

Everybody loves a good story!



Discover the heart-warming tales of Hickory Knolls from Harley the hawk on a short hike through the natural area as he takes his friend, Greta the Grasshopper, on an adventure.








Harley's family has lived in the Fox Valley area for generations and he has some great insight as to how the land and environment have changed over the years.







The walk begins on the trail across the road, west of the garden plots and east of the pavilion. The entire story walk is an estimated 3/4-mile. Inner loop story walk is about 1/2-mile.



For storybook information:
stcnature.org/Harley

HICKORY KNOLLS
Discovery
CENTER

	<p>Harley the Red-tailed hawk Like his family before him, Harley rules the skies over Hickory Knolls. His sharp eyesight lets him see a mouse from 100 feet in the air and his strong wings help him fly at speeds up to 40 mph. He and his mate can often be seen perching in the cottonwood trees near the first hill as you enter the natural area. Look for their large nest, made of sticks, as you hike the trails.</p>
	<p>Greta the grasshopper Greta is quite chatty in our story, but actually is a good listener too. Female grasshoppers have ears, not on their heads, but on the front part of their abdomen. They listen for the calls of the males of their species. The males can make sound either by rattling their wings in flight (crepitation), or by rubbing their legs against their wings (stridulation).</p>
	<p>Callie the monarch caterpillar Even though she's absent for much of the story, Callie is the star of Harley and Greta's adventure. She began her life as an egg, then fed on milkweed plants and molted several times before she reached the time to shed her skin one last time and form a chrysalis. There she begins her miraculous transformation in a butterfly, a process that takes 10 days to two weeks.</p>
	<p>Aaron the American goldfinch Some people call Aaron a wild canary due to his bright yellow color, and they wouldn't be too far off. American goldfinches belong to the same family as canaries, the Fringillidae. In summer, listen for Aaron's musical song as well as the call he gives in flight, which sounds like "potato chip, potato chip." You can find Aaron in winter too, but at that time of year he wears colors that are drab, much like those of his mate.</p>
	<p>Dottie the diurnal lightning bug Dottie's flashy relatives get all the attention in summertime, but she is an important member of the Lampyridae, the lightning bug or firefly family. Although she does not produce light as an adult, when she was a young larva she glowed. All lightning bug larvae live in the ground and feed on other insects but as adults they sip nectar and pollen, if they feed at all.</p>
	<p>Cora the coyote Just about everyone has heard of coyotes, but hardly anyone really understands these mysterious creatures. Although they have a reputation of being carnivores, coyotes actually are omnivores and eat a variety of plants and animals. In summertime their diet can be almost 100% plant-based because that's when fruits like berries are plentiful.</p>
	<p>Sammy the squirrel Hickory Knolls is home to both fox squirrels and gray squirrels. Fox squirrels have an orange underside and are larger, averaging around 2 lbs.; gray squirrels are smaller, around 1 lb., and have white underneath. As rodents, they feed on plant material, including fruits and nuts. They build leafy nests in trees but also will live in tree cavities. At any one time, most squirrels have at least two nests they call home.</p>

	<p>Chucky the chipmunk Chucky belongs to the same family as Sammy, which is the Sciuridae, or squirrel family. But rather than nesting in trees, Chucky digs an extensive home underneath the ground. His burrow can have many chambers, including spaces for sleeping, storing food and going to the bathroom. He needs all those rooms because chipmunks stay in their burrows all winter long.</p>
	<p>Spencer the spring peeper Spring peepers are about 1 ½ in. long and tan or brown in color with a telltale X on their back. They are named for the peeping sound of their call. Like chorus frogs, spring peepers mate and lay their eggs in wetlands and then disperse. Their tadpoles feed on aquatic plants and need about eight to 10 weeks to transform into frogs.</p>
	<p>Colin the chorus frog Chorus frogs measure about 1 in. in length and are tan or brown with three dark stripes running down their back. Colin and his friends are the loudest frogs in the wetlands. In springtime, after mating and laying eggs in water, the frogs disperse and head into the shaded woodlands where they can stay cool and moist. Like all frogs, they hibernate in winter.</p>
	<p>Norman the northern leopard frog Northern leopard frogs are 3 to 5 in. in length and are named for the dark spots their green skin. Their long, strong legs help them travel great distances from the wetlands where their eggs were laid. As long as they can avoid direct sunlight and drying winds, they survive just fine. As an adult, Norman feeds on insects, as do Spencer and Colin and in fact all frogs.</p>
	<p>Ginny the ground-nesting bee Ginny represents the dozens of species of native bees that live at Hickory Knolls. She is green, which tells us she is part of the Halictidae, or sweat bee family, and is quite small, about ½ in. in length. But native bees come in many colors and sizes and include fuzzy bumblebees, mason bees and leafcutter bees. They are important pollinators of our native wildflowers. With the exception of bumblebees, our native bees are solitary; they live by themselves and do not produce honey.</p>
	<p>Callie the monarch butterfly Once a caterpillar, Callie ends up a beautiful butterfly. In real life, monarch butterflies raise three generations in our area. The final group, known as the super generation, in September takes off on a fabulous journey south to the mountains of Mexico. They spend the winter there, then in March begin their flight back north. In the southern United States they lay their eggs, which will supply the next generation of monarchs that continue the journey. Monarchs typically arrive back at Hickory Knolls in June. You can start looking for their caterpillars—the next Callies—in early July.</p>

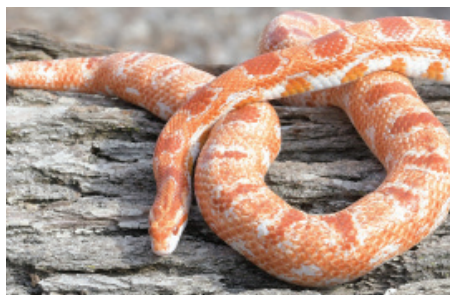
AFTER THE STORY WALK, ENJOY THESE ADDITIONAL NATURE ACTIVITIES

INSIDE THE DISCOVERY CENTER...



Meet Flower, Salamander

Flower is a tiger salamander and, despite his name, is male. Flower came to Hickory Knolls several years ago when his human family was embarking on a long vacation and couldn't find a salamander-sitter. He's lived front and center on the Hickory Knolls service desk ever since. Tiger salamanders are pretty common residents of neighborhoods that are near ponds or wetlands, yet these animals are rarely seen due to their secretive nature. They spend their days in underground burrows, emerging at night to hunt. Flower just loves to dig and play in his substrate. Their diet includes earthworms, insects and sometimes even frogs and other salamanders. Tiger salamanders are also notable for their long lifespans, which range from 10-16 years in the wild and more than 20 years in captivity.



Stumpy Hancock, Cornsnake

Several years ago Stumpy, a cornsnake, escaped inside a local apartment building and slithered into a unit where the people were afraid of snakes. Much shrieking and stomping ensued, and Stumpy took refuge under a refrigerator, but not before the end of her tail got crushed. A neighbor who likes snakes rescued her and tried to keep her, but his other snake reacted badly. Stumpy's stay at Hickory Knolls started off as temporary, but her gorgeous colors and calm temperament made her perfect for use in education programs. Because display space is limited, Stumpy lives in the back room. Ask to see her the next time you visit.

And many more critters!

MORE FALL FUN

Not Too Creepy Campfire

Ages 1+

Laura McCoy

The critters have selected their favorite stories that will have even the smallest ghouls giggling. Join the St. Charles Public Library storyteller who will bring these stories to life with more smiles than scares. Halloween fun continues at this campfire with a prepackaged sweet treat. Adults are free.

Th	Oct 22	6:30-7:15pm	23209
RES	\$5/NR \$8		HKDC

NEW! Nature Nights

Ages 3-10

Naturalist Staff

Calling all party animals! Spend a special, fun-filled evening meeting the critters, playing nature-related games and enjoying a sweet treat. Participants must be accompanied by a parent. One parent may accompany multiple children from the same household. Advance registration required.

RES	\$10/NR \$15 per child	HKDC
Adults are	FREE	

Mom & Son

F	Nov 13	7-8pm	23628
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Daddy & Daughter

Sa	Nov 14	7-8pm	23629
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How You Can Become a Naturalist

Ages 18+ Kane Co. Certified Naturalists

Want to learn about Kane County's fastest-growing nature-education program for adults? Attend this free information session to find out what all the excitement is about. Classes begin January 2021. Course fee is \$300 per person. The Mission of the Kane County Certified Naturalists is to promote awareness and citizen stewardship of Kane County and Illinois natural resources through science-based education and community service. For more information, call Pam Otto at 630-513-4346.

Th	Nov 12	7pm
FREE		HKDC



Borrow a book to read at home or share a story with one of the resident animals. Donations of nature-themed books in good condition are welcome.

HICKORY KNOLLS Hideout NATURE PLAY AREA

Open Daily • Dawn to Dusk

HAVE FUN • BE SAFE

What are your favorite childhood memories? Did you ever dig holes to China, catch fireflies or frogs, or pretend you were climbing the highest mountain, just by standing on a boulder?

Spontaneous, self-guided nature play by children has a beneficial impact on their mental and physical health. Reconnecting children with nature is also proving critical to fostering a healthy conservation ethic for the future of our planet.

This outdoor space provides positive, hands-on experiences in nature where kids – and parents – can discover unstructured fun... find all sorts of critters, dig for buried treasure or maybe make some music with sticks and a hollow log.

