

## NATURALIST PROGRAMMING AT STATE FOREST THIS SUMMER



Thanks to a partnership with Beaver Creek Reserve an exciting series of family-friendly naturalist programs will take place this summer at the Black River State Forest.

The first program – at 10 a.m. Saturday, May 24, at the Castle Mound shelter – will be all about reptiles, and it will feature live snakes and turtles of various species. Participants will be able to handle some of these creatures while they learn of the myths and misconceptions that have created fear of reptiles.

Additional events from the naturalists at Beaver Creek will continue through the summer. Topics will include owls, astronomy, animal tracking, butterflies, interpretive hikes, nature crafts for kids and a few yet to be determined.

Beaver Creek Reserve is a nature center in Eau Claire County that has been in existence since 1947. Staff at Beaver Creek provides a wide range of outdoor educational programs for all age groups.

Most of the naturalist events here will originate at the Castle Mound shelter building. This historic structure was built in the 1930s by the Works Progress Administration. There will be no charge for the programs other than the requirement that all vehicles entering Castle Mound must have a state parks and forest permit.

After the programs participants are encouraged to hike the nature trail and visit the observation tower atop Castle Mound. From this scenic vantage one can see miles in every direction. Castle Mound also offers tables and grills for picnicking and of course camping.

In addition to these events we will also have our annual Smokey the Bear birthday party in August. The Black River Forest Trail Foundation will sponsor a hike and bike day Sept 7. This is the same group that puts on the annual candlelight ski event. We are also open to hosting other suitable programming. If you have a nature based topic that you are interested in sharing please call us at the number below.

For more information please visit our website at <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/forestry/StateForests/SF-BlackRiver/> or Beaver Creeks at <http://www.beavercreekreserve.org/>. For questions about this article or our upcoming events please call us at (715) 284-4103.