

SUGAR GROVE NATURE CENTER IN FUNKS GROVE, ILLINOIS

GROUP VISIT INFORMATION

We are a private Nature Center, open to the public year-round. Each year, we welcome thousands of groups, individuals, and families wishing to explore our Nature Center buildings, grounds, trails, Imagination Grove, and numerous other unique site features. We are happy that you wish to visit us and appreciate your help by following these simple *Group Visit Guidelines*.

ALL GROUPS and Organized Gatherings of 10 or more must schedule their visit prior to arrival whether you are interested in a formal program or choose to explore on your own. This includes multiple families intending to meet at the Nature Center. Free admission is only for individuals and related families of 10 or less. Group fees are based on intended site use and will be quoted by Nature Center staff. We depend on support from those who enjoy our site!

Scheduling Your Visit

Groups are welcome. Whether you wish to participate in a Nature Center program or choose to visit on your own, RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED FOR GROUPS OF 10 OR MORE.

Scheduling your visit helps to ensure a quality experience for you and other groups that have arranged to visit. Quite often we have days when very large group events are taking place and certain areas are off-limits to other visitors and groups.

Our schedule fills quickly, so please contact us at least two weeks in advance to arrange your visit. Call 309.874.2174 or email register@sugargrovenaturecenter.org.

Groups Visiting With A Program

We offer a variety of fun and exciting nature programs, hikes, and site tours for all ages led by Nature Center staff and volunteers. Reasonable fees apply and are based on group size. Visit our website or call and speak to our Environmental Educator to learn more.

Groups Visiting Without A Program

Whether you plan to play in Imagination Grove, enjoy the trails, or explore the Nature Center, you must schedule your visit. Not doing so may result in your group being asked to leave. Even if you choose not to participate in a program, there is a nominal per person site fee. Contact us to learn more and schedule your visit.



Hiking Trails

Over seven miles of hiking trails wind through the forest and prairie habitats of the Funks Grove Natural Area. A map with suggested hikes and other important information can be picked up in the Nature Center, found at the trailheads, or downloaded from our website. In addition, a half mile self-guided interpretive trail features 18 learning stations that highlight natural features and introduce you to the wonders of nature while encouraging observation. Trails are for foot traffic only. Leashed dogs are welcome. Please stay on marked trails at all times.

Imagination Grove

Not far from the Nature Center, just across the covered bridge, is Imagination Grove. Imagination Grove is a special place where “kids can be kids,” designed to form a bond between children and nature that lasts a lifetime. This nature exploration area invites kids of ALL ages to build a fort, tromp in the creek, climb a tree, pretend they are an early explorer, and so much more! Groups are welcome to enjoy Imagination Grove during their scheduled visit. If you plan to do so, we encourage you to have your group bring shoes that can get wet. An extra set of clothes is also a good idea. ☺ Help us out by using the outside restrooms after you’ve played.

Campfires

Campfires are by permission only and a fee is charged for use of the campfire ring and firewood. Firewood CAN NOT be brought into Funks Grove due to the risk of transporting exotic species and diseases. We have roasting sticks available for use. Special campfire programs are offered during all seasons. Contact us to find out more!



Picnic Shelter

Our picnic shelter is available on a first-come, first-served basis unless it has been previously reserved. Any intended use by a group beyond one hour or 15 guests requires a picnic shelter reservation. If you would like to reserve the shelter, please contact us for site use fees and a reservation form. Please help us keep the shelter tidy by cleaning up after yourself. Thank you!

Camping

We offer group camping opportunities for youth groups such as scouts, 4H, church, or other non-profit organizations. Give us a call to learn more about spending a night under the stars in Funks Grove!

Retreats & Meetings

The Nature Center is a popular site for staff retreats and business/agency meetings. We would be happy to work with you to schedule your outing and provide ideas for a productive and fun-filled day in nature.

Please Remember

Sugar Grove Nature Center is a non-profit organization, which means that we do not receive any direct tax funding or state support. All of our funding comes from program and site use fees, grants, donations, and memberships. Your program fees help support the Nature Center’s daily operations and things like care for our education animals and the upkeep of Imagination Grove. It is also crucial funding for our programming, site features, trail maintenance, and land stewardship. We are thrilled to be able to provide opportunities for learning, discovering, and enjoying the environment of Funks Grove. Support from those who utilize our site will help ensure a long and vibrant future of connecting people with nature!

Hours

Our grounds, trails, & Imagination Grove are OPEN daily, year-round, from dawn until dusk.

Nature Center Building Hours

April-October

Tuesday-Friday, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Saturday, 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Sunday, 12:00-4:00 p.m.

November-March

Tuesday-Saturday, 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Sugar Grove Nature Center

4532 N 725 East Road

McLean, IL 61754

309.874.2174

www.sugargrovenaturecenter.org

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