

8. The fruit of the dogwood shrub is important in the diets of many bird and insect species. This native shrub looks very similar to the invasive bush honeysuckle. Here, the two species are found right next to one another.



The goldenrod gallfly lays its egg on top of the growing plant. The plant then grows around the egg, forming a protective case. The insect will then tunnel a hole to break free—that is, if it's lucky enough to escape woodpeckers and mice!



9. In the spring, this small creek flows freely to the lake. Cricket frogs and American toads can be heard during this time. As summer dries the creek, the footbridge is a good place to look for painted turtles and red-eared sliders. They can be found



on logs, soaking up the sun.

10. As you re-enter the prairie, you may notice large insect galls on the goldenrod plants.

11. Fires are important in removing dead plant matter and preventing trees and invasive plants from growing here. We burn our prairie every three years. Tree roots don't grow as deep as



prairie plants, and can't survive the fires. As you look into the prairie, you can see trees that have been burned.

What exactly is a Timberdoodle?

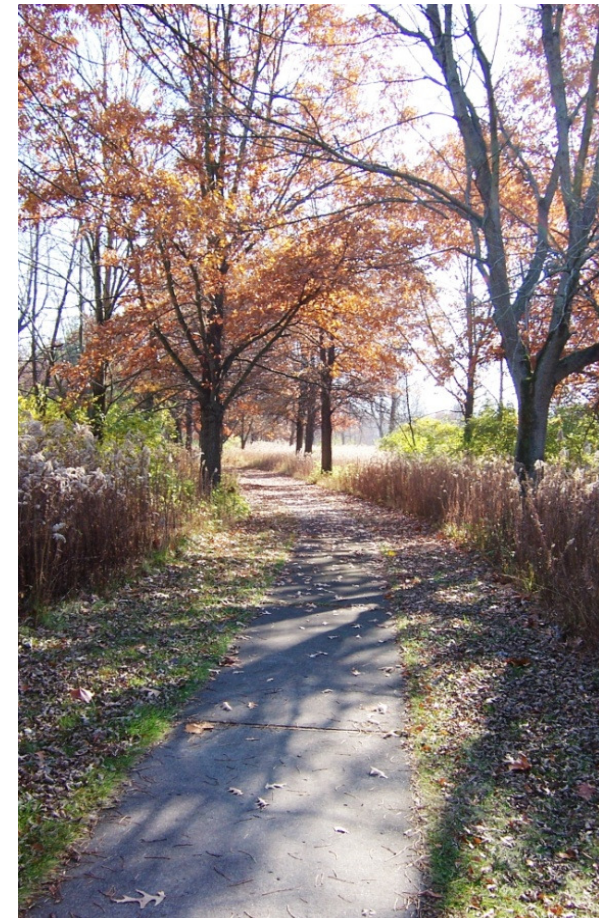
Timberdoodle, Labrador twister, bog sucker and mud snipe are other colorful names for the American Woodcock. These odd-looking birds are best known for their spectacular mating ritual, which takes place only at dawn and dusk. The male bursts into flight, spiraling up to 250 feet into the sky. He sings to waiting females while his wings whistle as the wind passes through his feathers. He returns to the same spot after each flight and repeats this several times. This type of prairie habitat is perfect for viewing the ritual from early March – April.



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Timberdoodle Trail Guide



**Homer Lake
Forest Preserve**

Timberdoodle Trail Map



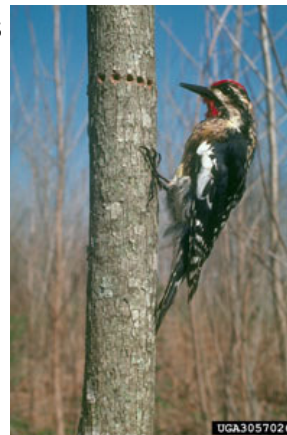
Welcome to Homer Lake Forest Preserve. Your self-guided tour of the Timberdoodle Trail starts just outside the Homer Lake Interpretive Center. Look for the numbered boulders to guide your way. We hope you will enjoy taking time to admire the natural beauty that our preserve has to offer!

1. As you head into the trail, you will notice a few white pines. This species can grow up to 180ft tall, making it the tallest in



Eastern North America. These are some of the only pines you will see along the trail. They can easily be recognized by their long needles in groups of five.

2. Homer Lake is home to 225 bird species. This includes seven types of woodpecker. The pattern of holes seen on the tree in front of you is unique to the yellow-bellied sapsucker. This bird drinks the sap and also eats insects drawn to the sap.



3. This prairie is home to many species of native plants. Flowers, like yellow



coneflower, goldenrod, and aster, bloom in the summer. Grasses, like big bluestem and Indian grass, average about 6 feet in height! Many prairie plants are becoming rare. Today, less than 0.01% of Illinois' prairie is left.

4. Underneath the observation platform you can see several mud-dauber nests. As their name suggests, these wasps use mud to build their nests, often called "organ-pipe nests." From the top of the platform you will see prairie to the west and forest to the east.



5. POISON IVY appears throughout the preserve. It may grow as a hairy vine, shrub, or low-growing plant. Poison ivy can be recognized by its leaflets, arranged in groups of three.



"Leaves of three, let it be," is an easy way to remember that a rash can result from contact.



6. In this clearing you may notice a lot of shrub removal. At Homer Lake, we work to control the very invasive honeysuckle. This shrub can kill native plants by decreasing light, soil moisture and nutrients.



7. Through this gap you can get a view of the natural beauty the lake has to offer. You may be able to see birds like osprey, kingfishers or great blue



herons (pictured here) searching for food. There are also several other types of waterfowl that can be seen on the lake.