

Naturally
Speaking



Winter
2022-2023

Retiring Staff

Two of the LaPorte County Parks staff members will be retiring in the Spring. "Ranger" Laura, the recreation and education programmer, will be retiring in April and has been with the parks since 2007. Over the years she has been responsible for all of the park's press, kiosks, manning the nature center and so much more. She started several very successful programs such as Natures Tiny Tots, Healthy Lifestyles, Spa Day, and many more. She has educated numerous school kids during field trips to our parks. "Ranger" Laura is excited about her future endeavors and will miss all of you who have participated in her programs.



"Nature" Niki, the chief naturalist, will be retiring in March. She has been with the Parks Department since 1994. She has managed the nature center, its staff, and has overseen all the programs taking place in the parks and at the schools. She has seen over 200,000 individuals at park programs over the 29 years she has been here. She created several of the programs offered today including the Parent Child Discovery Days, Tuesday Treasures, Reptiles and Amphibians, Pollinators Plus, and many more. She has educated thousands of students in their classrooms and at the parks. She enjoyed putting the Pioneer Days Festival together and working with the entire staff to pull off the

large event. "Nature" Niki is excited about the next chapter in her life. When she thinks about the LaPorte County Parks she will always have a smile on her face.



Both "Ranger" Laura and "Nature" Niki want to say thank you to everyone that attended their programs, volunteered, and worked with them over the years. As a team we have helped make the LaPorte County Parks some of the finest in the state. As "Nature" Niki always says,

"Woo Hoo!"



Administrative Office
Red Mill County Park
Open: 7am-3 pm
Monday - Friday
0185 S. Holmesville Rd.
LaPorte, IN 46350
219-325-8315
Fax 219-325-8317
E-Mail laparks@csinet.net
rangerjeremy@csinet.net
www.laportecountyparks.org

Naturalist Office
Luhr County Park
3178 S. 150 West
LaPorte, IN 46350
219-324-5855

www.laportecountyparks.org

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

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

Sebert Woods County Park
3608 W. 925 North
Michigan City, IN 46360

(undeveloped)
Kankakee Property
Kankakee Township

Foundation Properties:

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

A year in review 2022



The programming staff did 74+ public programs and saw over 1195 participants. They did 144+ school / group programs and saw over 4600 participants in the classrooms and at the parks.



Sebert Woods County Park opened. The park has 40 acres and offers plants and habitat you would normally see much farther north. The property was donated to the Park Foundation in 2000 by Wilmer Sebert. In 2021 it was dedicated as a State Nature Preserve.



The maintenance staff went above and beyond with the construction of the new restroom facilities at Bluhm Park. They did all of the work and put in countless hours. They did all of this while still maintaining all of the parks.



The playgrounds at Bluhm, Creek Ridge, and Red Mill Parks have all been replaced. This was made possible thanks to the County Council and Commissioners, Park Foundation, and the Health Care Foundation of LaPorte. Their continued support is felt throughout LaPorte County in so many ways.



Thanks to a private donation, the Park Foundation, and a grant from the Health Care Foundation of LaPorte, new displays have been added to the nature center with more to come. This interactive floor display gets visitors moving and helps develop coordination.



Programs - Programs

Parent and Child Discovery Days



6-7:15 pm Luhr Park

Ages 3-9

\$5.00 A Child / Per Program

An adult is required to participate.

Jan. 4- Game Night

Jan. 18- Where Did They Go?

Feb. 1- Oh Deer!

Feb. 8- See You Later

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

Natures Tiny Tots

On Tuesdays

January 17, 31

February 14, 28

March 14



10 – 11 am FREE Luhr Park
max total 16 (kids & parents)

Toddlers – Preschool age

Call at least one week in advance to signup & ensure 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.

Winterfest

Join the LaPorte City and LaPorte County Parks at one of their winterfest activities. January 27-29.

Winterfest Craft , Snow Art, and Snack



Sunday, January 29

2-4 pm

Luhr Park Nature Center

Come out to the Luhr Park Nature Center to make snow art (weather dependent), do a craft, and have a snack. All ages are welcome and no pre-registration is required. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Visit the LaPorte City Parks webpage to learn more about other fun Winterfest activities. <https://laporteparkandrec.com/>

Hat and Scarf Time with your stuffed friend

February 7

4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Luhr Park



Free - call week before 219-325-8315

Come to the Nature Center in your favorite Hat and Scarf along with your favorite stuffed animal. We will have story time, snacks and fun. Geared towards kids ages 2-11 years old. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Space is limited so call at least one week in advance to reserve your free spot.

Hootin Good Time with Owls

Learn about Owls via an on-line email program. You will receive one email a week for 9 weeks learning about different Owls that frequent our parks and around North America. Email rangerlaura@csinet.net and include your full name and email and in the subject line type "Owl Program:". Reserve your spot by January 9, 2023.



Programs - Programs



Daddy/Daughter Dance "Princess Style"

Friday, February 24 from 6 - 8 pm

Saturday, February 25 from 2 - 4 pm

Red Mill County Park

Pat Smith Hall

\$25.00 per couple, \$5.00 for each additional daughter.



Get all dressed up and come out to Red Mill County Park to share an evening of enchantment and wonder! Enjoy dancing, refreshments, crafts & more. Hurry this will fill up fast! Pre-registration and payment required on or before February 16 or until full, whichever comes first. **No registrations will be accepted after the due date or when the program is filled, whichever comes first. Max 80 participants each night.** See page 5 for registration information.

Rock Painting Craft Make and Take

March 22

inside the Nature Center

Luhr Park

1:00 – 4:00

FREE



Bring two of your favorite rocks in to paint them and place somewhere fun for people to find. All ages welcome and children must be accompanied by an adult. The supplies will be available to make your rock perfect while supplies last. **FREE No pre-registration required.**



Retirement Open House

March 1

Luhr Park Nature Center

1:30 – 4 pm

Stop by the Nature Center to visit with Ranger Laura and Nature Niki. They both will be retiring after years of service to the citizens of LaPorte County. They have touched thousands of lives through the programs they have offered. Refreshments will be served.

Masquerade Storytime and games

March 16

3:00 – 4:00

Luhr Park

Free



Come to the nature center with a masquerade mask and join us for story time, snacks and fun. Geared towards kids ages 2-11 years old. All children must be accompanied by an adult. **Space is limited so call at least one week in advance to reserve your free spot. 219-325-8315**

Migratory Bird & Scavenger Hunt

March 30

Luhr Park

Free

Stop by the Nature Center and pick up a fun self-guided scavenger hunt. Come outside and go on a scavenger hunt and along the way listen for songbirds and see spring flowers budding and popping up. **FREE No pre-registration required.**



For office use only Receipt # _____

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



LaPorte County Park Programs

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: _____

I would like to receive the Naturally Speaking Newsletter and don't already. Email ___ or Snail Mail ___

Daddy/Daughter Dance at Red Mill Park Friday, February 24 from 6 - 8 pm Saturday, February 25 from 2 - 4 pm

\$25 per couple and \$5 for each additional daughter. Registration due February 16 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 24 from 6 - 8 pm

OR

Want to attend Saturday, February 25 from 2 - 4 pm

_____ Total Amount Due (*no refunds)

Registration / payments may be made by mail, in person at Red Mill, or over the phone with a credit card. If you choose to pay with a credit card there is an additional fee associated with your card. You will be told what the fee is and can decide then if you want to proceed.

*Refunds will be given if the Parks Department cancels a program or if the program is full before we receive your payment / registration.

Parent/Child Discovery Days (Ages 3-9)

Wednesday nights

6:00 - 7:15pm at Luhr Park

Registration / payment due one week before program.

Name of child: _____

Age: _____

Check the program(s) you wish to attend.
\$5.00 A Child / Per Program

___ Jan. 4 ___ Jan. 18

___ Feb. 1 ___ Feb. 8

_____ Total Amount Due(*no refunds)

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

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

LaPorte County Parks
Administrative Office
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LaPorte, IN 46350

