dcr
Massachusetts

Great Falls Discovery Center

Department of Conservation and Recreation

DECEMBER 2026 PROGRAMS

All programs are free and open to the public, unless otherwise noted. Children under age 18 must be accompanied by an adult. The Great Falls Discovery Center is located at 2 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA. For more information, call the Visitor Center at (413) 863-3221.

ADA/Reasonable Accommodation:
Call (617) 645-0358, or email Moneesha.dasgupta2@mass.gov.

Coming Events

Visitor Center Open Hours.

Tuesdays, 10:00 am–4:00 pm, Wednesdays–Sundays, 10:00 am–5:30 pm. Closed Friday, Dec. 25.

Explore the natural, cultural and industrial history of the Connecticut River Watershed with our dynamic exhibit dioramas year-round. Adjacent to the Canalside Rail Trail, the center also includes the Great Hall exhibit gallery, restrooms, and drinking water. Wheelchair accessible. Closed Mondays, but open Monday holidays.

Ongoing, Dec. 3 – Jan. 30.

Accessible during open hours.

Great Hall Exhibit: Through the Lens of the Watershed, by Alfred Mitchell.

Mill windows stare like developed negatives. Foreclosure signs go unread by the river. These are tool towns, quiet towns, and in every gap the light finds its way back in. Alfred Mitchell is a Western Massachusetts photographer who finds meaning in both the obvious and the overlooked. Working across street, landscape, abstract, and fine art photography, he transforms light, shadow, and texture into moments of quiet discovery, inviting viewers to pause and see the beauty woven into everyday life. For all ages.

Ongoing, Oct. 24 – Jan. 31

Accessible during open hours.

Great Hall Exhibit Display Case: Mandalas.

Mandalas, from the Persian tradition, are mathematical patterns based on both variation and repetition. They are meant to imitate the symmetry found in nature and the divine. These Mandalas for Mindfulness and Peace are a project of the Women's Center at the Heartwing Center, with support from the Great Falls Discovery Center and RiverCulture. Special thanks to the Montague Cultural Council for generously sponsoring this project. For all ages.

MORE PROGRAMS CONTINUED, NEXT PAGE.

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Coming Events

Ongoing
Dec. 1 –
Jan. 1.

Indoor Story Walk®: *We Are Water Protectors*, by Carole Lindstrom.
This story honors Indigenous-led movements across the world to protect water. For ages 3–7 and everyone ready to safeguard the Earth's water from harm. Meet at the welcome desk inside the Discovery Center.

Ongoing,
Nov. 20 –
Jan. 1.

Outdoor StoryWalk® — *Thanks to the Animals*.
Enjoy a story, fresh air, and exercise! Stop by the Discovery Center's outdoor grounds for a free self-guided Story Walk® featuring *Thanks to the Animals* by Allen Sockabasin. For ages 6-8 and anyone grateful for wildlife Follow the path to book pages posted along the route.

The StoryWalk® Project was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, VT, and developed in collaboration with the Kellogg-Hubbard Library. StoryWalk® is a registered service mark owned by Ms. Ferguson. This StoryWalk® is provided by Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation Interpretive Services.

Thursdays,
Dec. 3, 10,
17, & 24.
1:00–2:00 pm.

Nice & Easy Walks.
Easy-paced, 1- to 2-mile guided walk, along the Canalside Rail Trail or downtown Turners Falls, geared for older adults, but open to all. Enjoy some natural and local history along the way. Dress for the weather with sturdy footwear and bring water. Inclement weather cancels. Meet at the main entrance.

Friday,
Dec. 4, 11,
& 18.
10:30–
11:30 am.

Kidleidoscope Story Hour.
For ages 3-6, accompanied by an adult. Learn more about our wildlife neighbors in the Connecticut River Watershed. Program includes a story, activities, and crafts. Activities are indoors and outdoors, weather permitting. Siblings and friends are welcome. Meet in the Great Hall.

- **12/4: Raccoons.**
- **12/11: Ducks.**
- **12/18: Deer.**

Friday,
Dec. 4.
4:00–7:00 pm.

First Friday: It's A Wonderful Night in Turners Falls … for the Birds!
Bring the wonder of nature to your home by crafting your own bird feeder. Keep warm with hot cocoa and conversations about how different feeders attract different birds during It's a Wonderful Night in Turners Falls — a town-wide event. For all ages. Meet in the Great Hall.

MORE PROGRAMS CONTINUED, NEXT PAGE.

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DECEMBER 2026 PROGRAMS

Coming Events

Saturday,
Dec. 5.
10:00 am–
12:30 pm.

It's A Wonderful Day in Turners Falls …
for the Birds!
The Bird feeder making continues! Keep warm with hot cocoa and conversations about how different feeders attract different birds. For all ages. Meet in the Great Hall.

Sunday,
Dec. 6.
3:00–4:30 pm.

A Holiday Music Session.
Join us for a soothing respite during the busy holiday time. Come listen to Danse Café — a duet featuring guitar and fiddle — who play traditional European and American holiday music. This is an informal gathering of two musically minded friends to celebrate the lovely music of the holidays. Free and for all ages. Open to the public to come and go at will. Meet in the Great Hall.

Saturday,
Dec. 12.
2:00–3:15 pm.

Local History Talk:
The Tenements of Turners Falls.
Discover how late 19th century mill worker tenements tested every aspect of the town, from sanitation to wages. In this illustrated talk, hear stories from four blocks that make up our planned industrial community, using photographs, maps and newspaper clippings. Ages 8 and up. Meet in the Great Hall.

Sunday,
Dec. 13.
2:30–4:30 pm.

A Québécois (French Canadian)
Jam Session.
French Canadians played a key role in building Turners Falls, arriving in the late-19th century to dig the canal and work in the local mills. They joined Irish, German, Polish, and Bohemian immigrants to shape the village's working-class and immigrant heritage. For this jam session, an informal group of musicians gather to honor this rich and joyful French Canadian music. This is an informal gathering of musically minded friends. Free, for all ages, and open to the public to come and go at will.

Ongoing,
Dec. 19 –
Jan. 3.

School Vacation Week:
Mammal Adaptation Investigation Station.
Come learn about local mammals and their unique winter adaptations. Every animal has special adaptations that enable them to survive in their winter habitats. Explore through touchable artifacts (pelts, replica skulls, and replica tracks), and habitat diorama scavenger hunts. Drop in anytime during open hours. For ages 4 and up.

MORE PROGRAMS CONTINUED, NEXT PAGE.

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Coming Events

Saturday,
Dec. 19.
1:00–
3:00 pm.

Gingerbread Houses.
Build an easy gingerbread house using graham crackers and an assortment of candy. For ages 3-16, accompanied by an adult. Free. Supplies are provided. Inquire if food allergies are a concern. Sponsored by the Montague Public Libraries.

Sunday,
Dec. 20.
1:30–
3:00 p.m.

Winter Solstice Walk.
Enjoy our annual tradition of sharing poetry, storytelling and light on this accessible 2.5-mile walk along the Canalside Rail Trail. Stay after the walk for hot cocoa and French/Breton music in the Great Hall. Dress for the weather and bring water. Meet outside the Discovery Center's main entrance. For adults and children ages 6 and up. Inclement weather or icy trail conditions cancel. Meet at the entrance.

Sunday,
Dec. 20.
2:30–4:30 pm.

A French / Breton Jam Session.
An informal group of musicians gathers to play the enchanting traditional dance music from France and Brittany, commonly known as bal folk. This is not a performance but rather a coming together of musically minded friends. The event is free and open to the public to come and go at will. For all ages. Meet in the Great Hall.

Sunday,
Dec. 27.
10:30 am–
12:00 pm.

Art Naturally: Felting Life Under the Snow.
Discover nature through story, poetry and art in our series of free art programs. Create a wintry landscape "painting" with wool, fleece, pre-felt and water. Learn how different animals adapt to snow, whether foraging or waiting out the cold. For teens, adults and children ages 6 and up (accompanied by an adult). All materials provided. Space and supplies are limited. Meet in the Great Hall promptly at 10:30 am for complete instructions.

Friday,
Jan. 1.
1:00–3:00 pm.

Save the Date! First Day Hike.
Enjoy a leisurely three-mile stroll down the Canalside Rail Trail and get the New Year started off on a Great Falls note! This family friendly hike follows a gentle route and provides an opportunity to discover the abundant natural, historical, and cultural features that make the Great Falls Discovery Center and Canalside Rail Trail such an amazing State Park! Be prepared for cold weather: dress in layers and wear winter boots. Dogs are welcome on-leash. Co-sponsored by the Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center. Meet in the Great Hall. Hike begins at 1:15 p.m.