

# Naturally Speaking

Newsletter for the friends of the LaPorte County Parks.

Fall 2021

## Working Together to Make County Parks Shine

Late summer of 2020 park staff was contacted about a gazebo located near the Michigan City Courthouse that was going to have to be demolished due to the courthouse expansion project. The project manager really didn't want it to be destroyed so she contacted the parks to see if there was any way to save it and give it a new home. It was proving very difficult to find a contractor to move this gazebo with very short notice so our park maintenance staff decided to tackle it themselves.

Staff was able to jump right in within a day and removed the roof, cut the building in half and hauled the sections back to Red Mill to be reconstructed later. A new roof and floor were put in as it was put back together and now nearly a year later the gazebo has a new home at Red Mill near the Headwaters of the Little Calumet River inside our south entrance.

Thanks to all who thought of the parks for this wonderful structure and to our staff for being willing and capable of taking on such a project last minute!

This project is just one example of how well many of our county departments work together. Your parks department receives help from MANY of the other county departments on a weekly basis. Whether it's the County Highway helping cut trees with their bucket truck or haul away broken up concrete, the sheriff's department helping with complaints, the animal shelter helping us out with canine conflicts in our dog parks or even the building maintenance department helping us when our air conditioners or furnaces go down. Without these and many other departments being willing to work together, your parks wouldn't be what they are.



**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 [lparks@csinet.net](mailto:lparks@csinet.net)  
[rangerjeremy@csinet.net](mailto:rangerjeremy@csinet.net)  
[www.laportecountyparks.org](http://www.laportecountyparks.org)

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

**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



Gazebo in its original location near the Michigan City Courthouse.



Half of the gazebo being loaded onto the park equipment trailer.



Nearly complete reconstructed gazebo in its new location at Red Mill County Park.

### 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  
William Proud- Maintenance  
Greg Scherer - Maintenance  
Olivia Combs- Maintenance  
Gracie Pickens- 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 Matias

### County Council Members

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



## School Programs and Park Field Trips

Attention Formal Educators



### Reptiles and Amphibians Oh My!

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.

### Pollinators Plus!



If you teach 2nd grade students in a school that is in LaPorte County, your classroom could have a visit from a park naturalist, and do fun pollination activities. During this visit students will learn the basics of pollination, play pollination games, and participate in a buggy 500 using wax worms.

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 Oct. - 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](mailto: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](mailto:natureniki@csinet.net) or call 219-324-5855 for more information or to schedule your field trip/ park program.

## Programs - Programs

### Family Stream Sampling and More!

September 11 11 am - 1 pm  
Red Mill County Park (EEC South Side)



Join us at Red Mill County Park (South Side) to enjoy some family friendly programs. Make a craft, meet a salamander and snake, get up close and personal with macroinvertebrates, use nets to sample water, and much more. The program is brought to you by the LaPorte County SWCD and the LaPorte County Parks. This is a free program and all children must be accompanied by an adult. Have questions call 219-324-5855. No pre-registration required.

### Easy Exercises for All Ages

September 15 Luhr Park 9-10 am Free  
Call week before to register 219-325-8315

"Easy Exercises for All Ages" Join Physical Therapist Diane Rich for a head-to-toe walkthrough of some easy exercises to help keep muscles and joints limber!

### 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. Luhr County Park from 9 - 10 am . Call at least one week in advance to register. 219-325-8315

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



October 6 - 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).

# Programs - Programs - Programs

## Pioneer Days

**September 25 & 26**

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.

## Parent and Child Discovery Days



6-7:15 pm **Ages 3-8**

Luhr Park Nature Center

\$5.00 A Child / Per Program

An adult is required to participate.

**Oct. 6- Who Lives Here?**

**Oct. 20-Deer Crossing**

**Nov. 3- What's For Dinner?**

**Nov. 10- Turkey Talk**

**Dec. 1- Catch The Sun**

**Dec. 15- Behind The Mask**

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

## Pumpkin Painting and Halloween Bingo

**October 4**

Luhr Park 5 - 6:15 pm

Max 30

Come out and decorate your pumpkin and play bingo; pumpkins and decorations will be provided. **Call to register your spot today 219-325-8315.** All children must be accompanied by an adult.

## Attention Homeschool Participants

### Fishing Fun



**October 13**

Luhr Park 11am - 12pm

For ages 6 - 13

Participants will learn how to cast and go fishing. Poles and bait will be provided.

Pre-register by October 6

### Reptiles and Amphibians

**November 10**

Luhr Park 11 am - 12pm

For ages 6 - 13

Students will learn the basic differences between reptiles and amphibians, while getting up close and personal with each. Pre-register by

November 3

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

## Plant Base Life

**October 19**

Luhr Park Nature Center

6- 7:30 pm

A Journey into Health; a Plant Based Path tips, tricks and recipes, by Marcy Daily

**Call week before to register 219-325-8315**

## Natures Tiny Tots

**September 13, 20**

**October 18, 25**

**November 8, 22**

**December 6, 20**



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

Toddlers - Pre-School age

**Call at least one week in advance to signup & assure a spot 219-325-8315**

## Tails from the Trails

**November 9**

Luhr Park 6- 7pm

Park Board Member Ron Knickrehm hiked the Appalachian Trail. Come follow his journey and experiences inside the Nature Center. **Call week before to register 219-325-8315.**



## Nature Center

### Craft Day

**December 2** Luhr Park

1-4 pm All Ages welcome

Come out to the Luhr Park Nature Center to hang out and do a craft while supplies last.

**No pre-registration is required.** Children must be accompanied by an adult.

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.



# 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 / Payment due one week before program.

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

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

Check the program(s) you wish to attend.

Oct. 6     Oct. 20     Nov. 3

Nov. 10     Dec. 1     Dec. 15

\_\_\_\_\_ 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.



E	A	X	W	A	L	R	S	T	S	T	
T	K	W	Q	U	E	E	F	G	C	N	Y
F	B	O	O	T	S	F	A	E	I	D	L
H	A	E	A	R	C	I	L	S	K	A	I
M	F	E	O	E	A	P	L	S	C	S	E
A	W	H	H	E	P	U	M	P	K	I	N
S	I	H	K	A	R	B	E	T	P	R	D
E	A	A	N	E	Y	N	M	R	O	A	C
O	R	J	X	K	V	S	N	C	G	R	Q
H	L	E	A	F	S	C	A	R	F	I	O



SCARF	APPLE	BOOTS
TREE	FALL	RAKE
ACORN	PUMPKIN	PIE
HAY	SWEATER	LEAF

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.**



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LaPorte, IN 46350

