



# Naturally Speaking

Newsletter for the friends of the LaPorte County Parks.

Fall 2019

## Baby Steps in Wildlife Habitat Improvements

When most people think about wildlife habitat improvements, they usually believe they cannot make a difference in the grand scheme of things. Here at the LaPorte County Parks we have the property to make more large scale habitat alterations. We constantly have non-native, invasive plant removal projects going on, several former farm fields have been converted to pollinator habitat, stream bank stabilization projects at Creek Ridge and wetland restoration at Red Mill are just a few of the projects that have happened in the past 15 years. But just because you don't have hundreds of acres to come up with these type of projects doesn't mean you can't help your local wildlife out!



Larger projects aside, your County Parks are also places where we have started converting flower beds over to native plants that better benefit all types of wildlife. While pollinators do utilize non-native plants, they have adapted and evolved with native plants and typically can more effectively utilize those plants over their non-native options. In the past two years we have been slowly removing non-native trees and landscape plantings then replacing them with native plants in your parks. While we have no study showing that pollinator numbers have increased due to these plantings, we can say that we are now seeing caterpillar larvae in our small plantings and these beds are constantly buzzing with activity. There are many options out there that are both beautiful and functional to your landscaping needs and that can be confusing and overwhelming.

*Continued on page 7*

**Administrative Office**  
**Red Mill County Park**  
**Open: 7am-12pm/12:30pm-5pm**  
**Monday - Thursday**  
0185 S. Holmesville Rd.  
LaPorte, IN 46350  
219-325-8315  
Fax 219-325-8317  
E-Mail [lcparcs@csinet.net](mailto:lcparcs@csinet.net)  
[rangerjeremy@csinet.net](mailto:rangerjeremy@csinet.net)  
[www.laportecountyparks.org](http://www.laportecountyparks.org)

**Naturalist Office**  
**Luhr County Park**  
3178 S. 150 West  
LaPorte, IN 46350  
219-324-5855  
E-Mail [natureniki@csinet.net](mailto:natureniki@csinet.net)  
[rangerlaura@csinet.net](mailto:rangerlaura@csinet.net)  
[www.laportecountyparks.org](http://www.laportecountyparks.org)

**Luhr Park Maintenance Facility** 219-326-0524

**Creek Ridge County Park**  
7943 W. 400 North  
Michigan City, IN 46360

**Bluhm County Park**  
3855 S. 1100 West  
Westville, IN 46391

**(undeveloped)**  
**Kankakee Property**  
Kankakee Township

### Foundation Properties:

**(undeveloped)**  
**Sebert Property**  
Springfield Township

**George R. Menkes Nature Preserve**  
Galena Township

## School Programs and Park Field Trips

### Reptiles and Amphibians Oh My!



#### Attention Formal Educators

If you teach 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students in a school that is in LaPorte County, your classroom could have a visit from a park naturalist, along with reptiles and amphibians. During the visit the students will learn the basic differences between reptiles and amphibians, while getting up close and personal with each. Programs can be set up for individual classes with visits to each room lasting 45 minutes each. Program visits are free and will be offered Nov. – Feb. on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays.

Programs can take place anytime during the school day starting as early as 8 am. These programs meet the Life Science Standards---1st grade--1.LS.1/ 1.LS.2/1.LS.3 2nd grade--2.LS.1 / 2.LS.2 / 2.LS.3  
Email- natureniki@csinet.net or call 219-324-5855 to schedule your classroom visit.

### Field Trips

#### Attention Formal Educators, Scout Leaders, and Groups.



You can schedule an organized program for your students or group at any of the county parks. The programs can be done on various topics that meet state standards and patch requirements. Visit [www.laportecountyparks.org](http://www.laportecountyparks.org) for sample programs. The programs are free. Email- natureniki@csinet.net or call 219-324-5855 for more information or to schedule your field trip/park program.



### Bluhm County Park

October 12 9 am Start

Meet at the Grove Shelter

Join us in a non-competitive 5K Fun Run/Walk to celebrate the newly constructed portion of the Lincoln Memorial Trail. This new trail connects Bluhm County Park to the town of Westville.

The surface of the course is mostly paved and flat. All ages are welcome but children must be accompanied by an adult.

**There is no cost but pre-registration is required by October 4. Call 219-325-8315**



## Northern Indiana Walk for PKD – 2-Mile Walk

Saturday, September 7

Check in 10 am Walk 11:15 am

Creek Ridge County Park – Michigan City, IN

For more information, please contact Walk Coordinator, [northernindianawalk@pkdcure.org](mailto:northernindianawalk@pkdcure.org)



Polycystic Kidney Disease (PKD) affects thousands of Americans and 12.5 million children and adults, worldwide. There is no treatment or cure, but there is hope.

**Walk, form a team, help with the committee, volunteer and more!**

Register online and take advantage of a host of effective and Free online team features like emailing members, tracking team progress and fundraising tools. Contact the PKD Foundation for more information on how you can help. [www.pkdcure.org](http://www.pkdcure.org). Come join us. [www.walkforpkd.org/northernindiana](http://www.walkforpkd.org/northernindiana)



## Healthy Lifestyles

9-10 am Luhr Park

A delightful social club committed to help improve your quality of life. Plus you'll keep up with the health trends, gardening, medical information and balancing your active lifestyle. Come relax, enjoy nature, and have coffee or tea on the Parks with your new circle of friends. Free.

**September 11** - Make and take homemade cleansers - Sacha Gee-Burns, Solid Waste District

**October 2** - Medicare 2020 - Overview of any changes in coverage and enrollment.

**November 6** - What is your spine saying & complimentary health/spinal screening with Hicks Chiropractic Health Center.

Call 219-325-8315 one week in advance to reserve your spot.

## Hand-stitched Painted Canvas

September 14 Luhr Park

10:30 am - 12:30 pm

\$15 per person

Ages 13 and up

Come on out to the Nature Center for tons of painting and stitching fun. Hemlock Heather will lead you on an adventure. The stitching part is very basic and minimal. Everyone will make the arrow design but you get to pick your paint and thread colors. All supplies will be provided, children must be accompanied by an adult. Pre-registration and payment is required on or before September 9. See page 5



## Pioneer Days



September 28 & 29

10 am - 4 pm

Creek Ridge County Park

\$2 for Adults

\$1 Child or Seniors (4 and under free)

Step into the past, visit with historically clad re-enactors and vendors. Bring the whole family and experience outdoor cooking, crafts, candle dipping, wagon rides, food, and much more. No pre-registration required.

## Chalk it Up

October 7 Luhr Park

6:00 - 8:00 p.m. age's 4 and up

\$25 each pair (adult and 1 child)

\$5 each additional child

Pick your design and make your own reusable vinyl transfer and chalk paste. The adult will make a 9x12 framed piece and your child makes their own 5X7 two sided masterpiece.

Registration and payment due at least on week in advance or until full whichever comes first. See page 5.



## Attention Homeschool

### Participants



October 9

Feeding time

Luhr Park , 10-11 am

For ages 6 - 13

The nature center animals will be fed during the program and students will learn about what these animals eat.

Program includes making a bird feeder. Pre-register by Oct. 2.

**Call 219-325-8315 to Register.**

Children must be accompanied by an adult.

November 13

Nature Center Open House

Luhr Park 9 am-12 pm

All Ages

Come out to the Luhr Park Nature Center to hang out with other homeschoolers. No organized program will take place during the open house. Stay for an hour or all three.

**No pre-registration is required.**

Children must be accompanied by an adult.

## Parent and Child

### Discovery Days

6-7:15 pm Luhr Park Ages 3-8

\$5.00 A Child / Per Program

An adult is required to participate.

Oct. 23- Timber

Nov. 6- Hooting Good Time

Nov. 20- Turkey Trouble

Dec. 4- Oh Deer

Dec. 18- What's for Dinner?



Pre-registration and payment is required one week before each program. See page 5

## Glass Bead Spider Ornament

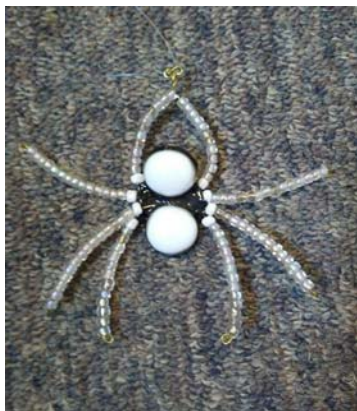
October 19 Luhr Park

10:30 am - 12:30 pm

Ages 13- Adults

\$20 per person

Come on out to the Nature Center for tons of art and craft fun. Hemlock Heather will lead you on an adventure making this glass bead spider. All supplies will be provided, children must be accompanied by an adult. Seating is limited so reserve your spot today. Pre-registration and payment is required on or before October 11. See page 6.



## Sunset Stroll Free

October 23 Luhr Park

5:30 - 6:15 p.m.

All ages welcome to take a sunset stroll. Meet with a naturalist at the Nature Center to begin the stroll around the park. Each child must be accompanied by an adult. Register by calling 219-325-8315 to reserve your spot.



## Nature's Tiny Tots (Free)

Come explore nature with toddlers and preschoolers in our Nature Center.

10 - 11 am Luhr County Park

Toddlers - Pre-School age

Call at least one week in advance to sign up & assure a spot 219-325-8315.

August 12, 26

September 16, 23

October 7, 28

November 18, 25

December 2, 16



## Spa Experience PJ party

October 21 Luhr Park

6:00- 7:30 pm

Girls Ages 10-18

\$15 per couple - \$10 each additional girl

As a young girl learn about personal healthy habits, hygiene, and etiquette. We will thrive to be our best. We will have snacks and product samples to try on our skin. Each child must be accompanied by an adult. Registration and payment due at least on week in advance or until full whichever comes first. See page 6.

## Early Celebration of Indigenous Peoples' Day

October 5-6 1-4 pm Luhr Park Nature Center

Stop in the nature center to decorate a paper bag vest. Handouts of recipes for squash soup and cornbread will be available. All ages are welcome but children must be accompanied by an adult. This free craft will be available while supplies last. **No pre-registration required.**



## Chalk time for differently-abled

October 28 Luhr Park

6:00 - 8:00 p.m. age's 4 and up

\$25 each pair (adult and 1 child)

\$5 each additional child

Those with special needs come chalk it up. Design you super hero during this class. You will pick your design and make your own reusable vinyl transfer and chalk paste. The adult will make a 9x12 framed piece and your child makes their own 5X7 two sided masterpiece.

Registration and payment due at least on week in advance or until full whichever comes first. See page 5





# LaPorte County Park Programs

Mail this form with payment or pay in person at Red Mill County Park.  
219-325-8315 [www.laportecountyparks.org](http://www.laportecountyparks.org)

**Make Checks Payable to:**  
LaPorte County Parks Dept.

**Mail this form and payment to:**  
LaPorte County Parks Dept.  
Program Registration  
0185 South Holmesville Road  
LaPorte, IN 46350

Name of Person filling out registration: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to receive the Naturally Speaking Newsletter Email \_\_\_\_\_ or Snail Mail \_\_\_\_\_

### Parent / Child Discovery Days (Ages 3-8) Registration due one week before program.

Name of child: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Check the program(s) you wish to attend.  
\$5 A Child / Per Program

\_\_\_ Oct. 23    \_\_\_ Nov. 6    \_\_\_ Nov. 20

\_\_\_ Dec. 4    \_\_\_ Dec. 18

\_\_\_\_\_ Total Amount Due (no refunds)

### Hand-stitched Painted Canvas September 14 Luhr Park Registration due on or before September 9

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

\$15 Per Person

\_\_\_\_\_ Total Amount Due (no refunds)

### Chalk it Up October 7 Luhr Park Registration due on or before September 30

Name of Adult: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and age of additional Children:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\$25 each pair (adult and 1 child) \$5 each additional child

\_\_\_\_\_ Total Amount Due (no refunds)

### Chalk time for differently-abled October 28 Luhr Park Registration due on or before October 21

Name of Adult: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and age of additional Children:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\$25 each pair (adult and 1 child) \$5 each additional child

\_\_\_\_\_ Total Amount Due (no refunds)



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Name of Person filling out registration: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to receive the Naturally Speaking Newsletter Email \_\_\_\_\_ or Snail Mail \_\_\_\_\_

### Glass Bead Spider Ornament

October 19 Luhr Park

Registration due on or before October 11

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

\$15 Per Person

\_\_\_\_\_ Total Amount Due (no refunds)

### Spa Experience PJ party

October 21 Luhr Park

Registration due on or before October 14

Name of Adult: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and age of additional Children:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\$15 each pair (adult and 1 child) \$10 each additional child

\_\_\_\_\_ Total Amount Due (no refunds)

No registrations will be accepted after the due date or when the program is filled whichever comes first. If you are interested in a program, **avoid disappointment** and sign up right away. Space is limited for most programs, and registration is first-come, first-served. Also, most programs require a minimum number of participants. So, failure to sign up early may mean your program will be cancelled.



Recently, the state of Indiana adopted a terrestrial plant rule which designates 44 plants as invasive pests and makes it illegal to sell, gift, barter, exchange, distribute, transport, or introduce them in the State of Indiana! You can find out more about this rule at <https://www.in.gov/dnr/6351.htm>. We believe this is a step in the right direction as millions of dollars are spent each year to combat plants that started out in a garden beds and are now displacing native species. While this list could be more inclusive in some areas, it is a great start and shows that our state is beginning to realize that there is a major problem with invasive species.

While these small beds aren't producing hundreds or thousands of pollinators in your parks, small flower beds around thousands of privately owned homes can start making a difference. Do some research on your own to find out if there is a native option for the plant you are looking to buy. Look for native plant workshops that will help educate you on the benefits and techniques in this venture. Many times the native options are much more hardy and can tolerate our climate and available water better than non-native plants. Consider adding native plants to your landscaping and start asking your local greenhouses and plant suppliers for more native options. If they get enough requests maybe they'll start carrying more of these beautiful and beneficial choices!



*Jeremy Sobecki  
Park Superintendent*

**LaPorte County Parks Staff**

Jeremy Sobecki- Superintendent  
Char Kalk- Office & Finance Manager  
"Nature" Niki Schmutte- Chief Naturalist  
"Ranger" Laura Moyer - Rec. and Ed. Programmer  
Bob Goethals- Maintenance Supervisor  
Boyd Lomow - Maintenance Technician  
Barb Janeczko - Maintenance Technician

**Seasonal Staff / Part-time**

"Ranger" Joanne Janisch - Naturalist Assistant  
"Hemlock" Heather Banas- Nature Center / Maintenance  
Sharon Bonner - Office  
Ken Havlin - Gate Keeper  
Michelle Bair- Maintenance / Gardener  
Joshua Meyers- Maintenance  
William Proud- Maintenance  
Robert Szilagyi- Maintenance

**Park Board**

Ronald Knickrehm- President  
Brian Root- Vice President  
Mary Foell  
Erin Lozano  
Amanda Nebelung  
Jim Holifield  
Kate Ardissono

**Foundation Board**

Stephanie Oberlie, President  
Sandy Menne  
Bill Hedge  
Steve King  
Liz Kaminski  
Ed Merrion  
Amy Riehle  
Jim Jessup

**County Commissioners**

Dr. Vidya Kora  
Sheila Brillson- Matias  
Richard Mrozinski

**County Council Members**

Jeff Santana  
John Sullivan  
Randall Novak  
Mark Yagelski  
Terry Garner  
Michael Rosenbaum  
Mike Mollenhauer

Visit our website for more  
park information:



[www.laportecountyparks.org](http://www.laportecountyparks.org)

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LaPorte County Parks  
Attn: Superintendent  
0185 S. Holmesville Rd.  
LaPorte, IN 46350

National Park Service  
Attn.: Director Equal  
Opportunity Program  
P.O. Box 37127  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

## Receive this newsletter by email

To receive this newsletter by email send us a message at [natureniki@csinet.net](mailto:natureniki@csinet.net). Please include Naturally Speaking in your subject. In the message please include your full name and email address you would like to receive the newsletter at.

**All the Parks are  
Open 7am to  
sunset daily.**



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Administrative Office  
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