

# NJMC NEWS RELEASE

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**New Jersey  
Meadowlands  
Commission**

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Kids Scavenger Hunt and Crime-Solving Activity, Animal Visits, Nature Walks Highlight New Jersey Meadowlands Commission (NJMC) Winter-Spring 2014 Public Programs**

**LYNDHURST, N.J.** –A nature-themed scavenger hunt and a crime-solving activity for kids, visits from owls and other critters, nature walks, history talks and astronomy programs are just some of the highlights of the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission’s (NJMC) Winter-Spring 2014 public schedule of events. The fun and educational programs for all ages take place at the Commission’s Meadowlands Environment Center and Center for Environmental and Scientific Education, both located in DeKorte Park, the home of the NJMC.

“The New Jersey Meadowlands Commission is pleased to present an array of engaging programs and workshops for children, adults and families that spotlight the importance of wildlife and environmental stewardship through hands-on activities and lively discussions,” said Marcia Karrow, Executive Director of the NJMC. “The Commission invites young and old alike to take advantage of these unique learning experiences.”

#### **Just for Kids: Scavenger Hunt, Sleuthing, Survival Skills, Marsh Exploration**

The NJMC is pleased to offer exciting new programs for kids this year. In **Kids’ CSI: The Case of the Missing Mustache (ages 8-12)**, participants find a crime scene in the Meadowlands Environment Center, which doubles as a museum gallery for this event. The gallery has been vandalized and amateur sleuths will use science to analyze the evidence and solve the crime. The program is **Saturday, Feb. 15, at 1 p.m.** and cost is **\$12 per child (no fee for adults)**. Kids of **all ages** can learn about **“Wilderness Survival: Primitive Skills,” on Sunday, March 30, at 1 p.m.** An MEC educator will demonstrate how early Meadowlands inhabitants constructed shelters, built fires using friction and trapped their dinners. The program cost is **\$5, MEC members \$4.**

On **Sunday, May 18, at 1 p.m.**, kids of **all ages** and their families can participate in a **DeKorte Park Scavenger Hunt**. Starting with a map and mission pack, teams will seek out clues around the park to find objects or picture stations and document their findings using digital cameras. If you do not have access to a digital camera, contact the Meadowlands Environment Center in advance at 201-460-8300. The Scavenger Hunt is **\$8, MEC members \$6**. Children of **all ages** can also participate in a **Marsh Mud Marathon, on Tuesday, May 27, at 6 p.m.** Those who attend will join MEC educators to catch shrimp, fish and other critters in the marsh. The program cost is **\$5, MEC members \$4.**

### Amazing Animals

On **Sunday, Jan. 12, at 2 p.m.**, visitors of **all ages** can learn about how animals live in the water at the **Snakes-n-Scales: Fish Tales** program. A digital video camera will display the smallest details of these inhabitants of deep and shallow waters. The public has the opportunity to meet and learn about rescue dogs **on Sunday, Jan. 26, at 2 p.m.** The Mahwah-based non-profit organization, **K9 – NJ Search and Rescue**, will talk about the work of these life-saving canines, as well as how you can stay safe in the wilderness and learn what to do if you get lost. Both programs are **\$5, MEC members \$4**.

**Sunday, April 6, at 2 p.m. is All About Owls**, which, if you're very lucky, you can see flying, hunting and roosting here in the Meadowlands. Members of the **Flat Rock Brook Nature Center** will bring artifacts and live birds and talk about these feathered ambassadors' behavior, physiology, adaptations and natural history. This program is **\$5, MEC members \$4**.

### Explore Nature's Beauty

Nature and bird-watching enthusiasts of **all ages** are invited to join the NJMC and the Bergen County Audubon Society on their twice-monthly guided nature walks. **These free, two-hour excursions begin at 10 a.m. and are held on the first Sunday and third Tuesday of each month at locations throughout the Meadowlands District.** Visit [www.njmeadowlands.gov](http://www.njmeadowlands.gov) and click on "Events and Alerts" or visit [www.meadowblog.net](http://www.meadowblog.net) for locations and additional information.

The Commission is also hosting several special walks and events. All walks and events listed below are **free**.

Before settling in to watch the big game being held at nearby MetLife Stadium, nature lovers can join the NJMC for its **Fifth Annual Super Bird Sunday** event at **10 a.m. on Sunday, Feb. 2**, at Losen Slote Creek Park in Little Ferry. Prizes will be awarded to the first people to spot a bird that serves as an NFL team name: Cardinal, Raven, Falcon, Eagle, Seahawk (osprey), Giant (great) egret and Giant (great) blue heron.

At **10 a.m. on Friday, Feb. 14**, birders are invited to break out their binoculars for the **Great Backyard Bird Count** at Mill Creek Marsh in Secaucus. The Bird Count is a nationwide avian census that aims to help researchers gain a better understanding of trends in bird populations throughout the country.

A **Woodcock Walk** will be held on **Monday, March 17, at 6:45 p.m.**, at Laurel Hill Park in Secaucus. In addition, **Birding for Beginners** sessions will take place at **1 p.m. on Sundays April 6 (Bird Identification) and 13 (Optics and Field Guides)**. There is also an **Early-Bird Special Walk** on **Sunday, May 4, at 8 a.m.**, at Losen Slote Creek Park in Little Ferry. The NJMC's **Sixth Annual Mother's Day Walk** is **Sunday, May 11, at 10 a.m.**, the Ridgefield Nature Center and Skeetkill Creek Marsh, both in Ridgefield.

Other nature-themed special events include an **Earth Day Concert by folk singer Spook Handy at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 22**, and a talk by the **NJ Invasive Species Strike Team on Wednesday, April 23, at 7 p.m.** The Strike Team is a statewide public/private cooperative effort to prevent the spread of emerging invasive animal and plant species that threaten our environment and natural resources.

### Spotlight on the Stars

Stargazers of **all ages** can view and learn about planets, stars and other celestial bodies at the **NJMC's William D. McDowell Observatory**. The Observatory, which features a research-grade telescope with a 20-inch mirror, is **open to the public for free on Monday and Wednesday nights**, excluding holidays and

weather permitting. Open viewing hours are **7 to 10 p.m. in January and February, 8 to 10 p.m. in March and April, and 8:30 to 10 p.m. in May.** Adults must accompany children, and you must be able to climb 25 steps to reach the telescope. Registration is not required.

Observatory staff is also hosting two **free** astronomy talks for **all ages**. **On Wednesday, Jan. 22, at 3 p.m.,** join Dr. John Sloan, Director of the Observatory, for **“The Milky Way.”** The introductory session will answer questions including how the Milky Way got its name, how many stars it includes and if it might contain a black hole. Dr. Sloan will also guide visitors on a scientific journey through the universe in a **Cosmology** discussion on **Wednesday, March 5, at 2 p.m.**

The Observatory also offers a **Let’s Talk Astronomy** lecture series **geared toward adults** on Tuesday nights. Each month focuses on a specific aspect of astronomy. Each session is **\$5, MEC members \$4.** For more information, visit [www.njmeadowlands.gov/ec](http://www.njmeadowlands.gov/ec).

### History Comes Alive

The rich history of the Meadowlands’ unique urban ecosystem over the past 60 years is the subject of **“Marshes of the Meadowlands: 1950 to Today,”** on **Sunday, March, 16 at 1 p.m.** Don Smith, retired Chief Naturalist with the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission, was born and raised in Little Ferry and is a fountain of knowledge on the history of the Hackensack River and its marshes. Don has spent hundreds of hours hiking, trapping and traversing the region’s wetlands. Join him and experience our wonderful marshes through the eyes of this seasoned observer. The program is open to **all ages** and the cost is **\$5, MEC members \$4.**

The NJMC welcomes Paterson Museum Curator Bruce Balisteri on **Wednesday, Feb. 5 at 2 p.m.** for a program **geared toward adults** on the history of the **Paterson Great Falls.** The 77-foot-high waterfall on the Passaic River was once a prime camping and fishing site for the Leni-Lenape Indians and later became the birthplace for the American Industrial Revolution. Balisteri will talk about how the falls attracted pioneering figures and continues to draw the daring and the curious. The talk is **\$5, MEC members \$4.** On **Tuesday, March 11, at 3 p.m.,** visitors of **all ages** will learn 20 facts about genius physicist **Albert Einstein** during a **free** program. Was Einstein slow in learning to speak? Who did he flirt with? Where is his brain today? Dr. Victoria Madden, MEC educator and resident Einstein expert, answers these and many more questions about the eccentric scientist.

### Nature As a Canvas

The NJMC is hosting several art workshops for adults and children this spring, with the environment as your muse. Basic supplies are provided at all programs, or participants can bring their own. The first class, **“Watercolor Pencils for Kids: Signs of Spring,”** (ages 5-12) is on **Saturday, March 22, at 1 p.m.** and geared toward children ages 5-12. Instructors will teach kids how create a colorful seasonal drawing and then turn it into a painting, all with the same pencil. This no-mess medium is easy to handle for young children and sophisticated enough for older students. **Cost is \$12 per child; \$10 MEC members (no fee for adults).**

On Saturday, **April 12, at 1 p.m., teens and adults** can take part in **Mixed Media Sketching,** a spontaneous method of drawing nature. Participants will explore and experiment with pencil, charcoal, ink and watercolor pencils to capture the essence of the season. Weather permitting, part of the class will be held outside, so bring a chair if you would like. **Cost is \$20; MEC members \$16.** The NJMC is also presenting a four-session series for **teens and adults. Watercolor Painting: Earth, Air, Fire, Water** begins with a traditional introduction to the medium and moves on to alternative techniques to provide texture and capture the elements of nature. Sessions take place **at 2:30 p.m. on Tuesdays, April 29 and May 6, 13, and 20. Registration is for all classes and costs \$70; \$50 MEC members.**

For information on becoming an MEC member, visit [www.njmeadowlands.gov/ec](http://www.njmeadowlands.gov/ec), click on “About Us,” then click on the “Membership” link under resources in the upper right-hand portion of the page.

To register for a program, go to [www.njmeadowlands.gov/ec](http://www.njmeadowlands.gov/ec) and click on the “Community Events/Register” link. Hard copy programs are available at the Meadowlands Environment Center, 2 DeKorte Park Plaza, Lyndhurst. There is no phone registration. For more information, call 201-460-8300.

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