

# Red Oak Nature Center to host free Maple Fest on March 18

Red Oak Nature Center will be offering an early, sweet taste of spring on Saturday, March 18, when the annual Maple Fest takes place.

The event is free to the public, with tours running every hour beginning at 9 a.m. (final tour at 1 p.m.).

Naturalists from Red Oak will lead visitors to various stations in the woods to view demonstrations of how maple sap is harvested and turned into delicious maple syrup. Each group will tap a maple tree, then witness the process of how sap is boiled and converted into syrup. Group taste-tests will follow.

“Early spring is the perfect time to collect maple sap because the days start getting warmer but the nights are still cold,” said Margaret Gazdacka, facility manager at Red Oak. “Visitors will witness this age-old practice of taking sap from a tree and turning it into syrup you use on your pancakes.”



Maple-themed treats and hot beverages will be available for a small fee (cash or check). Also, the event will feature items for sale from Vermont – the maple syrup-producing capital of the world – that include small bottles of maple syrup, candy and beef jerky. Dimple Donuts is providing maple doughnuts while supplies last.

Groups of 10 or more must pre-register by calling 630-897-1808.

Scout groups are encouraged to attend on Sunday, March 19, when Red Oak hosts its “Scout Syrup Sunday” event. Purchase tickets via the online event calendar.

Red Oak Nature Center is located on Route 25, one mile north of Route 56 (Butterfield Rd.). For more information, visit the District’s website at [www.foxvalleyparkdistrict.org](http://www.foxvalleyparkdistrict.org) and the Red Oak Facebook page.

**PHOTO CAPTION:** Visitors at the free Maple Fest event next Saturday (March 18) at Red Oak Nature Center will tap a maple tree and learn how its sap is converted into tasty maple syrup.