

Naturally Speaking



Newsletter for the Friends of the LaPorte County Parks.

Spring / Summer 2017

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
rangerjeremy@csinet.net
www.laportecountyparks.org

Naturalist Office
Luhr County Park
3178 S. 150 West
LaPorte, IN 46350
219-324-5855
E-Mail natureniki@csinet.net
rangerlaura@csinet.net
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

Welcome Spring...or did we even have a winter?

This winter was definitely one to remember! Not because of all the snow or the brutal cold, it was quite the opposite. Some of us loved the warm weather, while you winter loving folks were a little disappointed. The good thing for the parks department is that, due to the nice weather, we were able to accomplish several things we would not have been able to during a normal winter. This will give us a jump start on getting the parks ready for you this spring. Staff was able to install new composite lumber decking to most of the Steelheader's Boardwalk at Creek Ridge (the rest will be done after the Trail Creek bank stabilization project is complete). They are also in the process of replacing horse shoe pits at all the shelters with concrete bag toss games. Bring your own corn hole bags and try them out this spring!

In addition to the items mentioned above, this year you will see significant improvements at several of our parks. Trail Creek at Creek Ridge will have construction going on to stabilize the banks on 600 feet of stream. Paved trails will be repaired and re-sealed at Bluhm and Creek Ridge. We are starting the process of getting the parking lot paved at Luhr. A new brick paver walkway will be installed near the Morgan Shelter at Luhr. Lastly, we are continuing to do invasive plant removal at Luhr and Bluhm. A few other projects are in the works but I'll leave those a secret at this time in hopes you will be excited and surprised to see them completed. There may be days where you need to avoid areas of our parks due to some of these projects. Please be understanding and "pardon our mess" as we maintain and improve your parks!

I will conclude by stating that many of these projects would not be possible without donations and funding from our LaPorte County Park Foundation or the Coolspring Township Trustee and Board. This year is the Department's 40th anniversary, if you enjoy using these parks please consider donating to the Park Foundation. These donations will help us improve and maintain these parks for another 40 plus years!

Jeremy Sobecki

LaPorte County Parks Staff

Jeremy Sobecki - Superintendent
Jean Lawson - Office & Finance Manager
Niki Schmutte - Chief Naturalist
Laura Moyer - Rec. and Ed. Programmer
Jim Jackson - Maintenance Supervisor
Boyd Lomow - Maintenance Technician
Barb Janeczko - Maintenance Technician

Seasonal Staff / Part-time

Joanne Janisch - Naturalist Assistant
Sharon Bonner - Office
Ken Havlin - Gate Keeper
Chuck Wright - Maintenance
Kaite Gurnicz - Nature Center / Maintenance
Devin Smythe - Maintenance

Park Board

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

Foundation Board

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

County Commissioners

Richard Mrozinski
Michael Gonder
Vidya Kora

County Council Members

Jeff Santana
John Sullivan
Randall Novak
Mark Yagelski
Terry Garner
Cary Kirkham
Mike Mollenhauer

Luhr Park

Nature Center Hours

Open
March - October
Tuesday - Thursday
and
Saturday - Sunday
1:00 pm to 4:00 pm



2016 Award Winners

Volunteer Of The Year Award



The recipient of the "Volunteer of the Year" was given to Vicki Cain. Vicki has been a steady volunteer at our annual Pioneer Days program. She is open to volunteer at any station and always greets our park patrons with a smile and enthusiasm that is infectious. Schmutte said, "Volunteers like Cain make our programs so successful."

Outstanding Park Service Award

The recipient of the "Outstanding Park Service Award" was given to Joanne Janisch. Her willingness to pitch in wherever needed staffing both the park administrative office and the nature center. In addition she assists with many programs and events throughout the parks. Chief Naturalist, Niki Schmutte said "she is a joy to work with and is very dedicated and has the willingness to enhance our park department."



Organization Of The Year Award

The recipient of the "Organization of the Year" was given to the Valparaiso University Biology Club. They have put in many hours cleaning up Trail Creek at Creek Ridge County Park to assist with erosion control. Their assistance is helping improve the habitat for migrating fish there. Park Superintendent, Jeremy Sobecki said "without their assistance this project would be impossible for our park staff to accomplish on our own."



Programs --- Programs --- Programs

Tuesday Treasures

Tuesdays at Luhr Park 9am - 12pm **Ages 6-13**
 Parents are not required to participate or stay during the program. \$8.00 per person / per program. All programs include arts and crafts.



- June 20** Pond Predators- Go fishing and learn about pond life.
 - June 27** Wild Neighbors- Investigate animals living close to us.
 - July 18** On The Move- Take a closer look at animal movement.
 - July 25** Web of Life -Learn about life cycles and their connections.
 - August 1** A Sense of Nature- Use your 5 senses to explore nature.
- Pre-registration and payment is required one week before each program. See page 5**

Nature's Tiny Tots

Come explore nature with toddlers and preschoolers in our Nature Center. Designed for parents and grandparents to bring out the munchkins for some FUN. Enjoy music, dance with your kids, giggle, storytelling, take a hike (weather permitting) and just have plain ole fun.

FREE

10 – 11 am at Luhr County Park
 Toddlers – Pre-School age
 Call at least one week in advance to sign up & assure a spot 219-325-8315

- April 10
- May 1
- June 5, 19
- July 10, 24
- August 7, 21, 28



Movin' 'n Groovin' Fitness Fun

May 25 (First 10 get a free water bottle)

June 1, 8, 15

Luhr Park Morgan Shelter
 7:45 a.m. (beat the heat)
 45 min. -1 hour

Shake, Rattle and Move is perfect for all ages and abilities who enjoy the outdoors. We will be walking, stretching, utilizing our exercise equipment overlooking the pond. Whatever level you feel comfortable with this safe, easy to perform self-paced program will improve your flexibility, balance, strength and stamina. **FREE**

No pre-registration required.



Kids Fishing Fun Day

Saturday, June 3
 9 - 11am
 Luhr Park All Ages



Children must be accompanied by an adult. Co-Sponsored by the Northwest Indiana Steelheaders. Home Run Hot Dog Concessions will be at the event.

No pre-registration required. Free Program

Birthday Bash Lordy, Lordy, the Parks Department turns 40.

Saturday, June 3
 11 am-1 pm
 Luhr Park All Ages



Come to the nature center to help us celebrate the Park Departments 40th and Luhr Parks 30th birthdays. Go on a photo scavenger hunt, have some cake and ice cream, or just hang out in the nature center.

Children must be accompanied by an adult. This is a free program and no pre-registration is required.

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.

- June 21-** Fishing Fun
- June 28-** Wild Neighbors
- July 19 -** On The Move
- July 26-** A Sense of Nature
- August 2-** Play Trail Adventure

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



Programs --- Programs --- Programs

Senior Lifestyles Free

Luhr Park Nature Center from 9 – 10 am



Join our senior circle 50+ Club, a delightful social club committed to help improve your quality of life. Call 219-325-8315 at least one week in advance to sign up & assure a spot.

May 3 - Back Yard Gardening (fruits, vegetables, herbs). Learn about composting, pH levels, insects, disease and sustainability for better garden growth with Sacha Gee-Burns, Solid Waste District.

June 7 - Come learn what's new and exciting in the City of LaPorte from Mayor Blair Milo

July 12 - Pulmonary Health and respiratory needs by LaPorte Hospital

August 2 - "Constructing your Family Tree" and "Genetic Testing" by Genealogical Society - Dorothy Palmer and Alan Zeller.

September 13 - Fall Flowers, seeds for the future, soil health, composting and fall cleanup with Sacha Gee-Burns, Solid Waste District

Attention Homeschool Participants

Fishing Fun

May 2 Luhr Park
10 - 11 am

For ages 6 - 13
Min 5 Max 40



Participants will learn basic fishing skills and go fishing. All supplies will be provided. Pre-registration is required by April 27. Max of 40 participants. Sign up fast to avoid disappointment!

Call 219-325-8315 to Register. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Girls' Night Out - Mommy & Me Pamper Party

June 7

Luhr Park Nature Center
6 - 7:30 pm ages 6 and up
\$10 per couple/\$2 each additional daughter
Min. 6/Max 20



It's a girl's night out and moms and daughters are invited to an evening of pampering. We will have mini Pedicures, foot soaks, and do a craft. Everything will be provided. Wear your comfortable clothes and bring your flip flops, it's time to have some fun, relax, and delicious snacks! If you have a favorite nail polish please bring it.

Pre-registration and payment is required on or before May 31 or until it is full.

See page 5

"Under the Shady Tree - Story Time"

Hey Pre-school – Elementary age kids, come to Luhr for story time at the Park. Siblings are welcome to join in the fun. Bring a blanket to sit under the shady tree for some fun at Luhr Park. This story time includes a fun activity. Afterwards, stick around for playtime or bring a sack lunch.

Rain or shine, if raining meet in the Morgan Shelter. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Luhr Park
10:00 a.m. 30 - 45 min
FREE - no pre-registration required.



June 13 - I wish I were a Butterfly - learn about the life cycle of a butterfly

July 11 - Animal Senses and You - tricks that animals use to survive in the wild world.

August 8 - Pen Pal sharing - fun tips about having a pen pal & your very own park postcard



LaPorte County Park Programs

Registration Form

Mail this form with payment or pay in person at Red Mill County Park.

219-325-8315 www.laportecountyparks.org

Name of Person filling out registration: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____

Parent / Child Discovery Days (Ages 3-8)

Wednesday nights 6:00 - 7:15pm at Luhr Park
Registration due one week before program.

Name of child: _____

Age: _____

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

June 21 June 28 July 19

July 26 August 2

_____ Total Amount Due (no refunds)

~~Girls' Night Out - Mommy & Me Pamper Party (Ages 6 and up)~~

~~Luhr Park Nature Center June 7, 6 - 7:30 pm
\$10 per couple/\$2 each additional daughter
Registration due May 31. Min. 6/Max 20~~

~~Name of Adult: _____~~

~~Name of Child: _____~~

~~Childs Age: _____~~

~~Name and age of additional Children: _____~~

~~_____ Total Amount Due (no refunds)~~

Program is Full

Tuesday Treasures (Ages 6-13)

Tuesday Mornings 9 am - 12 pm at Luhr Park
Registration due one week before program.

Name of child: _____

Age: _____

Check the program(s) you wish to attend. \$8.00 per program.

June 20 June 27 July 18

July 25 August 1

_____ Total Amount Due (no refunds)

Registration Information
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

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.

**Visit our website for more
park information:**

www.laportecountyparks.org

Regulations of the U.S. Department of Interior strictly prohibit unlawful discrimination in departmental programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, or disability. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility; or who desires further information regarding Title VI or subtitle A of title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Pub. L. 101-336, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by public entities should write to:

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. 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.**

Mark your Calendars---Pioneer Days, September 23 and 24



LaPorte County Parks
Administrative Office
Red Mill County Park
0185 S. Holmesville Rd.
LaPorte, IN 46350

