February. We will cover a range of topics, from winter activities to prepping for spring. Our programs will be hosted on Zoom for everyone to enjoy. Our virtual public programs will be a combination of live presentation, video and time for Q&A. We hope you join us to learn something new and ask any questions you might have. We encourage you to sign up and add the programs to your calendar so you don't miss out on the fun.

Thursday, Jan. 21 at 7 p.m.: Ice Fishing How-To and Safety Featuring a DNR Conservation Officer

Ice fishing is a popular winter activity across Michigan. This program will cover ice safety, ice fishing equipment and more to make sure you are ready to get out on the ice. We will also be joined by a Michigan DNR conservation officer who will provide insight and help answer your questions. Join us to learn more so you don't end up on thin ice!

Thursday, Jan. 28 at 7 p.m.: Animal Tracks in the Snow

Looking for animal tracks in the snow is a favorite winter pastime, and for good reason – it's fun! A fresh snowfall can reveal the previous night's activities of many furry and feathered animals – a great opportunity to put wildlife detective skills to work! Our virtual presentation will give you some tips and tricks for solving these mysteries in the snow, such as understanding who was there and what they were doing. Afterwards, we hope you'll take your new skills out to the field!

Thursday, Feb. 11 at 7 p.m.: Meet our Cold-Blooded Critters!

Have you ever wondered how different cold-blooded critters, such as reptiles or amphibians, make it through Michigan's winters? Visit us virtually in our critter room while observing some of our live, educational cold-blooded friends, where we will talk more about what they would be doing this time of year if they were out in the wild – and when and where you might expect to notice them this coming spring.

Thursday, Feb. 25 at 7 p.m.: Create a Backyard Habitat!

Spring is coming soon – now is a great time to start planning your garden and landscape! This year, consider adding some wildlife habitat to your garden and yard. Creating a space for a variety of birds, insects and amphibians is not only fun and rewarding, but can provide many benefits to your yard, such as pollination and natural pest control. This virtual presentation will offer many simple ways that you can add elements of wildlife habitat – such as native plantings, pollinator homes and other wildlife-friendly features. Let's look forward to spring!

Attention teachers: Register now for one of our virtual school programs!

Allow us to visit you virtually! Choose from our list of virtual school program offerings to help keep your students engaged with Michigan's natural resources and the outdoors this school year. See our current offerings below, which include programs for grades preK through 12. The experience will be live with one of our educators, and will be approximately 45 minutes in length. Programs are NGSS-aligned, and additional pre- and post-lesson resources will be included.

Each program session of no more than 40 students costs \$40, paid in advance by check or charge (preferred). An educator will contact the teacher to discuss delivery details for the virtual experience prior to confirmation.

[Animal ABC's \(preK\)](#)

Practice letters and spelling virtually with Michigan wildlife! Learn about Michigan species and the differences between mammals, birds and reptiles through stories, rhymes and virtual exploration of their characteristics featuring a few of the OAC's live animals. We'll also discuss differences between wild and domestic animals.

[Wild in Michigan \(grades K-2\)](#)

All animals have the same basic survival needs – food, water, shelter, and space – the components that make up a habitat. In this virtual program we'll take a closer look at several Michigan wildlife species, from mammals to birds to reptiles, and compare and contrast some of their specific habitat needs.

[Trapper and Traders \(grades 3-5\)](#)

Detroit was founded in 1701 as a fur-trading post in the wilderness. Join us for a virtual exploration of the abundant natural resources and the lives of both Native Americans and settlers during that time, featuring footage of some historical locations and land features that we can observe in the area today.

[Great Lakes Invaders \(grades 3-5\)](#)

What does it mean to be invasive? How are invasive species in the Great Lakes different from our native species? We'll answer these questions and more while we introduce several of our Great Lakes invaders in our virtual program. We will also have the chance to meet one of our most destructive invaders – the sea lamprey.

[Migration Science – Featuring Southeast Michigan Osprey \(grades 6-8\)](#)

Bird migration is an absolutely incredible feat, but to make the journey, migratory birds still require the basic needs – food, water, shelter, and space – as they migrate. How do birds know where to fly? How do they know where to stop for food and rest? How have humans impacted bird migration over the last several decades? We'll answer these questions and more in our virtual program, as we take a closer look at one local migratory species – the Osprey. We'll track the migratory journeys of actual Osprey, and see how local biologists have used technology to track their migration.

[White-tailed Deer – Coming to a Neighborhood Near You! \(grades 9-12\)](#)

Have you been seeing more of Michigan's state mammal in your community? You're not alone! Numbers of white-tailed deer have gone up significantly in recent years – especially in our cities and suburbs! Join us to take a look at the reasons behind this increase, its ecological impact and the unique challenges this mammal has created for citizens, municipalities and wildlife managers in Michigan's urban areas.

[Register online for a virtual field trip.](#)

Attention scouts: Join us for a virtual badge workshop!

We are happy to announce that this season we will begin offering select Cub Scout and Girl Scout badges virtually! Each scheduled badge workshop will be a live program with an OAC educator. Virtual programs may include a mixture of real-time instruction or interaction using OAC materials, pre-recorded demonstration videos, and/or opportunities for scouts to interact verbally or through chat boxes.

Some badges may require an additional activity to be completed on your own or outdoors with your troop, such as required hikes. However, content in the virtual program will help to prepare scouts for any of those activities. Additionally, upon registration you will receive a document to help you prepare for your virtual program that will include information about any additional activities.

Each virtual program is scheduled in advance for Tuesdays beginning at 4 p.m. (see below), and scouts may be registered individually for the program. A minimum registration of eight scouts will be required for each program to take place. The cost of the program will be \$2 for each scout.

[Register for scout badge workshop.](#)

January 2021 open workshop offerings:

- Tuesday, Jan. 12: Tiger: My Tiger Jungle - Requirements: 1-4
- Tuesday, Jan. 19: Daisy: Rosie
- Tuesday, Jan. 26: Wolf: Paws on the Path – Requirements: 1-6

February 2021 open workshop offerings:

- Tuesday, Feb. 2: Brownies: Hiker – Requirements: 1-5
- Tuesday, Feb. 9: Bear: Fur, Feathers and Ferns – Requirements: 1-5
- Tuesday, Feb. 16: Juniors: Animal Habitats – Requirements: 1-5
- Tuesday, Feb. 23: Webelos: Into the Woods – Requirements: 1-4, 6

Behind the scenes: Introducing our new “Critter Room!”

During this closure, we have been working hard to enhance your visit. The Critter Room has been one of our favorite projects. While we have had a captive black rat snake that comes out on occasion to interact with guests and visiting students for a couple of years now, we’ve decided it is time to upgrade our live animal experiences! Upon reopening, we will be offering designated Critter Room visit times and programs in one of our classrooms for visiting guests. In addition to our black rat snake, we will have an eastern box turtle, a small live amphibian display and the opportunity to view our live lake sturgeon and sea lamprey up close. An educator will be present in the room to share information and answer your questions. We’re looking forward to bringing you closer to some of Michigan’s fascinating native wildlife species!

Meeting/event space

Let’s face it, things are a little different due to the current climate we are in. We know you have been looking forward to hosting your meetings and events! The Outdoor Adventure Center has the space for you. Whether it’s a hybrid meeting, minimony, sequel wedding, reception, baby shower or another event, we have you covered.

Although the Outdoor Adventure Center is currently not open, we are still here to help you plan for your future experiences. Please contact our promotional agent Jackie Hoskins at 1-844-622-6237 or email DNR-OAC@michigan.gov for more information on future bookings or to arrange a site visit of the event spaces at the Outdoor Adventure Center.

Who wore it best?

The adventure buff (a head wrap that can be worn many different ways) is the signature souvenir for the Michigan DNR Outdoor Adventure Center. Submit a photo of yourself, members of your family or a whole group wearing the OAC buff. Each newsletter, we are going to select the best submissions and award prizes. Simply post your best photo to [our Facebook page](#).

Start snapping those selfies – we can’t wait to see your best photos.

Recreation Passport: Cost/where to purchase/details

PLEASE NOTE: As of March 1, 2020, the Recreation Passport vehicle entry fee increased to \$12 due to a statutory provision to adjust the fee based upon the Consumer Price Index.

- Vehicles: \$12 when purchased with your license plate registration renewal through the Secretary of State.
- Vehicles: \$17 when purchased at state parks, *DNR customer service centers (cash or checks only) or at the Secretary of State outside your license plate registration renewal cycle. (Recreation Passport fee + \$5 convenience fee = \$17).
- Motorcycles: \$6 when purchased with your license plate registration renewal through the Secretary of State.
- Motorcycles: \$11 (\$6 passport fee, plus \$5 convenience fee) when purchased at state parks and *DNR customer service centers (cash or checks only) or at the Secretary of State outside your license plate registration renewal cycle.
- Moped: \$6 when purchased at state parks.
- Commercial daily pass: \$17 when purchased at state parks (24k+ pounds and/or seating capacity of 16+).
- A resident Recreation Passport cannot be purchased online.
- The purchase of a separate Recreation Passport is required for any hitched or unhitched towed vehicles.

*The option to purchase passports at DNR customer service centers is temporarily unavailable. You can still purchase passports in person at state parks and recreation areas.

The \$5 convenience fee will not be applied to purchases made at/for:

- Belle Isle Park.
- Non-street-legal vehicles at the Silver Lake State Park ORV area.
- Non-annual renewing vehicles (i.e., historical/authentic, street-legal moped, tribal government, dealer, temporary, manufacture, non-profit organization (Y) plates).
- Mopeds (a moped Recreation Passport is not available for purchase at the Secretary of State, so the \$5 convenience fee does not apply).
- Commercial vehicles.

Thank you for supporting your state parks by purchasing your Recreation Passport and by visiting our beautiful state parks.

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This newsletter is posted on our website and is available by email.

Visit [Michigan.gov/OAC](https://www.michigan.gov/OAC) and click on "About Us" and look for the red envelope to sign up.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is committed to the conservation, protection, management, use and enjoyment of the state's natural and cultural resources for current and future generations. For more information, go to www.michigan.gov/dnr.