

Outdoor Women at Big Oaks

2016 Course Descriptions

Archery, Basic. Basic archery skills will be covered and students will have hands on experience with modern archery equipment shooting at a bull's eye type target.

Backpacking & Camping. Backpacking is not just a walk in the woods. Learn from a Veteran Adventure Guide for all female groups in 4 states the mistakes she has made to make you successful! From head to toe, boots to backpack, learn about the women specific outdoor gear you need to make your backpack or camping adventures a little more scenic and a lot less hectic!

Backyard Monarch Conservation. Learn how you can help turn the tide for Monarch butterflies by providing habitat in your own backyard! When you create a monarch way station you not only give monarchs a place to feed, rest, and lay their eggs; but you also provide habitat for many other amazing pollinators and wildlife. We will talk about what plants need to be in your way station and what other elements to consider.

Become an Indiana Amateur Naturalist! All of the highlights from Indiana's Master Naturalist program for those who haven't found the time to do the 10 week course. Maybe you'll want to become an Indiana Amateur Naturalist!

Beekeeping. This course will introduce you to some general and basic knowledge of keeping honey bees. To include understanding the life cycle, make-up and internal workings of the honey bee colony. Plus the basic procedures used in establishing and keeping a working hive for the production of honey. Plus examples of equipment that is used for extracting, straining and storing honey. Class provides a hands-on inspection and handling of a live honey bee colony.

Long sleeve shirts, long pants, and foot wear that covers the entire foot will be required. No history of allergies to bee stings. I will provide bee veil, gloves and white coveralls to be worn during the class. You could be quite hot during the hands-on portion of the class.

Beginners Outdoor Yoga. What a good way to end your amazing day with an afternoon stretch! Outdoor yoga will add another dimension and can intensify the yoga experience in many ways. This nature inspired class will drive home - focusing awareness, breathing deeply, practicing stillness.

The class will take place outside in the grass and participants must bring a beach, blanket, or yoga mat. Stretchy clothing is recommended.

Bird Watching. Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge is home to many different species of birds. You'll learn how to select and use binoculars and field guides. Then you'll go birding in the field with experts to learn birds by sight and song. Refuge Manager Joe Robb will be one of your instructors ~ you can't help but find his enthusiasm contagious! Be sure to wear hiking shoes. Binoculars and field guides will be provided, but you are welcome to bring your own.

Canoeing and Kayaking, Basic. Learn how to get in and out of a canoe and/or kayak while staying dry. Practice several paddling methods including how to travel in a straight line. This course is taught on a lake, so be prepared. You may get wet. Bring extra clothing and a towel...just in case. Sunscreen, a hat and sunglasses would be a good idea, too.

Firearm Familiarity. Live fire demonstrations are included in this course, which covers basic firearm safety and instruction. Participants will have an opportunity to practice shooting handguns and rifles. All equipment is provided.

Fishing, Advanced. After taking this course, you'll understand why people love to fish. You'll learn about fish, knot tying, casting skills, and finding a good fishing spot. You'll also learn about different types of fishing tackle, lures, bait and what to do after you've caught one. Then try out your new skills fishing at Old Timbers Lake. All equipment for this course is provided.

Fly Fishing. Fishing with a fly rod is the natural way to catch fish. Learn about equipment basics, rods, lines, reels and flies, and general casting techniques. This basic course should provide you with enough information to start you off in the right direction for years of fly fishing adventures. All equipment for this course is provided. *Wear shoes that you don't mind getting muddy and wet.*

Geology of Big Oaks. We will discuss basic rock formations, sedimentology, lithology, glacial impacts, geomorphology and stream morphology. *Wear hiking boots, prefer water proof, but not necessary. Small hand lenses will be available, however bring your larger magnified glass if you'd like.*

Going Green – Practical Ideas for Living a Sustainable Lifestyle. Learn the practice of reducing your demand on natural resources by making sure that you replace what you use to the best of your ability. We'll show you how all you need is less. Learn about guilt-free green living, stress free living, and more about solar & wind energy!

Got Bugs? Indiana is home to thousands of species of insects and other invertebrates, all of which live in our streams, trees, and soil. This session will include both terrestrial and aquatic sampling of commonly found animals often overlooked by casual observers. Learn how to quickly identify some of the species that you may find in your own backyard!

Home Food Preservation – Water Bath Canning. Learn from a certified Home Food Preservation expert on how to properly preserve your harvest using the water bath canning method. This class will be an overview of procedures necessary to safely use this method.

Hyper Tufa Trough Making. Make a flower planter using light-weight concrete mix (looks like rock) in a re-usable container found around the house. Participants will create their own hand-made flower planter and take it home. This planter won't break from freezing like terra cotta pots. Course materials provided.

Mushrooms: Fungus among us! This class will focus on the very basics of mushroom and slime mold identification. Learn how to preserve specimens. Class is designed for those with very little to no mushroom knowledge. Identification guides and collecting material will be provided for use. *Dress appropriately for a hike through the woods.*

Muzzleloading, Introduction to. This course includes a short history and demonstration of muzzleloading weapons. Participants will have the opportunity to load and fire both traditional & muzzleloading rifles.

North America Predators. Are you interested in learning more about the large predators that are found in North America, especially right here in our region? This class will provide information on the predators you may encounter in your own adventures and clear up many misconceptions!

Outdoor Dutch Oven & Camp Fire Cooking. Are you interested in cooking outside using charcoal or wood fire? Find out what you'll need to get started, including seasoning a Dutch oven, cooking and clean up. *Closed-toe shoes are highly recommended.*

Outdoor Photography. Get outside and start photographing nature! This course teaches how to look out for what you want to see in your photos, including light, angles and focus. *Bring a digital camera if you have one.*

Seed Banks. You know all about banks, right? Well, do you know about SEED banks? This session will be about the value of growing old timey plants, then saving the seeds. We'll explore the whys, the whens, and the hows of saving our heritage of seeds including some Indiana native plant seeds. Also learn about the Indiana Master Gardener program. Lots of information will be given and hands on planting!

Self Defense. With crime on the rise, having the knowledge and courage to protect yourself is important. Participants will be introduced to the basics of self-defense. The session will focus on verbal and physical strategies for dealing with aggressive confrontations and will provide the opportunity to practice the use of these skills in drills and simulated attack scenarios. Active participation is encouraged and participants must be ready to have fun!

Sporting Clay Shooting. Learn the basics of firearm safety and trap shooting, including proper gun mounting and leading the target. Then practice shooting sporting clays with an expert. All equipment for this course is provided.

The Skins Game with Bob & Tom. See, touch, learn about some of the common vertebrates found at Big Oaks NWR – from snakes to coyotes. This hands-on class is sure to be fun & a great learning experience for all!

Tomahawk Throwing. Maybe you know how to shoot or use archery equipment, but do you know how to accurately throw a tomahawk? Discover the basics of tomahawk throwing during this fun, hands-on class!

Wild Botanicals at Big Oaks. Learn to recognize the wild, native plants of southeast Indiana as well as the some of the introduced ones. Course will look at herbaceous and woody plants. Bring a hand lens if you have one.

Wild Game Foods. Learn how to safely prepare, package, cook, and preserve wild game including venison & fish.

Wilderness Survival. This course teaches basic survival skills and the necessary frame of mind to survive in short-term wilderness emergencies. Demonstrations included. Survival guaranteed. *Participants will be hiking in rough terrain; please wear appropriate shoes and clothing.*

Wildlife Rehabilitation. Wildlife Rehab, a benefit for wildlife and the public we serve. Join us for a basic overview of wildlife rehabilitation and learn about Hardy Lake's 30 journey in the field.

Wood Working. Have you ever thought of building your own bird house, but didn't know where to begin? Join an avid woodworker to learn wood working skills and put those skills in play.