



Champions for Louisville's natural areas, from the nation's largest urban forest, Jefferson Memorial Forest, to the ones in your neighborhood.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Valentine's Day  
Romantic Retreat**

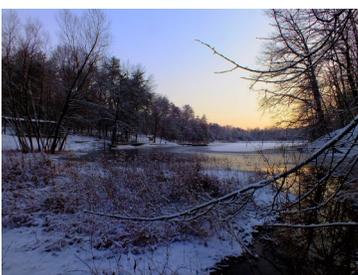
Tues., February 13th  
7:00 PM - 10:00 PM

**Valentine's Day  
Romantic Retreat**

Wed., February 14th  
7:00 PM - 10:00 PM

**FOX (Families Outside  
Exploring)**

Sat., February 17th  
9:00 AM - noon



**Please Give Your Support**

Your contributions help pre-serve and enhance natural areas and improve them as spaces for wonder and adventure.

**Jefferson Memorial Forest receives \$25,000 Award to support Louisville ECHO**

Jefferson Memorial Forest and its award-winning Louisville ECHO (Louisville is Engaging Children Outdoors) initiative has been highlighted as a Spotlight Award winner for identifying creative partnerships and enacting sustainable and replicable programs that address the unique health issues facing Louisville. The goal of Louisville ECHO is to create opportunities in West Louisville where every resident has access to a safe and healthy environment that increases physical activity, reduces stress, and leads to healthier lives through outdoor recreation and environmental education and stewardship.

This \$25,000 award, part of the Healthiest Cities & Counties Challenge, was presented by Johnathan Copely, CEO of Aetna Better Health of Kentucky. Ten winners and five honorable mentions were selected from among the fifty participating "challenge" cities for their ability to address the need to improve opportunities for all Americans – regardless of income, education or ethnic background – to take an active role in healthy living. The funding will be used to sustain the Louisville ECHO initiative.

From left to right: Councilwoman Cheri Bryan-Hamilton, Louisville Metro District 5; Johnathan Copely, Esq, CEO of Aetna Better Health of Kentucky; Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer; Betty Adkins, Director of Community Resource Development, Louisville Metro Department of Public Health & Wellness; Vincent James, Louisville Metro Chief of Community Building; Theresa Zawacki, Chairwoman, Wilderness Louisville, Inc.; Bennett Knox, Parks Administrator for Jefferson Memorial Forest and Executive Director of Wilderness Louisville, Inc.



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### Looking for a Valentine's Day Adventure?

What could possibly be more romantic than a candlelit walk in the woods with your special someone? Give your sweetie the moon, the stars and all of Louisville! With Valentine's Day right around the corner, Jefferson Memorial Forest's Valentine's Day hike will be filling up with happy couples from all over Louisville. Bring them to the Forest for a romantic candlelit hike that ends with a beautiful view of the lights of Louisville. The hike's destination is the Forest's beautiful Horine Center, where you'll be greeted by a roaring fire, hot beverages, hors d'oeuvres, and desserts. Inside sweethearts can find a cozy corner to themselves or mingle with other couples. Some have enjoyed the event enough to come back every year, always excited to catch up with other couples who have also made this evening escape a part of their Valentine's traditions. There is a \$40 fee per couple and reservations must be made by Friday, February 9, 2017. Couples can register to participate on February 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> by calling the Welcome Center at Jefferson Memorial Forest, (502)368-5404.

### A Tour Through the New Scott's Gap

One of the most remote and beautiful areas of Jefferson Memorial Forest, Scott's Gap, is being improved for visitors. At 90 feet long, a new boardwalk is complete with improvements on the way including a half-mile-long, accessible gravel path, a bench overlooking a scenic area and parking lot improvements.

As a result, there is more to explore in the woodlands, thanks to Jefferson Memorial Forest land management staff. Hardy crews from the staff stretched a \$152,000 budget by executing hands-on construction of the boardwalk and enhancements to the wetlands via the leadership of Jefferson Memorial Forest Land Manager, Bryan Lewis. Forest lovers have District 14 Metro Councilwoman Cindy Fowler to thank for her support of funding allocation by Metro Louisville. Look for Phase I of this project, for which the budget is about \$250,000, to be complete in 2018.



Wilderness Louisville welcomes donations for this and other Jefferson Memorial Forest initiatives. Phase II of this particular project, one of a number of exciting infrastructure improvements planned at the forest, calls for eventual construction of restroom facilities and a shelter. When complete, amenities like these open up nature exploration to many members of the public, including visits by school groups and others interested in nature programs. Both phases are part of the vision for this natural area from the 2009 Master Plan for Jefferson Memorial Forest. As spring comes, take some time to visit Scott's Gap and check out the progress!

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**About Us:** Incorporated in 2013, Wilderness Louisville, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that partners with Louisville Metro Parks and Recreation to support a variety of improvements to the wonderfully varied system of public Natural Areas across this community including Jefferson Memorial Forest, the nation's largest city-owned urban forest.

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