



# Naturally Speaking

Newsletter for the friends of the LaPorte County Parks.

Fall 2022

## It's Time to Play

Playgrounds attract thousands of visitors to our parks every year. In many ways when small children mention "going to the park" they are talking about just the playgrounds. We are glad to provide children with high quality, exciting places to play and enjoy the outdoors. However, many of our playgrounds are starting to show their age. Several of them are over 20 years old (some pushing 30) and are reaching the end of their life. If you didn't know, playgrounds can cost as much, or more than a house. So replacing them is extremely expensive.



Recently, we were given \$250,000 from the Healthcare Foundation to replace the small playground at Bluhm with a more modern ramped playground that everyone can enjoy. Then in 2022, the County Council allotted \$200,000 in American Relief Plan Act funds to go with another \$150,000 from the Healthcare Foundation of LaPorte to replace playgrounds at Red Mill and Creek Ridge. What a time to be a kid in our County Parks! These play areas will be amazing and are sure to attract kids from all over to our parks. We hope to complete construction on these in the fall/early winter of this year.

None of this would be possible without support from many sources. Our County Commissioners and County Council see the value in our parks and how they affect quality of life for our residents. The Healthcare Foundation of LaPorte and our LaPorte County Park Foundation also provide funds and support for these projects. If you get a chance tell your elected officials and these foundations how much you appreciate their support of our parks.

Our hope is that residents who come to enjoy our new playgrounds will venture out to find something or somewhere within our county parks that they truly love!



Jeremy Sobecki  
Park Superintendent

## Bluhm County Park Playground Additional Activities

Bluhm County Park Playground participants can do fun activities to help enhance their speech / Language / Cognition/ Fine Motor/ and Sensory skills. Here is an example of one of the activities. Scan the QR code to view more or visit our web page at [LaporteCountyParks.org](http://LaporteCountyParks.org).



- Using the balance beam is a great way to target receptive language skills and gross motor skills.
- As your child moves down the balance beam, model words such as "slow" and "fast" and have them follow those directions as prompted.
- Have your child follow directions to "walk forward, walk backward, side step, move left, move right, squat and move." This targets both receptive language skills and gross motor skills.

### Balance Beam



Activities provided by Playtime Pediatrics Rehab-Northwest Health LaPorte Hospital



Hello everyone! My name is Cathy Fuller. I am the new LaPorte County Parks Office/Finance Manager. I have worked for the LaPorte County Parks Dept. for about two years already in the Nature Center as well as assisting the Office/ Finance Manager, Char Kalk. Char has retired and I have taken her place making reservations for our shelters and halls and making sure all the bills and the employees get paid. I really enjoy my job and am learning lots of new things. Char kept all the plates spinning. Hopefully, I will be able to do the same! I am looking forward to working and serving the LaPorte community.

**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 [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)

**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

**(Coming Soon)**  
**Sebert Woods County Park**  
 Springfield Township

**(undeveloped)**  
**Kankakee Property**  
 Kankakee Township

#### Foundation Properties:

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

## School Programs

### 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.

#### Owls and More!

If you teach 3rd grade students in a school that is in LaPorte County, your classroom could have a visit from a park naturalist, and learn about owls. Students will look through owl pellets, learn about animal adaptations, discuss food chains /webs, and listen to owl calls.

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 **August - February** 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 **3rd grade**---3.LS.3 / 3.LS.4  
Email- [natureniki@csinet.net](mailto:natureniki@csinet.net) or call 219-324-5855 to schedule your classroom visit.

#### Park Field Trips



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.



## \*\*Program Update\*\* Pioneer Days 2022

Due to a staff shortage we will not be hosting the annual Pioneer Days Festival Scheduled for September 24 and 25 at Creek Ridge County Park. We look forward to the return of this festival in 2023. The dates will be September 23 and 24 2023. Please put them on your calendars!

## 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.

Sept. 14- Frog Fun  
Sept. 28- Sounds of Nature  
Oct. 12- Wiggly Workers  
Oct. 26- Spider Sniffing  
Nov. 2- What's Falling  
Nov. 16- Snakes Alive  
Dec. 7- Let it Snow



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



## Mother & Son Evening under the stars

**October 20**  
6 - 8 pm Luhr Park  
\$25 per couple/\$5 each additional son

Moms and sons join us for an evening of hands-on activities in the great outdoors. Dress for weather. Payment and registration due October 13 or when the program is filled whichever comes first. See page 5



**Stomp Rockets**  
**Glow Sticks**  
**Owl Prowl**  
**Snacks**  
**and More!**





# Programs - Programs - Programs

## 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

**August 23-** Ear & Hearing Care, Jessica Nichols, audiologist

**September 14-** Pairing your plants for multi-season display, Sacha-Gee Burns, Solid Waste District

**October 5-** Medicare 2023 Overview, Megan Rogers, SHIP Supervisor

**November 2-** Managing Stress with Moria Cogwell, Wellness Specialist, The Crossing

## Natures Tiny Tots



**\*Now on Tuesdays\***

**October 4, 18**

**November 15, 22**

**December 6, 20**

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

Toddlers - Pre-School age  
**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.

## Halloween decorating craft, bingo and prizes

**September 27**

4 - 5pm Luhr Park

\$5 each child



Come out and decorate a Halloween craft; All decorations will be provided. And fun Bingo with prizes. Payment and Registration due at least one week in advance. See page 5. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

## Bird Adaptations

Wonders of flight and migration

**October 18**

6- 7pm

Luhr Park

All ages welcome

Come to Luhr County Park Nature Center and Join the Potawatomi Audubon Society and learn about birds and their several adaptations. Program includes bird calls, nests, and a slide presentation! Then have a fun bird bingo game. Call 219-325-8315 to reserve your spot today. All children must be accompanied by an adult.



## Story & Bingo



**November 15**

4 - 5pm Luhr Park

Come out to Luhr Park for a story and bingo and nature center fun. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Call to reserve your spot 219-325-8315

## Pet Parade and Social

**October 5**

5:30 - 6:30 pm Luhr Park

We are partnering with the Small Animal Shelter. Bring your dogs and cats for a pet parade and social. Meet outside of the dog park. All animals must be on leash. No aggressive animals allowed and must be vaccinated.

## Nature Center Craft Day

**December 6,** 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.

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](http://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 \_\_\_

**Parent/Child Discovery Days (Ages 3-8)**  
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

\_\_\_ Sept. 14 \_\_\_ Sept. 28 \_\_\_ Oct. 12 \_\_\_ Oct. 26

\_\_\_ Nov. 2 \_\_\_ Nov. 16 \_\_\_ Dec. 7

\_\_\_\_\_ Total Amount Due (\*no refunds)

**Halloween Decoration Craft, Bingo and Prizes**  
September 27 4-5pm at Luhr Park  
Registration / payment due one week before program.

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

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

Additional Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

\$5.00 A Child

\_\_\_\_\_ Total Amount Due (\*no refunds)

**Mother and Son**  
Evening under the stars  
Luhr Park

Thursday, October 20 from 6- 8 pm

\$25 per couple and \$5 for each additional Son. Registration due October 13 or when the program is filled whichever comes first.

Name of Adult Female: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Son: \_\_\_\_\_

Son's Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of additional Son's: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ 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.

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

