



Nature Notes



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF DARKE COUNTY PARKS



March - May 2017

WHAT'S INSIDE

From the Director's Desk	2
Thank You for Your Kindness	2
School & Group Programs	3
Parent and Preschooler Adventures	4
Park PALS	4
Jr. Naturalist	4
Spring Special Programs	5
3 Months At A Glance Calendar	6&7
Nature Programs	8
Naturalist Corner	9
Cultural Programs	9
Friends of the Parks	10
Darke County Photography Club	10
Darke County Canoe & Kayak Club	10
The Olde Thyme Gardeners	10
Volunteer Corner	11
Darke County Birders Club	11
Quarterly Question	12
Parks Contacts	12

MAPLE SUGARIN' AT THE PRAIRIE



Saturday, March 4: 8am - 3pm
Shawnee Prairie Preserve



Freezing nights and thawing days are the start to a bottle of maple syrup! This early spring festival at Shawnee Prairie offers guided tours through history and science as we learn the process of turning sap into syrup. After our tour of the woods, we'll visit the sugar shack where you can warm up in the steam-filled evaporator room as the sap spends countless hours boiling down to syrup. Be sure to stop by the log house, blacksmith shop, and Nature Center gift shop (full of maple goodies) to complete your day at the prairie.



WAFFLE BREAKFAST

Saturday, March 4: 8am - 12pm
Shawnee Prairie Preserve / \$6 Donation



The Friends of the Parks will once again be serving up a hearty breakfast of waffles, sausage, juice, coffee, and local pure maple syrup for just a \$6 donation towards the Friends' mission! After breakfast, take a maple syrup tour, grab some fantastic maple-themed baked goods, enter the 50/50 raffle, and visit the log house historical area. Stop by the Nature Center to purchase your pre-sale tickets, or tickets can be bought at the door.

(Additional sausage can be purchased for an extra \$1.)

OUR MISSION

The Mission of Darke County Park District is to acquire and preserve land areas possessing special natural and historical features and to manage and maintain these resources for the benefit of its residents through appropriate educational and passive recreational programs and activities.

TAKE FLIGHT:

A CELEBRATION OF OUR FEATHERED FRIENDS

Saturday, April 22: 7am-2pm
Shawnee Prairie Preserve / FREE



What better time to celebrate birds than Earth Day? Spend the day with your family exploring the wild birds that call Shawnee Prairie home. This fun-filled birding festival will begin with "Breakfast with the Birds," a fundraiser by the Darke Co. Birders, which will be offering breakfast bites in an effort to raise money for the care of the our owl, Greta. Five Rivers MetroParks will join us with a wide selection of their birds of prey animal ambassadors!

7am-9am: Breakfast with the Birds Fundraiser

7:30am: Avid Birder Hike

8am: Beginners Bird walk

9am: Family Bird walk

10am: Birds of prey program

Ongoing from 10am:

Nestbox building; Bird feeder craft; Toys that fly; Kites; Bird bingo; Workshops on gardening for birds; Backyard birdfeeding; and more!

See a Screech Owl, Kestrel, and a Red-tailed Hawk up close, and learn about these amazing animals! We will continue the day with a variety of bird-themed hikes, activities (all ages), workshops, and more! Join us to discover who's nesting around the Nature Center or a lunch-time chat about birdfeeding. The Friends of the Parks will be offering a quick hotdog lunch from 11am-1pm. We hope to see you enjoying Earth Day on the trails of Shawnee Prairie!



FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK...

In past issues of the Nature Notes I have written about change occurring with every season, and we continue to live that change. As most of you know, Steve Shaltry, after more than two and a half decades, has retired from the Darke County Parks Board of Commissioners. Steve was not only an inspiration to staff, but for me, he provided sincere leadership and friendship. As with each year, we seem to grow and watch the next stewards of our park district step forward and offer their time and services to the parks. Long time Darke County resident Tina E. White has accepted the position Steve vacated. I have had the pleasure of working with Tina while she volunteered for the district at different events. Her energy and sincerity to serve the park visitors is contagious, and she leads by example.

With each of the changes that take place with the Park Board of Commissioners, it becomes necessary to pass on the history of this park district. Within my short fifteen years of service to our community, I have come to learn that we have an extremely valuable resource to offer to our stewards of tomorrow. The passion with which commissioners, staff, and volunteers approach each day and each program is intended to leave lasting memories that will mold the thinking of these stewards. There is no doubt that we must leave them with these memories in order to protect the natural and cultural resource for decades to come. We are very fortunate that our levy has enjoyed backing by the majority of voters. The park board takes their responsibility to protect the resource seriously. The retired members of the park board of commissioners still play an active role as volunteers and educate us about the history of the park areas and each park's role and importance to this district.

As each year passes, the park district may grow, but each addition is carefully considered so as not to expand beyond what can be maintained and make sure we can protect and preserve that resource appropriately. I continually review our mission statement, written on page one of every Nature Notes, as a reminder of our goals, as do our staff and commissioners. As always we remind ourselves that these are YOUR parks, and we serve you, the general public. We can't be successful at this mission without the volunteerism offered by the surrounding community. In 2017 we look forward to celebrating 45 years of service with you. Come join us for a special event or one of the unique programs offered by our staff and volunteers. I look forward to seeing you on the trails or in the parks. Remember the benefits of parks and recreation are endless.

Roger Van Frank
Director

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KINDNESS...

Memorials / Honorariums

"In Memory" of Tom Rhoades

- Farmers State Bank; Bill, Sarah, Ainsley, & Bri Hans; Rachel White/ Casey Burdick/Cody Munchel; Roger & Connie Brocius; Jim & Donna Ballard; Roger Van Frank; Steve & Cynthia Shaltry; Deb Shiverdecker; Sharon Lapp; Sandy Hoying; Jack Coblentz; Mandy Martin

Monetary Donations

Morrow-Shiverdecker Family
Annie Oakley Committee
Darke County Health Dept
Friends of the Parks
Fur, Fish, and Game 4-H Club
Sherry Marten
Gary Donaldson

Material / Service Donations

Darke County Birders - *The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds of Ohio* / *Mick Maher* - Elk Skull / *Sandy Denniston* - Birdseed
Marilyn Banks - Birdseed, votive candles / *Ronda Miley* - popcorn / *Ginny Bertram* - Cranberries & gingerbread cookies
John R. Labig - Votive candles / *Gail Shafer* - Votive candles
Anna Wetzel - Popcorn & gingerbread cookies / *Torri Brown* - Wilton icing, apple cider, candlelight dinners prep / *Barbie Hanbarger* - Marshmallows, candlelight dinners prep supplies
Terri Wehrley-Pyles - Gingerbread cookies / *Janice Dubbs* - Towels, peanuts, cutting board, can openers, bar mop towels
Lyle Pinney - Storage totes / *Cindy Ploch* - Birdseed, felt, ribbon, embroidery thread, candlelight dinners prep supplies
Richard Kinninger - Birdseed *Eileen Litchfield* - Gingerbread cookies, candlelight dinners prep supplies / *Linda Onkst* - Christmas cards, sewing supplies, ribbons, buttons, embroidery floss / *Marilou Coverstone* - Prairie clothing & books / *Pat Treadway* - Bonnet / *Margaret Hensel* - Sparkling cider
Roger Van Frank - Candlelight dinners prep supplies / *Gail & Kent Shafer* - Candlelight dinners prep supplies *Dan & Marty Schipfer* - Candlelight dinners prep supplies
Eileen Schulze - Trunk for Log House

Christmas Decorating of the Nature Center & Log House

Barbie Hansbarger	Ray Bradbury
Babette Delk	Arcanum High School IEP Class
Carolyn Hollinger	Karan Hoschouer
Fort Greenville Chapter DAR	Lorraine Gebhardt
Olde Thyme Gardeners	Regina Schieltz
Friends of the Parks	Deb Shiverdecker
Darke Co. Birders	Lowe's (Greenville)
Horse & Rider 4-H Club	Outpost Enterprises, LTD
Girl Scout Troop #31223	Cindy Sneary
Beth Combs	Walmart
Sandy Hoying	

Grants Received

☐ Harry D. Stephens Memorial, Inc. - Grant towards updating of raptor mew

YOUR GUIDE TO GROUP PROGRAMS



NATURE'S CLASSROOM FIELDTRIPS

Our school field trip programs are designed to enhance and supplement Ohio's science curriculum. Each program topic addresses current ODOE Science Grade Level Indicators and the Science Benchmarks by Academic Content Standards. There is a fee of \$3 per student for out-of-county schools and groups. For more details, please call 937.548.0165, and ask to speak with Robb.

K Making Sense of Nature

Exploring the natural world using the senses

K What's Wild

Understanding *living* things and their basic needs

1 Resources: Naturally

Defining natural resources and conservation

1-2 A Look at Habitats

Ohio's animals and their basic needs

2 Through the Seasons

Seasonal changes and weather influences

3 Life Cycles

Understanding plant and animal birth, life, growth, and survival

3 Our Active Earth

Investigating the processes that shape the Earth

4 Positively Plants

Plant structure, function, and life cycles

4 Pioneer Living

Experiencing local frontier life in the late 18th century

5 It's All Connected

Tracing the flow of energy through natural systems

4-6 Wading Into Wetlands

The function, value, and biotic diversity of wetlands

NATURALIST IN THE CLASSROOM

Schools are invited to schedule a visit to your class by a parks' naturalist. Topics include a number of natural history themes focused on native wildlife. Classroom programs are normally one class period in length and may include hands-on activities, live animals, a PowerPoint program, and other visual aids. There is a fee of \$3 per student for out-of-county schools and groups. For more details, please call 937.548.0165, and ask to speak with Mandy.

K-3 Beautiful Bees & Butterflies

Learn insect parts and discover insects' importance to plants.

K-3 Birds, Birds, Birds

Get hands on with beaks, feathers, and bird food.

K-3 Ready for Winter?

How Ohio's wildlife survives winter

4-6 Ohio Wildlife Timeline

4-6 Rocks Rock

4-6 Get to Know Mammals

Discover the skulls, furs, and scat of Ohio's mammals.

SPECIAL HISTORY PROGRAM: THE CIVIL WAR

Friday, April 28th - Shawnee Prairie Preserve

Attention 8th grade teachers! History comes alive when the Ohio Valley Civil War Association, a premier living history unit, visits Shawnee Prairie. Students will hear the cannon blast, watch soldiers drill, learn about the war from the civilians' perspective, and meet President Lincoln and his first lady. Morning and afternoon sessions are available but will be filled on a first come, first serve basis. Register your class today by calling (937) 548-0165 and asking for Hannah.

YOUR GUIDE TO CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

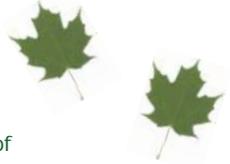
PARENT & PRESCHOOLER ADVENTURES

Parent and Preschooler Adventures is a series of monthly, hour-long programs designed to give parents and their preschoolers an opportunity to investigate nature through hands-on activities, hikes, stories, songs, and take-home projects. The "Little Explorers" Wednesday classes are for 2-3 year olds, and the "Seedlings" Thursday classes are for 4-5 year olds. **Registration is required, and each class has a fee of \$2.00.**

MARCH - MMMM...MAPLE

Wed., March 15 (2-3 yr. olds); 10-11am
Thurs., March 16 (4-5 yr. olds); 10-11am
Shawnee Prairie Preserve

The sweet treat that comes from trees will be the highlight of our March preschool. We'll learn more about the sugar maple tree and discover the parts of a tree. End the morning with a taste of nature's candy.



APRIL - CAN YOU FIND?

Wed., April 12 (2-3 yr. olds); 10-11am
Thurs., April 13 (4-5 yr. olds); 10-11am
Shawnee Prairie Preserve

Let's go outside and have a good old-fashioned scavenger hunt. Let's shake off the winter dust and head outside. This preschool version of a scavenger hunt will include color matching, pictures, and our sense of touch.



MAY - Toad-ally Fun

Wed., May 17 (2-3 yr. olds); 10-11am
Thurs., May 18 (4-5 yr. olds); 10-11am
Shawnee Prairie Preserve

They hop, lay their eggs in winter, and eat bugs. All things toad will be the subject of this month's preschool adventures. Explore more about these little amphibians through stories, games, and art.



PARK P.A.L.S.

Park P.A.L.S. is a series of monthly programs designed for children in grades K-2nd who are interested in nature. P.A.L.S. stands for Practicing And Learning Stewardship. The program's mission is to develop future earth stewards through meaningful educational opportunities and hands-on experiences in the natural world. Programs are held on a Saturday of every month, and are supervised by staff & adult volunteers. A materials fee of \$3.00 is charged for each program, and registration is required.

MARCH - BUILD A FORT

Saturday, March 25: 10am-12pm; Shawnee Prairie Preserve

Bring your sense of adventure to the Natural Play Zone. Working together we will design and build a fort using natural materials. Once our task is accomplished the group can creatively use the structure for unstructured play. Dress for the weather.



APRIL - SPRING HIKING ADVENTURE

Saturday, April 15: 10am-12pm; Shawnee Prairie Preserve

Go on a scavenger hunt for critters as the ground starts to warm and the forest comes alive. We will gently roll logs and pull back leaves to expose the diversity of life that thrives on the forest floor



MAY - WETLAND EXPLORATION

Saturday, May 13: 10am-12 pm; Shawnee Prairie Preserve

Come see what's hopping in the wetlands as we search for tadpoles, frogs, and more. Getting knee-deep in nature, we will gently collect and discuss our findings before releasing them back to their own environment. Dress to get wet and muddy.



JUNIOR NATURALISTS

Jr. Naturalists is a series of monthly programs designed to give 3rd-6th grade students hands-on interaction with the natural world and a look at our current and historical place within it. Hikes, games, and service projects are all part of this exciting integrated study group. Programs are held on a Saturday of every month and are supervised by staff & adult volunteers. A materials fee of \$3.00 is charged for each program, and registration is required.

MARCH - ANTLER AMBLE

Saturday, March 11: 9:30am-12pm; Shawnee Prairie Preserve

White-tailed deer grow a new set of antlers every year and shed them in the late winter. We'll venture off trail to hunt for shed antlers and see what treasures we'll discover along the way. Dress for the weather and being off trail.



APRIL - DRAW A BIRD

Saturday, April 8: 9:30am-12pm; Shawnee Prairie Preserve

We'll join in the tradition of expressing joy in the simplest of things in life by drawing a bird and creating our own nature journals. It's not about artistic talent; it's about forgetting the worries of the world for a short time and enjoying the gifts nature gives us.



MAY - OHIO'S ENDANGERED SPECIES

Saturday, May 20: 9:30am-12pm; Shawnee Prairie Preserve

We'll explore what it means for a species to be endangered or threatened. Then we'll look at what species are in danger right here in Ohio. Finally we'll learn what we can do to help these wonderful links in nature's chain come back from the brink.



YOUR GUIDE TO SPRING SPECIAL PROGRAMS

EGG DYEING; NATURALLY

Saturday, April 8: 2pm
Shawnee Prairie Preserve / Registration Required / FREE

White, brown, blue, and orange are a few of the colors we could achieve while dyeing eggs. Today, Mara Cox will share her Latvian heritage of dyeing eggs naturally. All the registered participants will get the chance to combine onion skins, flowers, leaves, and water to create a one-of-a-kind Easter egg.



SPRING SURVIVAL SHELTERS

Thursday, May 18: 6pm
Shawnee Prairie Preserve
Registration Required / FREE

Join local survival and bushcraft expert, Rob Simpson from "Lost Wilds Outdoors" (formerly The Canteen Shop) as we continue to build our knowledge of survival shelters. This season, we'll focus on using the versatile tarp for our shelter needs. Dress for the weather as we will be outside in all but the most extreme weather for the duration of this program.

5K FIT

Every Thursday @ 5:30pm March 30 - May 18
Shawnee Prairie Preserve / FREE

Have you always wanted to try a 5k but never got around to it? Are you tired of those holiday pounds sticking around? Do you just need some motivation to get healthy? Join us throughout the spring as we help each other to do just that. We'll have three different eight-week programs for you to choose from (walking, walking/jogging, and running) to suit your fitness needs and help you work towards a healthier lifestyle. With everyone setting their own goals and moving at their own pace, feel free to join us at any point during the program. For every time you attend, you'll be entered into a drawing to win a free registration for the "Raptor Run/Walk" on Saturday, August 5th at Shawnee Prairie Preserve. Please dress for the weather, bring a timing device, and a water bottle.



CANOE/KAYAK PADDLING SKILLS

Float difficulty varies. Some are ideal for beginners; others are more suited to those with experience. Paddling outings are weather dependent, and adjustments may be necessary due to conditions. All equipment is provided. Parks' staff are certified canoe/kayak instructors. Dress for the possibility of getting wet.

INTRODUCTION TO KAYAKING

Monday, May 22 @ 6pm
Thursday, May 25 @ 6pm
Shawnee Prairie Preserve
Registration required
Fee: \$15

It's finally paddling season! That means it's finally time to learn (or remember) how to use that kayak correctly and safely. Join us to refresh old skills or learn a few new ones while you're at it! This two-day course will introduce you to kayaking by way of classroom study on Monday and on-the-water workshop on Thursday at a local pond. Learn all the paddle strokes, how to re-enter a capsized kayak, where and when you should paddle local waterways, and more! During this fun-filled program, we'll play games, enjoy the warm spring weather, and prepare for a great paddling season. Ages 16 and up please. Both class dates are required. Dress for wet on Thursday; bring water and sunscreen.

DOWN TO EARTH BOOK CLUB

Do you like reading books by nature writers, books about the outdoors, or maybe even about pioneers first settling Ohio? The Down to Earth Book Club will feature a different book in every Nature Notes. Each quarter, everyone is welcome to come discuss the work, enjoy some yummy treats, and suggest future books.

THE MOON BY WHALE LIGHT

Monday, May 1 @ 6:30pm
Shawnee Prairie Preserve



In our sixth season, we invite you to read *The Moon by Whale Light: And Other Adventures Among Bats, Penguins, Crocodilians, and Whales* by Diane Ackerman. In a rare blend of scientific fact and poetic truth, the acclaimed author of *A Natural History of the Senses* explores the activities of whales, penguins, bats, and crocodilians, plunging headlong into nature and coming up with highly entertaining treasures. Please give us a call to let us know you plan on participating.

SUMMER CAMP DATES 2017

Day Camps

These classic day camps are similar in format to camps we have offered for over a decade! Most camps feature crafts, take-home items, and lots of nature and fun!

Ages 6-7: JUNE 19-23: 10AM-12PM

THINGS WITH WINGS - \$65

Ages 6-7: JUNE 26-30: 10AM-12PM

ROCKS - \$65

Ages 8-9: JULY 10-14: 10AM-12PM

TRAILBLAZERS - \$70

Ages 8-9: JULY 24-29: 10AM-12PM

OCEAN EXPLORERS- \$70

Ages 10-12: JUNE 12-16: 1PM-4PM

LET'S PADDLE - \$75*

Ages 10-12: JULY 31-AUG.4: 9AM-12PM

SURVIVE THE OHIO TERRITORY - \$75

Ages 13-15: JULY 17-21: 10AM-4PM

ADVENTURE ZONE- \$95*



Plan Your Summer Now!

Space is limited for each camp, so be sure to call to register your campers TODAY! Campers can attend any or all of the camps within their age bracket.

Payment & registration packets are due 4 weeks prior to camp.

Call for more info.

**denotes a single overnight camping experience*



Mini-Camps

These shorter, more condensed camps will allow for additional campers to join us this summer!

Please note: Mini-Camps price reflects the lack of a snack, camp shirt, and additional take-home items (crafts/projects still included).

Ages 6-9: JUNE 12-14: 9:30AM-12PM

STAMP INTO NATURE - \$30

Ages 6-9: JULY 5-7: 10AM-12PM

CHRISTMAS IN JULY - \$30



3 Months At A Glance

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
March						
Programs marked with an (*) require registration.	Unless indicated, all programs begin at Shawnee Prairie Preserve.		1 Project FeederWatch	2 Canoe & Kayak Meeting 7pm	3 ☾	4 Maple Sugarin' at the Prairie Waffle Breakfast
5 Nature Center & Park Office -Closed -	6	7 Early Morning Discovery Hike 8am Friends of DCP Meeting 6:30pm Project FeederWatch	8	9 Woodcock Walk 6:30pm* ----- DCP Board Meeting 4pm	10	11 Jr. Naturalists 9:30am*
12 Nature Center & Park Office -Closed -	13 Volunteer Shenanigans: 1pm*	14 Early Morning Discovery Hike 8am Olde Thyme Gardeners 12pm Cast Iron 102 5:30pm* Full Sap Moon 8pm @ Worth Preserve Project FeederWatch	15 Little Explorers Preschool 10am*	16 Seedlings Preschool 10am*	17	18
19 Nature Center & Park Office -Closed -	20 ~Vernal Equinox~ ☾	21 Early Morning Discovery Hike 8am Project FeederWatch	22	23	24	25 Park PALS 10am*
26 Nature Center & Park Office -Closed -	27 ☀	28 Early Morning Discovery Hike 8am Birders Meeting 7pm Project FeederWatch	29	30 5K Fit 5:30pm ----- Skunks 6:30pm*	31 ☀ - New Moon ☾ - First Quarter ☽ - Full Moon ☾ - Last Quarter	

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>April</h1>						1
2 Nature Center & Park Office -Closed -	3 <i>Volunteer Shenanigans:</i> 1pm*	4 Early Morning Discovery Hike 8am ----- Friends Meeting 6:30pm	5	6 5K Fit 5:30pm ----- Canoe & Kayak Meeting 7pm	7 WILD 5-0 1pm*	8 Jr Naturalists 9:30am* ----- Egg Dyeing; Naturally 2pm*
9 Nature Center & Park Office Closed	10 <i>Volunteer Shenanigans:</i> 1pm* ----- Full Grass Moon 8pm @ <i>Routzong Preserve</i>	11 Early Morning Discovery Hike 8am ----- Olde Thyme Gardeners 12pm	12 Little Explorers Preschool 10am*	13 Seedlings Preschool 10am* ----- 5K Fit 5:30pm ----- DCP Board Meeting 4pm	14	15 Park PALS 10am*
16 Nature Center & Park Office Closed	17	18 Early Morning Discovery Hike 8am	19 Wondrous Wildflowers 6pm @ <i>Copess Nature Sanctuary</i>	20 5K Fit 5:30pm	21	22 Take Flight ----- -Earth Day-
23 Nature Center -Closed - ----- Nature Center -Closed - ----- Civil War Weekend	24	25 Early Morning Discovery Hike 8am ----- Birders Meeting 7pm	26	27 5K Fit 5:30pm	28 Civil War School Day	29 Civil War Heritage Weekend

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>May</h1>						
	1 Down to Earth Book Club 6:30pm*	2 Early Morning Discovery Hike 8am ----- Friends of DCP Meeting 6:30pm	3	4 5K Fit 5:30pm ----- Canoe & Kayak Meeting 7pm	5 WILD 5-0 1pm* ----- Butterfly Monitoring 1pm	6 Jupiter Stargaze 8:30pm
7 Nature Center & Park Office -Closed -	8	9 Early Morning Discovery Hike 8am ----- Olde Thyme Gardeners 12pm	10 Full Flower Moon 8:30pm @ <i>Eidson Woods Preserve</i>	11 5K Fit 5:30pm ----- DCP Board Meeting 4pm	12 Butterfly Monitoring 1pm	13 Plant Sale ----- Park PALS 10am*
14 Nature Center & Park Office -Closed -	15 <i>Volunteer Shenanigans: Roadtrip!</i> 7am*	16 Early Morning Discovery Hike 8am	17 Little Explorers Preschool 10am*	18 Seedlings Preschool 10am* ----- 5K Fit 5:30pm ----- Shelter Building 6pm*	19 Butterfly Monitoring 1pm	20 Jr Naturalists 9:30am* ----- Plant Lore 2pm* ----- Log House Area Open 1-4pm
21 Nature Center & Park Office -Closed -	22 Intro To Kayaking - Pt 1 6pm *	23 Early Morning Discovery Hike 8am ----- Birders Meeting 7pm	24	25 Intro To Kayaking - Pt 2 6pm *	26 Butterfly Monitoring 1pm	27 Winged Jewels 9am ----- Log House Area Open 1-4pm
28 Nature Center & Park Office -Closed -	29 Memorial Day -Nature Center Closed-	30 Early Morning Discovery Hike 8am	31			

**Butterfly Monitoring
Fridays @ 1pm
Shawnee Prairie Preserve**

Join us each and every Friday from May through October as we attempt to record every butterfly species found at Shawnee Prairie Preserve. This data will be submitted to The Ohio Lepidopterists in order to further their efforts. This is an excellent chance to learn new butterfly species and to enjoy the many blooms of our pollinator's meadow. Please note that if the temperature is below 60 degrees or it is raining, these hikes will be canceled. Call for more info.

YOUR GUIDE TO NATURAL HISTORY PROGRAMS

SPRING SENSATIONS - HIKES OF THE SEASON

Full Sap Moon- March 14: 8pm @ Worth Family Preserve

Full Grass Moon- April 10: 8pm @ Routzong Preserve

Full Flower Moon- May 10: 8:30pm @ Eidson Woods Preserve

Woodcock Walk- March 9: 6:30pm @ Shawnee Prairie Preserve

Wondrous Wildflowers- April 19: 6pm @ Coppess Nature Sanctuary

Winged Jewels - May 27: 9am @ Shawnee Prairie Preserve

Join us for a hiking series exploring the sensations of spring! We'll begin searching for spring as we watch the skies for the American Woodcock performing its mating song and dance. These unique birds require the ground to be thawed, so call the Nature Center to confirm this date. We'll check Coppess' trails for its annual wildflower display in mid-April (dress for mud). At the end of May, we'll hope to pick up some last-minute migrating warblers and other songbirds on Shawnee Prairie's trails.

Each hike will be rain or shine (except full moon hikes).



SKUNKS: THEY MAKE SCENTS

March 30, 6:30pm
Registration Required / FREE

As if they weren't easily identified by their distinct black and white coloration, skunks also have an unmistakable odor. Odor is putting it kindly; skunks really stink! Of all chemical defenses that wildlife employ, the smell of skunk is most offensive. Let's discover why these mammals smell so bad and why they are an important part of the ecosystem.

JUPITER SKYGAZING

Saturday, May 6, 8:30pm
Shawnee Prairie Preserve / FREE

Under the light of a near full moon, join us as we welcome back the Stillwater Stargazers. Jupiter and four of its moons will be high for optimal viewing through the provided telescopes. We will spend some time discussing the coming total solar eclipse to occur this August as well! Enter the parking lot with caution please.



PLANT NAME LORE

May 20, 2pm
Registration Required / Shawnee Prairie Preserve / FREE

Ever wonder how a plant got its name or why historical tradition views it in a particular light? The Mayapple is pretty easy, but others aren't so simple. Join us for an illuminating afternoon as we discuss why some plants were stuck with their common names, the historical uses for them, and perhaps a few superstitions about these beautiful backcountry residents.

WILD 5-0

Friday, April 7, 1pm
Friday, May 5, 1pm
Shawnee Prairie Preserve / Registration requested / FREE

With age comes wisdom, and with wisdom come special opportunities. We invite all of those young at heart and wise with age to this new series of programs geared towards the "50 and over" crowd. We'll gather at the Nature Center or a pre-designated park and explore a different topic each session. Spring wildflowers, migrating birds, and fresh leaves will greet us this season.



EARLY MORNING DISCOVERY HIKES

Every Tuesday at 8am
Shawnee Prairie Preserve



The air is alive with birdsong, and the ground is blanketed in colorful blooms. Spring rejuvenates the winter-weary soul, and we return to our weekly walk schedule this March. As we hike the trails each week, we'll explore the progression of spring and all the splendor that comes with it! Join us weekly for revitalizing walks as we marvel at the sights and sounds of springtime.





Naturalist Corner



HERE COME THE SALAMANDERS

In early March, those who are familiar with salamander movement start to get excited. The reward for patiently waiting for warmer temperatures combined with substantial rainfall is the chance to witness the mass awakening of a rarely seen amphibian. As you stand in freezing drizzle, boots coated in mud, an indescribable appreciation for this natural process begins to grow, and it seems unimaginable that the world could exist without these animals. As large numbers of salamanders migrate to temporary vernal pools for breeding, you have to wonder where they are the rest of the time.

There are more than twenty species of salamanders living in Ohio, mostly in old growth forests, spending daylight hours under old logs. This secretive existence comes with a cost, as many people will not support conservation efforts for a species they know little about. However, some scientists make it their life's work to study salamanders and have found that various species can leap up to ten times their body length into the air, appearing to defy gravity.

At Northern Arizona University, PhD student Anthony Hessel is studying how salamanders jump. Hessel saw that salamanders use abdominal muscles to release stored energy using a protein called titin. Muscles of both salamanders and humans need titin in order to work and move. Titin is folded like an accordion when not in use but stretches out when needed



to provide extra bursts of energy. The formula for this protein is needed when fabricating artificial limbs, or prostheses, for amputees. The software used to mimic muscular movement in the design of prostheses has a formula that can be adjusted to create a more realistic, bouncy piece of prosthetic equipment. This means people are able to move more naturally and with

less pain when the correct formulation is used. While the technology for producing better limbs has become more advanced over the years, the understanding of how movement actually works is just now being discovered thanks to the salamanders.

While the focus of Hessel's research is not conservation, the results contribute to conservation efforts simply by showing the amazing connection that salamanders have to humans. This is not to say that salamanders are not independently important; however, this type of example can bring more skeptical minds to the side of conservation issues.

Salamander populations are declining rapidly, and without community support for research and conservation, there will be no way to prevent species extinctions. Perhaps the key to creating an awareness of salamander conservation lies in our ability to link this little amphibian back to our own lives.



Kathi McQueen, Naturalist & Volunteer Coordinator

YOUR GUIDE TO CULTURAL HISTORY PROGRAMS

CIVIL WAR HERITAGE WEEKEND

April 29 - April 30: Demonstrations at 11am, 1pm, and 3pm
Shawnee Prairie Preserve / FREE

History comes alive when the Ohio Valley Civil War Association, one of the premier living history units in the country, visits Shawnee Prairie once again. Hear the cannon blast, watch men drill, and smell a soldier's supper simmering. Daily demonstrations will include the 35th Ohio Vol. Inf., Birge's Western Sharpshooters, and the 1st Ohio Light Art. Between demonstrations observe daily life for a Union soldier, discuss the war effort with civilians, or marvel at visiting ladies' latest fashions. The OVCWA has taught at Manassas, Kennesaw Mountain, Stones River, and Gettysburg National Battlefields, and Darke County Parks is proud to welcome them here again.



CAST IRON CUISINE 102

March 14: 5:30pm / Shawnee Prairie Preserve
Registration Required / Fee: \$5



Do you want to use your cast iron cookware more often? Have hotdogs and marshmallows lost their camping appeal? Are you ready for a bigger challenge? Join us for the intermediate level cast iron cooking class. We'll do a quick review of cast iron use and maintenance; then we'll try some slightly more complicated recipes to expand our culinary repertoire. Previous participation in the 101 class is helpful but not required. Dress for the weather as the program will take place in the log house.

FRIENDS OF THE DARKE COUNTY PARKS

Organized in 1995, the Friends of the Darke County Park District is a 501(c)3 corporation whose mission is to "Promote and support the mission of the Darke County Parks through volunteerism and fund-raising". The Friends strive to increase public awareness and appreciation of the beauty found within Darke County Parks. Their volunteerism shows throughout the county through Adopt-a-Waterway & Highway programs, helping staff run events such as Prairie Days, hosting the Waffle Breakfast, managing the endowment fund, and staffing the gift shop in the Nature Center. Business meetings are held the first Tuesday of every month beginning at 6:30pm, with a gathering or program being held at 7pm immediately following the business meeting. Please join us!

A Message from the Friends:

I can't believe that March 20th is the first day of spring! That means it's time to get out of the house and help your local park by volunteering for spring programs or maybe some spring cleaning. There are always plenty of jobs that need done after the winter months.

Also spring brings two big events for which you can volunteer. The Friends of the Darke County Parks will be hosting their annual waffle and sausage breakfast held during Maple Sugaring at the Prairie on March 4th. The waffle breakfast is our biggest fundraising event and will help our parks. The other occasion we need help with is Take Flight (formerly known as Nature Day) which is April 22nd.

Kathi McQueen, our volunteer coordinator, needs to hear from you about both events. Your help is a very important part of making our activities successful, so I hope to see you there. Don't forget to make your favorite maple-flavored baked good for the bake sale during the waffle breakfast.



-Barbie Hansbarger, President

Meetings

March 7 @ 6:30pm:

Kathi McQueen: World Bird Sanctuary

April 4 @ 6:30pm:

May 2 @ 6:30pm:

The Olde Thyme Gardeners

The Olde Thyme Gardeners have a strong interest in heritage and pioneer gardening techniques used in the 19th century. They also maintain the heirloom garden adjacent to the log house at Shawnee Prairie Preserve. No special training is necessary to become a member; the only requirement is an interest in gardening practices of 1800-1820 and a love of growing things. Meetings are held each month at 12pm.

Meetings

March 14

April 11

May 9



Spring Gardening Seminar:

Native Plants: History and Ecology

Sunday, March 19th at 2pm

Registration Required: See below

-Registration closes March 10-

The Olde Thyme Gardeners are excited to sponsor a program by local treasure, Susan Gray. Susan has a wealth of knowledge on many topics but will join us today to speak on native plants. Learn how the Native Americans used plants and how the prairie needs to be protected. A snack buffet featuring coffee, tea, chips, and dips are included with registration. Mark your calendar now. Registration is \$10 and is due March 10th. Registration forms can be collected at the Nature Center and many local libraries. Please mail your registration and a check for \$10 made out to Olde Thyme Gardeners to PO Box 74, Greenville, Ohio 45331. Confirmations will be sent by email only. For more information, please call Marilyn Banks at 937-678-6870.

DARKE COUNTY CANOE & KAYAK CLUB

The Darke County Canoe and Kayak Club was organized to promote canoeing and kayaking. In non-paddling months, we enjoy hiking or biking. Our meetings are held the first Thursday of each month at 7pm in the Nature Center. For updates and to reserve space on a trip, call Carol Hathaway at 937.547.0220.

The Canoe & Kayak Club is exploring a change to "Paddlers & Pedallers." Since many of our participants bicycle, hike, & boat we will include bicycling in our schedule to see if there is an interest. We also often cancel boating trips due to low or high water, so this will give us an alternative. If we have enough participants, & the weather cooperates we will have bicycling & boating as scheduled. Contact Carol, or attend a club meeting if you are interested.

Trips & Gatherings

March 20

Hike at Carriage Hill MetroPark

April 8

Taylorville MetroPark (hike or bike)

May 20

Paddle the Stillwater River near Dayton

Meetings

March 2

April 6

May 4

DARKE COUNTY PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB

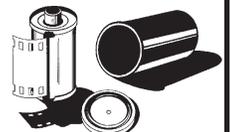
The Darke County Photography Club was formed in 1995 and promotes photography in & around Darke County. Presentations are also given by guest speakers on all subjects of photography. Whether you are a beginner or advanced photographer, all are invited to attend the monthly meetings held the second Tuesday of each month at 7pm at the Shawnee Prairie Preserve Nature Center.



March 14

April 11

May 9



Meet Wayne & Jill Fisher, this quarter's Volunteers in the Spotlight! This couple has been volunteering at the parks for eight years with things like the log house, Nature Day, trail monitoring, and the maple sugar festival. In recent years, they have become advocates for the bike trail, spending time gathering support through grants and community awareness. Wayne and Jill enjoy volunteering because it allows them to make new friends and work on projects that help the community. It is this philosophy that they use when encouraging others to volunteer. Living just southeast of Greenville, this retired couple likes to garden, run, bike, hike, read, sew, and do woodworking. In the future, they would like to see the Tecumseh Trail completed from Bradford to Union City, with a covered bridge over Greenville Creek. Thank you, Wayne & Jill for your dedication to the parks!

VOLUNTEER IN THE SPOTLIGHT



"THOSE WHO CAN, DO.
THOSE WHO CAN DO MORE, VOLUNTEER."

Winter is a time for planning in the world of parks. Things tend to slow down, and your mind starts to wander a bit, making it easy to make big plans for the upcoming spring. I have seen a full rotation of events here at Darke Co. Parks, and now is my time to reflect on what we can do to improve things for the coming year. I continue to be amazed at how devoted our volunteers are and how they bring their best foot forward in times of need. The truth is that it takes a while to build the trust and relationships that are needed to make the park and its events run smoothly. I feel we have made great progress in this area, and it will continue to develop as our relationship continues. Perhaps we will even make big plans come to fruition.

~Kathi McQueen: Volunteer Coordinator

Volunteer Corner



VOLUNTEERS IN THE FIELD

Eric Strait, McKenna Gilbert,
& Kaley Preston help out
during Prairie Days



VOLUNTEER SHENANIGANS

Welcome to Volunteer Shenanigans! These social gatherings and workshops will allow you to grow your skills, help with group projects, explore other nature centers/parks, and have fun! Even if you aren't sure about the topic, join us for a enjoyable, social gathering!

We hope you will attend often and see this as a small reward for all that you give us. Thank you.

Register with Kathi, so we know you are coming!

- ❑ **March 13, 1pm** - You Are The Heart of the Park
- ❑ **April 3, 1pm** - Teas, Trees and Evergreen Leaves
- ❑ **April 10, 1pm** - Nature Did It First
- ❑ **May 15, 7am** - Volunteer Roadtrip: Serpent Mound



DARKE COUNTY BIRDERS CLUB



The Darke County Birders Club is open to beginning and experienced birders alike. Monthly meetings include a short business session followed by a program on a variety of topics. The club meets the fourth Tuesday of each month at Shawnee Prairie Preserve Nature Center. Monthly field trips begin at the Nature Center where directions and carpooling opportunities are discussed. For more information, contact Steve Miller at 547-3340.

PROGRAMS, MEETINGS, & TRIPS

Darke Duck Drive

Saturday, March 11, 12:30pm

Bird from the car as we search for waterfowl migrating through our county.

Winter's Last Day

Sunday, March 19, 8am

Travel to Spring Valley if the weather is good, Mississinawa and Salamonie in IN if not.

Meeting

Tuesday, March 28, 7pm

Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival: Pat McCarthy brings back tales from Kennedy Space Center & Merritt Island area.

Evening Sounds Walk

Friday, April 7, 6pm

Meet at Chestnut Street Marsh for our annual welcoming of spring's migrating warblers.

Cindy's Campground Visit

Sunday, April 23, 7am

We'll head out to find Cindy and bird at her campground area.

Meeting

Tuesday, April 25, 7pm

6pm: Pre-meeting hike at Chestnut Street Marsh
7pm: Birding Around the World: Margaret Hensel returns from travels to bring us adventures from Namibia and Botswana.

Morning Sounds Walk

Sunday, May 7, 6am

Walk Chestnut St. Marsh as we refresh our singing birds audio skills.

Crane Creek Campout

May 13-14

Join us at Maumee Bay State Park for the biggest week in American birding. See Steve Miller for details.

Meeting

Tuesday, May 23, 7pm

6pm: Pre-meeting hike at Chestnut Street Marsh
7pm: Ice is Nice: Kate Young shares her experience in Iceland.

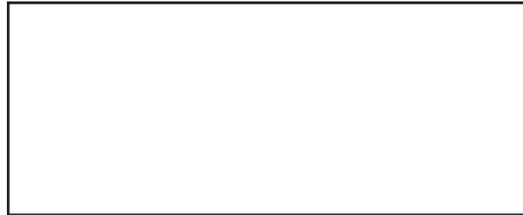
Darke County Parks

P.O. Box 801
4267 State Route 502
Greenville, OH 45331
Voice: 937.548.0165
Fax: 937.548.2935
www.darkecountyparks.org



30% Recycled Content

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE PAID
GREENVILLE OH
PERMIT #48



Quarterly Question:

Though its song is a common sound of spring in many of our woodlots, this small frog is often impossible to see! These small frogs have been known to begin singing as early as February and will sometimes even sing in the autumn, regardless of its common name. Can you guess the name?

Call in your answer to the Nature Center at 937.548.0165, or email your answer to info@darkecountyparks.org.

Congrats to last quarter's winner, Daniel Maynard, who correctly answered "Dec 21".

WISH LIST

If you have any of the following items and would be willing to donate them to Darke County Parks, please contact the park office at 548-0165. Your donations are tax deductible.

- Birdseed (black oil sunflower preferred)
- 100% wool blankets x 4
- Nightcrawlers for critter food
- Pre-packed snacks for summer camps
- Bottled water for summer camps
- Storage tote containers (small, medium, and large)

Darke County Parks Contacts

Director/Secretary - Roger Van Frank

Chief Naturalist - Robb Clifford

Naturalist - Mandy Martin

Naturalist - Hannah Wiest

Volunteer Coordinator/Naturalist - Kathi McQueen

Administrative Assistant - Deb Shiverdecker

Parks Maintenance - Wayne Nichols

Board of Park Commissioners

John M. Cook, President

Roger L. Brocius, Vice-President

Tina E. White, Commissioner-At-Large

Questions about the newsletter or operations of the park district may be directed to 937.548.0165

Monday through Friday, 9am-5pm, or send an email to info@darkecountyparks.org.

Darke County Parks' Native Plant Sale

May 13, 2017
10am-3pm

Our annual plant sale returns Saturday, May 13th from 10am-3pm at Shawnee Prairie Preserve. Favorite flowers of the Monarch butterfly and other pollinators are the focus this year. Please consider planting milkweed to help provide habitat for the struggling Monarch population.

Pre-sale forms and payment must be turned in by April 26th. Plants are available for pre-sale only (a few select plants may be available during the sale).

On the back side, you will find a list of plants available, a brief description, and the price of each plant. Fill out this form with the number of plants you would like and return it, along with your payment, to the address on the reverse side.

**The Native Plant Sale will occur at the shelter house at Shawnee Prairie Preserve (4267 State Route 502 West)
Pre-sale plants must be picked up during the plant sale on Saturday, May 13th between 10am and 3pm.**

Please note: 1) Any plants not picked up by May 20th, 2017 will be considered a donation to the park district and will be planted within our prairies. 2) In the event the minimum of any plant is not met, we will try to replace it with a similar species to the best of our ability.

Cash or check only. Thank You.

-Over for Plant List-



Name: _____ Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Common Name, Scientific Name	Description	# ordered	\$3 / plant	Total Cost
Milkweed- Crucial to Monarch Populations				
Rose (Swamp) Milkweed – <i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	Clusters of pink blooms, Sun, 3-5'		x 3.00	
Sullivant's Milkweed – <i>Asclepias sullivantii</i>	Pink blooms and pink-striped leaves, Sun, 3-5'		x 3.00	
Butterflyweed – <i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	Vivid orange, attracts butterflies, Sun, 2'		x 3.00	
Common Milkweed – <i>Asclepias syriaca</i>	Sweet-scented clusters of violet-pink Sun, 2-4'		x 3.00	
Whorled Milkweed - <i>Asclepias verticillata</i>	White blooms, Sun, 2-4' (toxic to livestock)		x 3.00	
Shade - Part Shade				
Wild Columbine – <i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>	Unique red/yellow blooms, hummingbird favorite, 1-3'		x 3.00	
Blue Woodland Aster – <i>Aster cordifolius</i>	Late blooming aster, small blue blooms, 3'		x 3.00	
Woodland Stonecrop – <i>Sedum ternatum</i>	Native sedum, white star blooms, low growing		x 3.00	
Sun - Part Sun				
Mountain Mint – <i>Pycnanthemum virginianum</i>	White blooms, fragrant leaves, pollinator favorite, 3'		x 3.00	
Rattlesnake Master – <i>Eryngium yucifolium</i>	Leaves of a yucca, white "golf ball" flowers, 4'		x 3.00	
Grass-leaved Goldenrod – <i>Solidago graminifolia</i>	Yellow cluster flowers, tolerates part-shade, 2-4'		x 3.00	
Blue Vervain – <i>Verbena hastata</i>	Blue flower spikes biennial, med-wet soil, 3-6'		x 3.00	
Turtlehead – <i>Chelone glabra</i>	White flower resembles turtle head, moist-wet, 2-4'		x 3.00	
Wild Bergamot – <i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	Pink flower, fragrant foliage, native bee balm, 4'		x 3.00	
Purple Prairie Clover – <i>Petalostemum purpureum</i>	Purple blooms July-Sept; Fixes nitrogen, 2'		x 3.00	
Wild Senna – <i>Cassia hebecarpa</i>	Profusion of yellow flowers on tall foliage, 4-6'		x 3.00	
Yellow Coneflower - <i>Ratibida pinnata</i>	Yellow flowers, draught/flood resistant, 3-6'		x 3.00	
Indian Grass – <i>Sorghastrum nutans</i>	First-blooming of the warm season grasses, 6'		x 3.00	

Please mail order form and payment by April 26th:

Grand Total: \$ _____

Darke County Parks, c/o Mandy Martin, P.O. Box 801, Greenville OH, 45331

(Please make checks payable to: Darke County Parks)