At a glance…
Tawny Oaks is the newest environmental facility of the Peoria Park District. It is located next to Singing Woods, a 700 acre Illinois Nature Preserve. The mission of Tawny Oaks is “focus the community on the rich biological heritage of Central Illinois and engage people in its protection and restoration.” The property contains a prairie restoration, 1/2 mile of handicap accessible trail, picnic area and visitor center with restrooms. It also serves as the trailhead for our trail system into Singing Woods Nature Preserve which consists of 4 miles of rugged trails.

Field Station Hours:
April 4-October 27, 2018
Wednesday-Saturday 10 am-4 pm
Sunday-Tuesday closed
Trails: Open daily from Dawn to Dusk

Spring Wildflower Walk
Saturday, April 7
9:00 – 10:30 AM, Ages 10+ suggested, donations appreciated
Singing Woods next door is absolutely loaded with early-blooming ephemeral plants. Enjoy these fleeting beauties quickly because they are typically gone even before most people start to think about woodland wildflowers.

Singing Woods Hikes
Saturdays, April 14 and October 27
9:00 – Noon, Ages 10+ suggested, donations appreciated
Tawny Oaks is the gateway to Singing Woods Nature Preserve. Take a walk down one of our newest trails into one of Illinois’ finest stands of oak-hickory forests and visit a couple glacial drift hill prairies. It’s about a 4 mile hike and our topography here is steep and the hiking challenging, so wear sturdy shoes and durable clothes.

Songbird Mania!
Saturdays, April 28 and May 12
7:00 – 9:30 AM, Ages 10+ suggested, donations appreciated
April and May are prime months for migrating songbirds and we get ‘em in droves here at Tawny Oaks. We’re starting early but these little birds came from Central America to see us, and morning is when we hear their lively songs. It’s a great time to dust off the binos and brush up on the bird songs.

Tawny Oaks Prairie Hikes
Saturdays, May 26, June 23, July 21 and August 25
10:00 – 11:00 AM, Ages 10+ suggested, donations appreciated
Join us at Tawny Oaks for a series of prairie hikes. You’ll learn to identify what plants are blooming in our prairie, prairie birds, insects and prairie ecology. These leisurely hikes are along a smooth level path and should take no more than an hour.

Butterfly Stroll
Saturdays, May 26, June 23, July 21 and August 25
2:00 – 3:30 PM, Ages 10+ suggested, donations appreciated
Over 50 species of butterflies can be found in our prairie planting. They are most active in the heat of the day, so bring your sun hat and some water as we take a leisurely stroll through the prairie and learn to identify these insect gems. If you bring a camera, we’ll take time to snap a bunch of photos.

Explore More! Visit www.PeoriaParks.org
**Mid-morning Warbler Walks**  
**Saturdays, September 1, 8 and 15**  
**9:00 – 10:30 AM**, Ages 10+ suggested, donations appreciated  
We’ll set a leisurely pace along some level paths in hope of finding wood warblers and additional songbirds during Illinois’ fall migration. Bring along some binoculars if you have them and maybe a few friends as more eyes are better when trying to spot these quiet, tiny birds. If you lack binoculars we will have some on hand to lend and of course, all levels of experience are welcome.

**Keep Your Eye on the Sparrow**  
**Saturdays, October 6, 13 and 20**  
**9:00 – 10:30 AM**, Ages 10+ suggested, donations appreciated  
While often abundant, native sparrows are notorious for being some of the most difficult birds to spot and identify, so here’s your chance to learn them. Bring along your binoculars, and field guides as we head out into the prairie with the goal of finding 10 species of native sparrows. If you lack binoculars we will have some on hand to lend and of course, all levels of experience are welcome.

**Hawktober Hawk Watch!**  
**Saturdays, October 6, 13 and 20**  
**1:00 – 3:00 PM**, Ages 10+ suggested, donations appreciated  
Early autumn is a traditional time for hawk migration in central Illinois and we’ll scan the skies for red-tailed, broad-winged and sharp-shinned hawks, falcons, eagles and other birds of prey. Situated on top of the Illinois River bluffs, Tawny Oaks is an ideal spot for soaring birds. Bring binoculars if you have them, or use some we have on hand.

**Native Plant Sale**  
**Saturday, August 25**  
**9:00 AM – 4:00 PM**  
Late summer is an excellent time to plant native wildflowers. It gives time for roots to grow before winter, and fall rain means that you don’t need to water the plants as often. Pleasant Prairie Nursery will be at Tawny Oaks with a wonderful variety of native species to help you start your prairie garden. Get a jump-start on next year’s garden by fall planting.

**Perseids Meteor Shower**  
**Saturday, August 11**  
**9:00 PM - 11:00 PM**, Ages 10+ suggested, donations appreciated  
The Perseids is the name of a prolific meteor shower that is visible from earth that begins in July of each year and peaks in the second week of August. We’ll cross our fingers for no rain, and see just how many shooting stars go by between 9:00 PM and midnight. This meteor shower is expected to peak with one per minute so you won’t want to miss this event in the dark skies over Tawny Oaks. Bring along a blanket or lawn chair, and probably some bug spray.
**Stewardship Programs**

Become a part of the solution and join our efforts to preserve and restore the rich biological heritage of Central Illinois. These programs are all excellent opportunities to get out and volunteer to make our parks more ecologically diverse, and to help protect rare and endangered species. Groups, as well as individuals, are welcome! There are no fees for these programs, but we do request that you call (309) 418-7051 to register.

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**VPEO Training**  
**Thursday, April 12**  
**10:00 AM – Noon, Meet at Tawny Oaks**  
**Ages 18+**

VPEO stands for Volunteer Power Equipment Operator, and in our ecological restoration efforts, we often have the need to train volunteers to operate chainsaws and brush-cutters. If you are interested in becoming a VPEO, this training will be the first step in the process.

**Vegetation Monitoring Workshop**  
**Friday, May 25**  
**10:00 AM – Noon, Meet at Tawny Oaks**  
**Ages 14+**

Learn how we keep our fingers on the pulse of the forest by monitoring the plants that grow there. We need volunteers trained in the protocols we use to go out and survey plants and trees to help us understand how healthy our forest systems are, and how they are responding to restoration. Participants in this workshop will then have the opportunity to go out and conduct vegetation monitoring of our nature preserves in June.

**Butterfly Monitoring Workshop**  
**Friday, June 1**  
**10:00 AM – Noon, Meet at Tawny Oaks**  
**Ages 14+**

Each year, we conduct a weekly Butterfly Count. This workshop will teach you the protocols we use in this national monitoring effort. Participants will then have the opportunity to take part in our butterfly monitoring efforts that take place throughout the summer.

**Invasive Species Workshop**  
**Friday, June 8**  
**10:00 AM – Noon, Meet at Tawny Oaks**  
**Ages 14+**

There are several exotic and invasive species that cause havoc to our isolated natural areas. Learn how to identify these invasive species, and the best methods of controlling them. Participants in this workshop will have a strong base of knowledge to participate in our ecological restoration workdays starting in September.

**Prescribed Fire Workshop**  
**Saturday, September 22**  
**10:00 AM – 3:00 PM, Meet at Tawny Oaks**  
**Ages 18+**

Prescribed fire is one of the most important tools in the ecological restoration toolbox for keeping oak woodlands healthy and diverse. The Peoria Park District has several areas that receive periodic prescribed burns, and it takes trained and dedicated volunteers to do this. Come out and learn all about how we conduct prescribed burns and learn how to be a crew member and participate in our prescribed burns in October and November.

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**Ecological Restoration Workdays**

**Ages 14+**

Here’s where the real work happens! Join us as we meet-up at one of our local natural areas and we’ll put everything we know to work in making our natural areas as healthy as we can. We’ll be dealing with exotic-invasive species removal, so bring gloves, sturdy shoes, and water. We’ll have all the tools necessary. It’s some of the most important ecological work we can do, and we need your help to make it happen. Join us on one or all of these focused efforts:

- **Friday, September 7, 9:00 AM, Singing Woods Hill Prairie Workday** - Meet at the Tawny Oaks Shelter
- **Friday, September 14, 9:00 AM, Robinson Park Hill Prairie Workday** - Meet at the Mossville Rd South Parking Lot
- **Friday, September 21, 9:00 AM, Forest Park Hill Prairie Workday** - Meet at Forest Park Nature Center
- **Friday, September 28, 9:00 AM, Detweiller Park Workday** - Meet at Parking lot by Pine and Dogwood Shelters in Detweiller Park
- **Friday, October 5, 9:00 AM, Donovan Park Workday** - Meet in parking lot at Donovan Park
- **Friday, October 12, 9:00 AM, Camp Wokanda Hill Prairie Workday** - Meet in upper lot at Camp Wokanda
- **Friday, October 19, 9:00 AM, Singing Woods Hill Prairie Workday** - Meet at Tawny Oaks Shelter
- **Friday, October 26, 9:00 AM, Tawny Oaks Prairie Workday** - Meet at Tawny Oaks Shelter

**Garlic Mustard Workdays**

**Friday, May 18 and Saturday, May 19**

10:00 – 11:30 AM, Meet at Tawny Oaks

**Ages 14+ suggested**

Garlic mustard is an exotic/invasive species that has the potential to take over large swaths of our woodlands, and crowding out native wildflowers. Each year, we remove as much as we can by cutting and hand-pulling. No experience is necessary, but bring work gloves and a willingness to work. Our forests will thank you.

**Oak Woods Workdays**

**Saturdays, August 4, September 29**

9:00 – 11:00 AM, Meet at Tawny Oaks

**Ages 14+ suggested**

Exotic plants are a major ecological problem throughout the country and Tawny Oaks is no different. Volunteer this season to help us remove bush honeysuckle, multiflora rose, autumn olive and sweet clover in our wood edges and prairie restoration.

**Prairie Seed Collection Workdays**

**Saturdays, September 29, October 27**

1:00 – 3:00 PM, Meet at Tawny Oaks

**Ages 10+**

Our prairies at Tawny Oaks are loaded with seed this time of year. This seed helps us start new prairie plantings throughout the Park District. But the seed doesn’t pick itself, and that’s where we need your help. You will learn how to identify dormant plants, harvest methods and how to clean and prep seed for planting.

Explore More! Visit www.PeoriaParks.org