

TROUT LAKE NATURE CENTER



February 2026



Nature Love Photo Contest

The Trout Lake Nature Center's Nature Love Photo Contest has concluded. Many thanks to the photographers who found heart-shaped things in nature to photograph. Entries are being judged for uniqueness, photo quality, and heart shape. The creativity is amazing and, of course, there are many heart shapes to be found in nature when you take the time to look and use your imagination. This is a special way to celebrate Valentine's Day. **Check out our Facebook page to see the photos submitted or we will be posting them on our lobby television.**

Scrambled Eggs???

The Trout Lake Nature Center will begin its **Egg Hunt Scramble on February 24 through April 13th** to celebrate the egg laying season. Large eggs are hidden on one of our trails. Each egg has a letter on the outside. Visitors find the eggs and record the letters (leaving the eggs) to unscramble the letters to find the secret phrase. It is a fun way to enjoy our trails and discover hidden things. Last year, several participants noticed a barred owl watching them as they searched for the eggs.

The Egg Hunt Scramble occurs at this time of year because birds are breeding and nesting as temperatures start to warm up. The exact time birds start to have babies depends on the species and varies based on geographic location and climate conditions for that year. Birds in tropical and southern climates nest earlier, starting in January or February which often happens in Lake County.

Daylight hours becoming longer stimulates the reproductive hormone cycle in birds and triggers mating behavior and nesting instincts.



Warming temperatures mean not as much energy is needed to stay warm and this energy can be used for egg production and incubation. More abundant and easily found food provides essential nutrition for breeding and rearing young. Hatching in the spring allows nestlings and fledging peak food and summer days for optimal development.

The Egg Hunt Scramble will take place any day TLNC is open for visitors (Tuesday through Saturday, 9 AM to 4 PM and Sunday from 1 to 4 PM). Non-TLNC members must pay the \$5/vehicle entry fee but donations are always appreciated.



Inspired by Mushrooms???

Fungi are both, fascinating and mysterious at the same time. Mushrooms and fungi are vital to the planet, performing numerous beneficial roles such as decomposing organic matter, enriching soil, and supporting plant growth. They facilitate crucial nutrient cycling and carbon sequestration, acting as a foundation for life. Fungi can't survive independently; they rely on carbon from plants. In return, around 80% of plants depend on fungal networks for their vitality. Fungi enhance

nutrient availability by breaking down plant and animal debris, promoting nitrogen fixation and phosphorus mobilization.

Beneath the visible mushrooms, truffles, and crusts, lies the mycelium, which connects different fungi and plant roots. Functioning similarly to nature's internet or the wood wide web. Mycelium enables the exchange of water, nitrogen, carbon, and essential minerals, facilitating plant survival and growth. Approximately 80% of plant species depend on these fungal networks, highlighting their crucial role in maintaining ecosystem health.

The February 18th water color painting class from 1 to 3 PM will focus on mushrooms. Ellen Westerholm teaches the TLNC Inspired by Nature classes from February to May. You must register to attend. All classes are held at TLNC. Your facility entry fee is included in your class fee.

[Register Here](#)



Caring for Trees

Trees in our landscape may have suffered from freeze damage. How do you care for these trees to protect your landscape? Can you tell if a tree is diseased? Do you know how to remove portions or trim a tree to keep its natural shape and maintain its strength?

Improperly trimmed trees can be a potential hazard during a storm or rain event. Tree and palm arborist Eric Scovack (TipTop Tree Service) will explain how to care for your landscape's most expensive and often largest feature—your trees. Learn how to trim and maintain your trees through a lecture followed by demonstrations on some the TLNC trees.

This program will take place on February 21 from 1:30 to 3 PM at TLNC. There is no cost to attend but non-TLNC member will be charged a \$5/vehicle facility entry fee.

Wood Carving Class

Bill Dodd has been carving decorative decoys for 56 years, starting with a knife, chisel and draw knife. Over the years, Dodd graduated to carving with power tools.

Join Dodd for an introductory carving class on **February 28 from 10 AM to 1 PM at the Trout Lake Nature Center**. This workshop is for anyone interested in trying their hand at carving and painting a feather pin. The cost of the class includes the purchase of a rotary carving tool and other carving materials needed.

The cost of the class is \$80 which included TLNC's facility entry fee (\$5/vehicle). Please, bring safety glasses and an apron (the apron is for easier cleanup). Use the button below to register and learn more about this class.

[Register Here](#)



We Need Your Help

The Amazing Race for Charity will take place on March 21 in Eustis. TLNC will participate but needs to provide 10 volunteers to help at the race. This race is held yearly to raise funds to support local nonprofits. Like the television version of the Amazing Race, the Amazing Race for Charity include challenges that two-member teams must complete as they run the course. These challenges are created by participating nonprofits and change each year.

As a participating nonprofit, TLNC has created a challenge with an environmental education element. Become a volunteer for TLNC or participate as a team racing. The Amazing Race is a half-day activity that helps raise funds for TLNC and other local charities while being loads of fun.

Email TLNC.director@gmail.com or call 352-357-7536 if you are interested in helping.

Mission, Vision and Core Values of TLNC

The TLNC Board and staff recently engage in strategic and succession planning. At the first meeting, the mission and vision for TLNC was updated.

The **mission** of the Trout Lake Nature Center is to connect people with nature through education and conservation.

Vision: The Trout Lake Nature Center strives to be the premier nature center providing nature-based environmental education to all.

TLNC's core values are a little longer and its mission, vision and core values can be found on the TLNC website.

Office Manager Vacancy

Recently, Mel Munguia our Education Specialist/Office Manager left Florida to follow her husband who moved to Missouri for a new job. Her position has been split into two part-time positions up to 30 hours/week for both an Office Manager and Education Specialist.

The Education Specialist position is filled. We are still looking for someone to be our Office Manager. Anyone who is retired or wants to work part-time would be perfect for this position. Database Management, and financial and customer relations experience is needed. Use the button below to get a position description. Submit your resume to TLNC.director@gmail.com

Button

TLNC Blog

UPCOMING EVENTS



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