

Winter Activity Tips

STEP OUTDOORS
WHERE HEALTH MEETS ADVENTURE!
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- 1.** Pick up a few winter tree identification tips from your local library's field guides and head out for a walk, determined to learn the name of a few trees. Start with the more recognizable ones in winter like white pine, hemlock, and white birch.
- 2.** Grab a sled and coax the family out for a day of wintry fun at the 10th annual Winterfest at Hills Creek State Park on Saturday, February 13, from 9 am - 3 pm. See the next page for more information.
- 3.** Enjoy some cross-country skiing along the Pine Creek Rail Trail, which is often groomed along the Darling Run and Marsh Creek Access Areas. If you don't have skis but want to try free of charge, come out to Winterfest 2010. In addition, Wellsboro Parks & Recreation is offering cross country ski clinics January 16th and January 30th, appropriate for youth and adults. Fee: \$8/session. Call 570-724-0300 for more info.
- 4.** Encourage each of your kids to make a pine cone birdfeeder and place it outside to see how many different birds you can attract. Be sure to participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count on February 12-16, an annual four-day event utilizing bird watchers of all ages to count birds across the continent. Visit www.birdsource.org to find out more about the Great Backyard Bird Count.
- 5.** For a change of pace from your walking route at home, walk the plowed roads of Hills Creek State Park. The minimal traffic, good scenery, and the added security gained by the presence of park staff make this a great spot for walking.
- 6.** Visit the Nasser Ice Rink in Corning some afternoon or evening for some family ice skating. Check the last page for the ice rink schedule and fees.
- 7.** Take a Flashlight Walk. Fun winter activities don't always have to take place during the daylight hours. Bundle up the family, grab a few flashlights, and take a night hike -- either through your neighborhood or at a safe, picturesque location. Pick a night when the sky is clear so you can stargaze. Make coming home the best part of the evening, by serving hot chocolate.



Try snowshoeing at Winterfest,
Feb. 13, 2010, Hills Creek State Park.

Pine Cone Backyard Feeder



MATERIALS

- a large, open pinecone
- vegetable shortening (Crisco), suet, (animal fat) or peanut butter
- oatmeal or corn meal
- birdseed (to attract more varieties of birds choose birdseed containing, sunflower seeds millet and cracked corn.)
- a few feet of string, fishing line or twine
- mixing bowl
- butter knife
- spoon
- scissors
- pie tin, paper plate or cookie sheet
- ½ cup measuring cup

DIRECTIONS

Once you have gathered your materials, you're ready to start making your bird feeder.

- Tie a string around the wider, stem end of the pinecone.
- Mix ½ cup vegetable shortening (or alternative) with ½ cup oatmeal or corn meal in a mixing bowl until well blended. (This amount will cover one large pinecone or two or three smaller ones.)
- Thoroughly spread the mixture over the pinecone with a butter knife or back side of a spoon.
- Pour the birdseed into a pie tin or on a paper plate or cookie sheet. Then roll the pinecone in the birdseed until well covered.
- Suspend the feeder from a tree branch outside.

*For more backyard feeder ideas, visit the Audubon Society's website:
www.audubon.org/educate/educators/bird_feeders.html*

BIRD-FEEDING MYTHS

MYTH: If birds eat uncooked rice, it can swell up in their throats or stomachs and kill them.

FACT: Plenty of birds eat uncooked rice in the wild. Bobolinks, sometimes called "rice birds," are a good example. While rice is okay for birds, many wedding parties now throw bird seed instead.

MYTH: Birds can choke on peanut butter.

FACT: There is no documented evidence for this. However, mixing peanut butter with grit or cornmeal will break up the stickiness if you are concerned.

MYTH: Birds become dependent on bird feeders.

FACT: Birds become accustomed to a reliable food source and will visit daily. However, birds search for food in many places, so if your feeder goes empty, most birds will find food elsewhere. During periods of extreme ice, snow, or cold, the sudden disappearance of food might be a hardship; if you are leaving town during freezing weather, consider having someone fill your feeder while you're away.

MYTH: Birds' feet can stick to metal perches.

FACT: This is not likely. A bird's legs and feet are made up mostly of tough tendons that have little blood flow during cold weather. However, we've heard rumors of feet sticking to perches: if you observe this unfortunate circumstance, please take a picture and send it to Project FeederWatch.

MYTH: Feeding hummingbirds in late summer can stop their migration.

FACT: Some people believe they should stop feeding hummingbirds right after Labor Day because the birds' southward migrations will be interrupted. However, a bird's migratory urge is primarily triggered by day length (photoperiod), and even a hearty appetite won't make a bird resist that urge. In fact, your feeder might provide a needed energy boost along a bird's migration route.



*Try ice skating for FREE at Winterfest 2010,
Saturday, February 13, Hills Creek State Park...*



*Skating at
Hills Creek State Park
Winterfest 2008*

*.. or visit the indoor
Nasser Civic Center
Ice Rink, 8 Civic
Center Plaza
Corning, NY, 14830*

MONDAY

10:00-3:00 open public
3:30-4:30 lessons
4:30-5:30 lessons
8:30-10:00 adult drop-in hockey

THURSDAY

10:00-3:00 open public
3:30-5:00 group discount open public
8:30-10:00 adult drop-in hockey

SUNDAY

8:00-9:15 Stick practice
1:00-3:30 open public
4:00-6:00 family and adults only

TUESDAY

10:00-3:00 open public
3:45-4:45 lessons
7:45-9:15 open public dollar night

FRIDAY

10:00-3:00 pm open public
8:00-10:00 open public

WEDNESDAY

10:00-3:00 open public
3:30-4:30 lessons
4:30-5:00 lessons 3 yr olds only
6:00-8:00 open public

SATURDAY

1:00-3:30 open public
8:00-10:00 open public
4:00-6:00 family and adults only

CONTACT

607-936-3764
press "7" for
Parks & Recreation

FEES:

Tots, 5 and under - \$1.00
Youth 6-17 - \$2.00
Adults 18 and up - \$3.50
Seniors - \$3.00
Skate Rental: \$2.00

Lessons: \$7.50
Adult Drop-in hockey: \$7.00
Stick Practice: \$5.00
Skate Sharpening \$7.00