



Naturally Speaking

Newsletter for the friends of the LaPorte County Parks.

Winter 2018-2019

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

Winter Can Be The Best Time for Wildlife Viewing In The County Parks

While most people are cuddling up with a blanket on a couch with some coffee or hot cocoa, animals in the wild are still out and about. Actually many of them are likely more active in the colder months just because they need to keep searching for food which can be harder to find this time of year. Birds that call Indiana home for the winter flock to feeders because it's an easy source of food.



Deer have to travel more to food sources as the easy pickings are depleted. Other animals find themselves in similar situations in the wild and are many times more active. One of the best things about wildlife viewing this time of year is that most of the leaves have fallen from the trees making it easier to see greater distances in the woods. That paired with a little snow make it easier for a hiker/wildlife observer to walk quietly therefore not spooking the wildlife away.

Another benefit of getting out in the winter is that many times you'll have the parks basically to yourself. Our visitation is usually much lower and many times you might never see another person out on the trail. Wildlife that may not frequent our parks during our busy season tend to spend more time in them because the human activity is lower. We typically try to get the paved park trails plowed fairly soon after the snow falls (sometimes on weekends you'll need to give us a few days) so that people can get out and enjoy a winter hike and observe nature.

So just because it's cold outside, don't forget that our LaPorte County Parks are still great places to visit and see what's going on in the natural world. Bundle up and go for a hike, you may be surprised at what you will see out there!!

Jeremy Sobecki
Park Superintendent



A Year in Review

The Park Staff works hard to provide you with the best park facilities and programs as possible. It has been a very busy year and here are a few highlights.

The new paved trail at Luhr is complete. The new restroom is under construction as well. Next year look for a new picnic shelter, improvements to the existing parking lot as well as a new lot and boardwalks going out into the new park property (15 acres) just south of the park.



Contractors completed the EZ Trail at Red Mill County Park. This new bridge makes it possible to get a fantastic view of the wetlands while hiking a loop trail.



Over 198 school, group and public programs were offered in 2018. Over 9026 people participated in these programs.



LaPorte County Parks Staff

Jeremy Sobacki- 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 Attendant
Sharon Bonner - Office
Ken Havlin - Gate Keeper

Park Board

Ronald Knickrehm- President
Brian Root- Vice President
Mary Foell
Erin Lozano
Amanda 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
Connie Gramarossa
Vidya Kora

County Council Members

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



LaPorte County Parks

Programs -- Programs -- Programs

Breakfast with the Birds

January 26 Free!
Luhr County Park
Nature Center
9:30 - 11 am



Come enjoy breakfast treats while watching birds grab a bite at the bird feeders. No pre-registration required. This program is open to all ages but, children must be accompanied by an adult.

Attention Homeschool Participants

February 13 Hooting Good Time

Participants will learn about Owls, their calls and more.
Luhr Park, 10-11 am
For ages 6 - 13
Min 5 Max 20 Children
Pre-register by Feb. 11.



April 9 Terrific Trees

Participants will learn about trees, their parts and more.
Luhr Park, 10-11 am
For ages 6 - 13
Min 5 Max 30 Children
Pre-register by April 4.

Sign up fast to avoid disappointment!
Call 219-325-8315 to Register. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

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

December 17
January 14, 28
February 4, 11
March 4, 18
April 1, 15



...a fun place to play and learn!



Healthy Lifestyles

9-10 am Luhr Park

Join our delightful social club committed to help improve your quality of life.

March 6 - Tips for working on balance, coordination, endurance & strength from the Orthopedic & Balance Therapy Specialists

April 3 - Spring cleaning, container gardening, and recycling with Sacha Gee-Burns, Solid Waste District

Call 219-325-8315 one week in advance



Daddy/Daughter Dance "Princess Style"

Friday, February 22 from 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Saturday, February 23 from 2 - 4 pm

Red Mill County Park Pat Smith Hall

\$15.00 per couple, \$5.00 for each additional daughter. Get all dressed up and come out to Red Mill County Park to enjoy dancing. Pictures will be taken of all couples to take home. Refreshments will be served. Fill out the form and mail it in with payment. Hurry this will fill up fast! **Pre-registration and payment is required on or before February 14. No registrations will be accepted after the due date or when the program is filled whichever comes first. Max 90 participants each night.** See page 5 for registration information.



Programs -- Programs -- Programs

Reptiles and Amphibians Oh My!



Attention Formal Educators

If you teach 1st or 2nd 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 to an hour each. Program visits are free and will be offered Dec. – Feb. on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Program start time is flexible. Call 219-324-5855 or email: natureniki@csinet.net to schedule your classroom visit.

Teachers - Groups Scout Leaders

Free Environmental Education Programs are offered to groups throughout the year. The programs last one hour or longer depending on the group size and age. Programs can be scheduled at Creek Ridge Park, Luhr Park, Bluhm Park or Red Mill Park. Call the Nature Center at 324-5855 for information or to make reservations.



Spa Day at the Park

March 9
10 am – 12 noon



Red Mill Park – Pat Smith Hall
FREE - First 50 will receive a swag bag.

Calming the mind and pampering the body are what is in store for those who come. "Spa Day in the Park" will have sample services and/or products to share and sell. No pre-registration is required.

Family Fishing Night

April 30 6-7:30 pm
Luhr County 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 program. Children must be accompanied by an adult. FREE - Pre-registration is required at least one week in advance. Call 219-325-8315

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.



January 16- Terrific Trees
January 30- Owls and More
February 6- A Raccoon's World
February 27- Catch The Sun
March 6- Bug Fun
March 20- A Hopping Good Time
April 10- Scavenger Hunt Fun

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



Fun Winter Facts



All snowflakes have 6 sides.

The average snowflake falls at about 3 mph.



The most snow ever recorded in 24 hours in the United States was at Silver Lake, Colorado, in 1921 at 76 inches.

To survive winters, many animals have developed various survival techniques, such as migrating, hibernating, storing food, changing colors, or growing thicker fur.





LaPorte County Park Programs

Winter 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 at Luhr (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

___ January 16 ___ January 30 ___ February 6

___ February 27 ___ March 6 ___ March 20

___ April 10

_____ Total Amount Due (no refunds)

Daddy/Daughter Dance at Red Mill

Friday, February 22 from 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Saturday, February 23 from 2 - 4 pm

\$15 per couple and \$5 for each additional daughter. Registration due February 14 or when the program is filled whichever comes first.

Name of Adult Male: _____

Name of Daughter: _____

Daughter's Age: _____

Name of additional Daughter's: _____

Check the box for the dance you want to attend. Note the different times.

Want to attend Friday, February 22
from 6:30 - 8:30 pm

OR

Want to attend Saturday, February 23
from 2 - 4 pm

_____ Total Amount Due (no refunds)

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



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.**

LaPorte County Parks
Administrative Office
Red Mill County Park
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