



# Spring Valley Nature Club

## News Leaf

[www.springvalleynatureclub.org](http://www.springvalleynatureclub.org)

springvalleynatureclub@gmail.com

**Letter from the President, Donna Johnson**

**January/February 2026**

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

**Spring Valley Nature Club business meeting, January 7, 2026, 6:30PM**  
**Spring Valley Nature Center 1111 E Schaumburg Rd.**

### Spring Valley Nature Club 2026 Annual Meeting Overview

#### Proposals for New Projects in 2026

During the meeting, the Board will carefully review and discuss all suggestions received for new projects to be scheduled for 2026. These proposals will be deliberated to assess their feasibility and alignment with the club's mission and goals. Members are encouraged to participate in the conversation and share their perspectives as the Board considers which projects to move forward with in the coming year.

#### Budget for 2026

The proposed budget for the upcoming year will be formally presented to the membership. Attendees will have the opportunity to review the financial plans and allocations for 2026. Following the presentation, a vote will be held to approve the budget, ensuring that the club's financial objectives and resources are clearly established for the year ahead.

#### Upcoming Events and Fundraisers

Members will receive updates regarding planned future events and fundraising initiatives. The meeting will include a discussion of strategies and logistics to help ensure the successful execution of these activities. The club will outline key dates, objectives, and ways for members to get involved in supporting these important efforts throughout the year.

#### Slate of Officers and Directors for 2026

A list of candidates for club officers and directors for the year 2026 will be presented to all members in attendance. The membership will have the opportunity to review the slate and participate in the voting process to select the leadership team for the coming year.

## **Spring Valley Update for January/February 2026**

Spring Valley's grounds and facilities will remain on 'winter' hours until April 1. The Nature Center continues to offer a full schedule of family, youth, and adult programs and unique events.

- Spring Valley's grounds and walking trails are open every day from 8am-5pm.
- The Nature Center Museum is open to visitors daily from 10am-4pm.
- Volkening Heritage Farm's Visitor Center and other farm buildings are closed during the winter months. The Farm does offer limited programs during winter. Visit [www.parkfun.com](http://www.parkfun.com) for more information on winter programs offered.
- Bison's Bluff Nature Playground will remain open daily from 10am-4:00pm at no charge through the end of March when safe conditions exist (no snow, ice, rain, or temperatures below 32°F).
- The Merkle Cabin is available for private events when not scheduled for programs. Requests for rentals need to be submitted at least two weeks in advance. Rates are based on residency.
- Volunteers continue to assist with outdoor conservation projects, garden and trail maintenance, youth summer camps, and with our events and programs. If you are willing and able to assist with projects, please contact Jeff Pal at [jepal@parkfun.com](mailto:jepal@parkfun.com).

### **Snowshoe Rentals**

Snowshoe rentals will once again be offered anytime there is 4 inches or more of snow on the ground. Rentals are available between the hours of 10:00am and 3:00pm. The cost is \$5/pair for one hour of use. Call the Nature Center for more information on snow conditions.

### **Spring Valley App**

Staff maintains a site-use app for use on either Android or Apple smartphones. It features not only information on hours, site features, and facilities, but two guided tours that provide information on various natural history or historical topics as you walk the trails. The app is FREE and available from either the Google Play Store or Apple Store (simply type Spring Valley Nature Center into the search bar). It is also available as a web-app by going to [www.springvalley.stqry.app](http://www.springvalley.stqry.app).

### **Nature Center Construction Alert**

The construction that was anticipated to begin in November of 2025 has been delayed till September of 2026. This work would affect the façade and offices at the Nature Center. Once begun, this will result in periodic closures of the Nature Center, except for program functions. This will last into the first half of 2027. More information on this project will be forthcoming.

### **Winter Events & Programs**

NOTE: On-line pre-registration is required for many of the programs Spring Valley offers, which have limited capacity; however most special events have walk-in registration. More information and on-line registration are available within the Park District's virtual Program Guide for winter, found at [www.parkfun.com/programs-events/program-guide](http://www.parkfun.com/programs-events/program-guide).

#### **National Seed Swap Day – Saturday, Jan. 31, 10:00am-2:00pm**

Once a common practice, the tradition of seed swapping has nearly disappeared – but National Seed Swap Day is bringing it back! It's a chance for gardeners to gather, exchange seeds and discover new varieties. Although not required, please bring seeds to share if you have them! FREE admission!

#### **Cabin Fever Festival – Sunday, Feb 15, 12:00-3:00pm**

Experience and embrace the beauty of winter! From dogsled and ice fishing demonstrations to outdoor games and hikes, discover a day of adventure capped with s'mores and cocoa by the fire. Dress for the weather! Admission is paid at the event; children 2 and younger are free.

### **Sugar Bush Fair – Saturday & Sunday, Mar 14 & 15, 9:00am-12:00pm**

Celebrate spring's arrival with us! Learn about the history of maple syruping at our demonstration areas and enjoy a delicious pancake breakfast. Breakfast is served under a large, enclosed tent on the grounds of Merkle Cabin, a short walk from the Nature Center. Breakfast includes pancakes, sausage, beverages, and real maple syrup. Event attendance is free. Reservations for the pancake breakfast are \$8.00/person if made by noon on March 13. Day-of breakfast admission will be \$10/person. Visit [parkfun.com](http://parkfun.com) or stop by the Nature Center to make your breakfast reservations!

### **Coming Soon!**

Eggapalooza, Spring Valley's always popular egg hunt and scavenger hunt for kids, is scheduled for Sunday, March 29th. Reservations are necessary for this program, which sells out each year.

Earth Day Party returns on Sunday, April 19 from 12:00-4:00pm with a host of activities, games, and demonstrations designed to get you thinking about your environmental footprint and simple ways you can have a positive impact on the environment.

Native Plant & Heirloom Vegetable Sale will return on May 16 & 17, 2026. Plan to place your order early for native plants and heirloom herbs and vegetables, The annual Pre-ordering is the only way to ensure that you get the plants you want for the 2026 garden season. Visit the Spring Valley Nature Club website to preorder heirloom vegetables and herbs. Visit the Schaumburg Community Garden Club website to preorder native wildflowers, grasses and shrubs. Both websites should be open for business from early to mid-March!

Additional programs are being offered throughout the winter months – visit the virtual Winter Program Guide to learn more!

## 1974 And Beyond

**Spring Valley began as a dream by one of the founders of the Village of Schaumburg, Ellsworth Meineke.** Early on he referred to it as “The Spring Valley Dream.” It was he who convinced the Schaumburg Park District and the Village of Schaumburg to work together to acquire and preserve land for Spring Valley. Ellsworth founded the Spring Valley Nature Club in 1974 as a not-for-profit service organization which provides volunteer and financial support for Spring Valley and promotes conservation, nature, and environmental education. The Club sponsors nature programs and teacher field trips, and members volunteer at festivals and fund raisers. We have been working hard since 1974. Won’t you join us?

These words reflect the dedication that the founders felt for the purpose of the Club and the love of the natural world around us. Since the Schaumburg Park District assumed the responsibility of recruiting volunteers, Nature Club’s purpose has evolved to share its love of Spring Valley by offering timely programs that reinforce a more wholesome lifestyle. We have initiated monthly educational programs that instill a comprehension of our ability to lessen our carbon footprint by reducing waste, recycling and reusing our valuable resources. Our monthly programs enlighten us to appreciate our environment and respect its fragile beauty.

We have lessened our impact on landfill waste by eliminating the mailing of our bimonthly News Leaf. We are encouraging members to attend educational programs which teach us the importance of the wildlife around us, the art of using our natural resources wisely and being more self-reliant by advising how to live a more wholesome lifestyle, grow and live more organically and become more self-sufficient.

With the kind donations and assistance from local merchants and organizations, we can exist more ecologically by shopping locally. Some of the wonderful supporters and contributors to the club have been, Roselle Ace Hardware discount coupon on purchases; Schaumburg Park District 1-day Fitness Pass; Platt Hill Nursery for their support and discount coupon at their garden centers; Holistic Art Studio discount coupon; Skincare by Carmela for their discount on services.

Our wonderful supporters have given us a way to lessen our footsteps by offering valued products and services at discounted prices while saving our energy dollars by reducing the number of miles we travel. Please support our supporters. With their help, we have been successful in raising additional funds to sponsor educational programming for our Club members, Spring Valley Volunteers, and school children and teachers from our community. We have supplied funds for books for Spring Valley’s Library and have sponsored various free to the public programs and events that the Nature Center has offered.

Thanks to you all, and especially our valued Members and Supporters of Spring Valley Nature Club!

Please take time to review all the wonderful benefits we are offering to our members with their Nature Club membership. Won’t you join us?

Spring Valley Nature Club is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and contributions may be tax deductible. Check with your tax advisor.

## **Spring Valley Nature Club 2026 Membership Rates**

To show our appreciation for our members' loyalty, a special benefit packet is offered to club members.

**“Discount Coupon Packet”** This packet will include certificates and coupons for various merchants, i.e., Platt Hill Nursery (discount on purchase), Chick-Fil-A (Free Sandwich - Schaumburg Stores only), Skincare by Carmela (Discount on Services), Ace Hardware (Nerge Rd. \$5 off) and Schaumburg Park District one day fitness pass & one day pool pass.

**Special Benefit;** An invitation to the Spring Valley Volunteer/Meineke Award Picnic in August. Members in good standing please RSVP Spring Valley at 847-985-2100 for you and a guest, in July.

**Free Entry to the Nature Club Programs:** Allows you to attend any of Spring Valley Nature Club monthly meetings and educational programs from February through November where you can enjoy some refreshments and camaraderie with fellow supporters of the Nature Club and the Spring Valley Volunteers.

**Membership Card & Bi-monthly News Leaf:** Identifies you as a supporter of the Nature Club's efforts.

**Life Membership:** In addition to the above items, this membership includes a Nature Club Commemorative Fleece Throw (\$35.00 value); this fleece throw is for **New Life Memberships Only.**

**Current Life Members** are eligible for the Discount Coupon Packet. A donation is appreciated and helps the Nature Club fulfill its charter to support Spring Valley Nature Center.

Your Membership Packet needs to be picked up in person at the Spring Valley Nature Center 10:00 – 4:00 daily. Any member may have the membership packet mailed to them for a handling fee of \$2.00

**Yearly Memberships Begin February 1<sup>st</sup> through January 31<sup>st</sup>**

Senior 55 Plus	\$15.00
Individual	\$20.00
Family	\$30.00
Supporting	\$40.00
Life	\$200.00
Sponsor	\$1000.00

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**Senior - Individual – Family – Supporting - Life – Sponsor**

**Name**-----

**Address**-----**City**-----**St.**-----**Zip**-----

**Email**-----**Phone**-----

**Checks should be made payable and mailed to:**  
**Spring Valley Nature Club - 1111 East Schaumburg Road, Schaumburg, IL 60194**