

# Naturally Speaking

Newsletter for the friends of the LaPorte County Parks. Summer 2021

## Not Looking Back

2020 was a tough one for everyone! Here at the LaPorte County Parks we are looking ahead and hoping we are all able to put the craziness that was last year behind us. We have all been working hard this winter to prepare for a return to "normal". Program staff is working to plan modified programming that will keep everyone safe. Some programs may still not be able to happen but we hope to provide new or modified programs that will be just as fun and engaging. Maintenance staff has been busy installing hand sanitizing stations and getting the parks ready for increased visitation and our office staff is busy taking calls from hopeful facility users and program attendees. We all hope that this year brings back many of the things we love about parks and all aspects of our lives.

2021 is also bringing some exciting new opportunities for our parks. In April, the LaPorte County Parks Department was granted money from the Healthcare Foundation of LaPorte to replace the playground at Bluhm County Park with an accessible playground that will be a destination for many children and families from miles around! Along with this new playground, the LaPorte County Park Foundation donated money to replace the vault toilets with a new accessible restroom facility and the County will fund paving the parking lot. Bluhm has always been a favorite to many, but these improvements look to make it one of our more visited parks. More details on the Bluhm project to come as we are finalizing plans but these are exciting times out there!



Major improvements like this would not be possible without support from our community partners, county leaders and more. In the past few years, we are looking at over \$400,000 in improvements at Luhr and nearly that much at Bluhm! If you want to know how you can help make the parks even better through our Park Foundation let us know. Together these groups are making LaPorte County a better place to live and everyone can be part of that.

Jeremy Sobecki  
Park Superintendent



**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)

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

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

(undeveloped)  
**Kankakee Property**  
Kankakee Township

### Foundation Properties:

(undeveloped)  
**Sebert Property**  
Springfield Township

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

# Programs

Each program is limited to maintain social distancing and masks are required.

## Kids Fishing Fun Day

June 5  
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**



## Early Morning Stroll Listening Walk

June 8 Luhr Park  
7:15 - 8:00 am  
Free

All ages welcome to take a stroll and listen for wildlife along the way. 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.



## Natures Tiny Tots

June 14, 28  
July 12, 26  
August 9, 23

10 - 11 am FREE Luhr Park  
max total 12 (kids & parents)

Toddlers - Pre-School age  
(masks required ages 3 plus)  
Call at least one week in  
advance to signup & assure a  
spot 219-325-8315

Come explore nature with your toddlers and preschoolers at Luhr Park. Designed for parents and grandparents to bring out the munchkins for some FUN. Enjoy music, dance with your kids, giggle, storytelling, hands-on activities, take a hike (weather permitting) and just have plain ole fun.

## 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 22- Who's Eyes Are Who's-** Participants will learn fun facts and information about animal eyes.

**June 29- Earth Art-** Learn about nature while painting, drawing, and doing other fun activities.

**July 20- Bug Off-** Learn about insects, bugs, spiders, and other creepy crawlers.

**July 27- Scat, Tracks, and Other Mammal Facts-** Learn to identify animal scat, tracks and more.

**August 3- Feathers, Feet, Nests and Beaks-** Birds will be the topic during this fun hands on program.

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



## Meet a Bee Keeper

June 16 at Luhr Park  
9am - 10am



Learn about bees and what it takes to be a beekeeper. Local beekeepers Bob & Sandy Palan will talk about how they monitor their hives and harvest their honey. Space is limited so call at least one week in advance to reserve your free spot.  
Call 219-325-8315

# Programs

Each program is limited to maintain social distancing and masks are required.

## Healthy Lifestyles



A delightful social club committed to help improve your quality of life. Come relax, enjoy nature, and have coffee or tea on the Parks with your new circle of friends. What is even better, its FREE.

Luhr County Park from 9 - 10 am on Wednesdays

Call at least one week in advance to signup & assure a spot.

Call 219-325-8315

**June 9** - GERD; new treatments for relief of heartburn & acid reflux by Dr. Conn, Gastroenterologist

**July 14** - Nutrition, food groups and labeling, by Stephanie Thomas, Registered Dietician

**August 4th** - Sleep disorders and their effects on your health, by Mindi Whittaker, Franciscan Health Michigan City

**September 1st** - Fall garden cleanup & separating your plants with Sacha Gee-Burns, Solid Waste District

**October 6th** - Pulmonary Health, Patti Solona, Respiratory Therapy Manager Northwest Health LaPorte

**November 3** - Understanding Medicare, Parts A, B, C and D as well as the upcoming Annual Enrollment Period. Even if you're not on Medicare yet, becoming familiar will enable you to make educated decisions. By Megan Rogers, Specialist for the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP).

## Parent and Child Discovery Days



6-7:15 pm Luhr Park Morgan Shelter

**Ages 3-8**

\$5.00 A Child / Per Program

An adult is required to participate.

**June 23-** Snakes Alive      **June 30-**Howling Coyote

**July 21-** Lonesome Dove      **July 28-** Here, Fishy, Fishy

**August 4-** It's a Great Blue Heron

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



## Luhr County Park Nature Center Hours

### Open

Tuesday - Thursday

1-4 pm

Saturday - Sunday

12-5 pm



### Closed

Monday and Friday

**\*\*Masks will be required in the nature center and all visitors should practice social distancing.**

## Family Fishing Nights

June 16

July 26

August 30



5- 7:30 pm Luhr Park

All ages welcome

Come out to the Pond at Luhr Park for an evening of fishing. A limited number of poles and bait will be provided. No fishing licenses are required during the family fishing programs. Children must be accompanied by an adult. FREE Pre-registration is required at least one day before each program.

Call 219-325-8315

# Programs

Each program is limited to maintain social distancing and masks are required.

## Chalk it Up



June 17 Luhr  
9:30 - 10:30 am  
FREE

Leave your mark creating a chalk masterpiece along one of the sidewalks at Luhr with chalk. Free event for all ages and abilities. We'll provide the sidewalk, chalk, and tape while supplies last - You bring your creativity. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Call to reserve your free spot. 219-325-8315

## Under the Shady Tree - Story Time

July 19  
9:30 am  
Luhr Park  
Free - call week before  
219-325-8315 to reserve  
your spot

Hey Pre-school - Elementary age kids geared for kids ages 2-11 years old, 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. Afterwards, stick around for self-guided playtime or bring a snack for family time. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

## Storytime a Good Day for a Hat Day

June 21st  
9:30 am  
Luhr Park  
Free - call week before  
219-325-8315 to reserve your  
spot



Hey Pre-school - Elementary age kids geared for kids ages 2-11 years old, come to Luhr for story time at the Park. Siblings are welcome to join in the fun. Wear your favorite Hat and bring a blanket to sit under the shady tree for some fun. Afterwards, stick around for self-guided playtime or bring a snack for family time. All children must be accompanied by an adult.



## Nature Stroll

August 17 Luhr  
7:15 - 8:00 am

Join a naturalist in front of the Nature Center for a relaxing stroll through Luhr park. Learn about the history of their park, look for migrating birds, identify some trees, hunt for native plants. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Call to reserve your free spot. 219-325-8315



## LaPorte County Parks Staff

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

## Seasonal Staff / Part-time

Cathy Fuller- Nature Center / Office  
Cindy Buell- Nature Center  
Theresa Wojkovich- Office  
Ken Havlin - Gate Keeper  
Michelle Bair- Maintenance / Gardener  
William Proud- Maintenance  
Greg Scherer - Maintenance

## Park Board

Ronald Knickrehm- President  
Brian Root- Vice President  
Mary Foell  
Erin Lozano  
Amanda Nebelung  
Jim Holifield  
Mary Nell Murphy

## Foundation Board

Stephanie Oberlie, President  
Bill Hedge  
Steve King  
Liz Kaminski  
Ed Merrion  
Amy Riehle  
Jim Jessup  
Jenn Wozniak  
Tom Hester

## County Commissioners

Richard Mrozinski  
Joe Haney  
Sheila Brillson- Matias

## County Council Members

Randall Novak  
Mark Yagelski  
Terry Garner  
Connie Gramarossa  
Michael Rosenbaum  
Earl Cunningham  
Mike Mollenhauer





# LaPorte County Park Programs

Mail this form with payment or pay in person at Red Mill County Park.  
219-325-8315 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 \_\_\_\_\_



## 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 22 \_\_\_ June 29 \_\_\_ July 20

\_\_\_ July 27 \_\_\_ August 3

\_\_\_\_\_ 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.

**Each program is limited to maintain social distancing and masks are required.**



## 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.  
\$5.00 A Child / Per Program

\_\_\_ June 23 \_\_\_ June 30 \_\_\_ July 21

\_\_\_ July 28 \_\_\_ August 4

Visit our website for more  
park information:



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

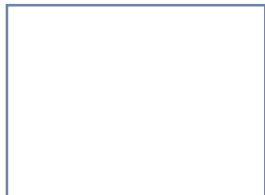
National Park Service  
Attn.: Director Equal  
Opportunity Program  
P.O. Box 37127  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

## Receive this newsletter by email

To receive this newsletter by email send us a message at [natureniki@csinet.net](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.**



LaPorte County Parks  
Administrative Office  
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LaPorte, IN 46350

