

Scout Programming at Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge

Thank you for your continued support of and interest in Neal Smith NWR. We are excited to offer a number of badge programs and other events for Cub and Boy Scouts throughout the coming spring season and school year! Please note that we have made some significant changes to the Cub Scout program offerings here, due to the badge program overhaul that became effective this summer.

Below are our programs and dates, followed by some special events you may be interested in. To sign up for a badge program OR an event, please contact **Brianna Patrick at 515-994-3400 or email brianna_patrick@fws.gov**. Please include the number of scouts who will attend & your contact information (email and phone, please). Note that, for badge programs, we welcome up to 25 scouts from as many dens as can participate at each program. **Pre-registration is REQUIRED via phone or e-mail.**

Badge programs are free of charge, and supplies will be provided unless otherwise noted. **We will complete all requirements for the badge, with a few noted exceptions indicated with an asterisk (*)**. For more information on what we will cover, please contact Megan.

We will be outside for some portions, so scouts should dress for the weather. Bring a water bottle, sunscreen and/or insect repellent, as needed. You may also bring a lunch and eat at the Prairie Learning Center before or after your program.

Tigers: Tigers in the Wild badge** - Saturday, April 16, 9am – 12pm

Wolves: Paws on the Path badge - Saturday, March 19, 9am – 12pm

Bears: Fur, Feathers & Ferns badge - Saturday, April 30, 9am - 12pm

Webelos: Walkabout badge** - Saturday, March 26, 9am-12pm
Into the Wild badge - Sunday, May 8, 12:30pm – 3:30pm



Special Events and Service Projects

We also have some special events throughout the next school year, which you and your scouts may want to participate in. Most of them include a service component, so it's a great way to earn service hours, too!

1. Earth Day - Saturday, April 23, 9am-12pm at Neal Smith NWR.

We need volunteers to help us restore our oak savannas by collecting and piling branches, logs, and non-native trees, so our native oaks and hickories can grow bigger and stronger. A FREE lunch will be provided by the Friends of Neal Smith NWR.

2. Monarch Madness - Saturday, September 10, 9am-11pm, at Neal Smith NWR. We need volunteers to help us catch, tag, and release monarch butterflies. The data collected for this event will be submitted to Monarch Watch, so scientists can learn more about monarchs' fascinating migration. Registration is limited to the first 100 participants and we fill up quickly!

3. National Public Lands Day - Saturday, September 24, 9am-12pm, at Neal Smith National Public Lands Day (NPLD) is the nation's largest, single-day volunteer effort for public lands. Last year, over 175,000 volunteers celebrated across the country. Join us for a chance to volunteer & collect seed to create more native tallgrass prairie at Neal Smith.

4. Ding Darling Day - Saturday, October 8, 9am-12pm.

In honor of Iowan J.N. "Ding" Darling, a pioneer conservationist, the refuge is hosting stewardship opportunities for you and your group. We need volunteers to help restore the prairie ecosystem by collecting seeds. A FREE lunch will be provided at noon by the Friends of Neal Smith NWR.

We would really love for scouts to help volunteer on these days! It is wonderful to have so much help from scouts and we appreciate it so much. Please let me know if you have any questions or would like more information about these events or activities. If you are interested in completing volunteer projects for your troop outside of these dates, please contact Cheryl Groom at Cheryl_groom@fws.gov. **To sign up for any event or program, please contact Brianna at Brianna_patrick@fws.gov or call 515-994-3400.**

Thanks for all your time, effort and help, and for getting your scouts exploring outdoors!