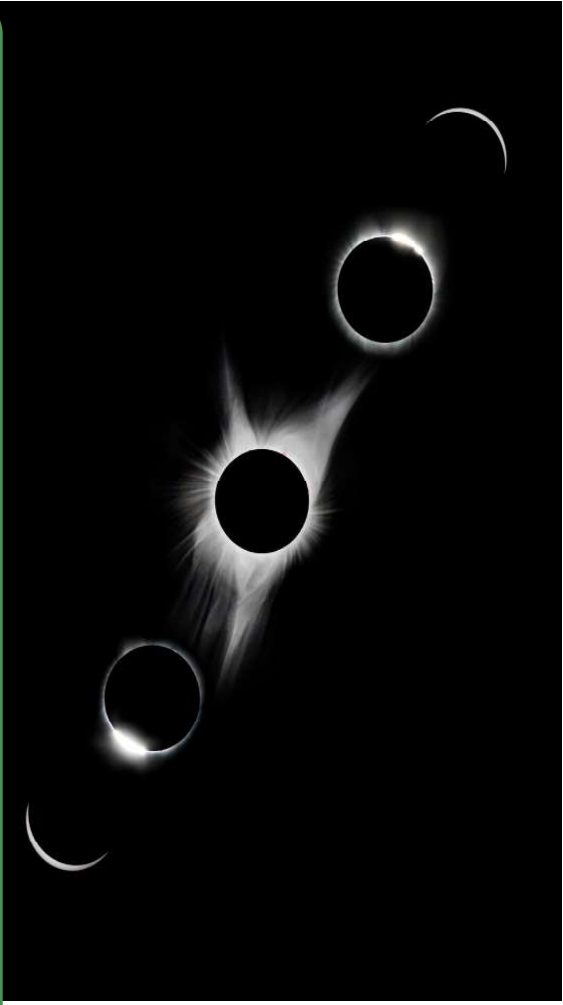


QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF  
DARKE COUNTY PARKS

Spring 2024



# Nature Notes



Darke  
County Parks

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

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION  
US POSTAGE PAID  
GREENVILLE OH  
PERMIT #48



## DARKE SIDE OF THE MOON

Monday, April 8: 1pm - 5pm  
Shawnee Prairie, Bear's Mill, Prairie Ridge

The biggest astronomical event of the decade is coming on April 8th, 2024... A total solar eclipse!!

Join Darke County Parks in celebrating the Total Eclipse! Three locations will host viewing parties to witness this once-in-a-lifetime event taking place right over Darke County.

Each location will host a selection of food from local food trucks as well as various entertainment and music. No matter where you decide to join us, there will be much to enjoy before total eclipse!

Some locations require tickets. See web for details.



## FRIENDS OF THE PARKS WAFFLE BREAKFAST

Saturday, March 2: 8am - 12pm  
Shawnee Prairie Preserve

The Friends of the Parks are excited to announce the return of the Annual Waffle Breakfast! Once again they will be serving up a hearty breakfast of waffles, sausage, juice, coffee, and pure maple syrup for just a **\$8 donation** towards the Friends' mission! Children ages 3-9 are only a **\$4 donation** and those under 3 years old are free! Extra sausage will be available for \$1.50. After breakfast, take a maple syrup tour, grab some fantastic maple-themed baked goods, 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. Breakfast will be served from 8am-12pm.



# Discovery Awaits...



## March

### PROJECT FEEDERWATCH

Tuesdays & Wednesdays 9-11am  
Shawnee Prairie Preserve FREE

### MAPLE SUGARIN' ON THE PRAIRIE

March 2, 8am-12:30pm  
Shawnee Prairie Preserve

Freezing nights and thawing days are the start to a bottle of maple syrup! Join us for a morning of guided tours along our "sugar trail" to see the history and science of Maple Syrup! The Sugar Shack will be open to view the boiling process. Darke County Parks' maple syrup, if available, will be sold in the Nature Center gift shop during normal hours. Come on out to welcome early spring with Nature's "sweetest treat"!

### CONSERVATION KIDS - VERNAL POOLS

March 7, 4:15pm: Shawnee Prairie Preserve  
Registration Required Ages: 8-11 FREE

### PREPARING FOR TOTAL ECLIPSE 2024

March 11, 6pm Shawnee Prairie Preserve  
Registration Required FREE

### PARENT & PRESCHOOLER ADVENTURES: NUTS ABOUT SQUIRRELS

March 13, 10am Ages 2-5  
Registration Required Fee: \$4

### HIKING THE ARIZONA NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL - FROM MEXICO TO UTAH

March 15, 6:30pm Shawnee Prairie Preserve  
Registration Required FREE

### SOUP & BOWL

March 16, 5-6:30pm & 7-8:30pm  
Historic Bear's Mill \$45/seat  
For tickets, stop in at Bear's Mill or call 937-548-5112

### NATURAL EGG DYEING

March 28, 6pm Shawnee Prairie Preserve  
Registration Required FREE

## April

### SALAMANDER RUN - "ON-CALL"

Registration Required FREE  
Sign up now and we'll call you when the salamanders are running!

### CONSERVATION KIDS - EARTH DAY CELEBRATION!

April 4, 4:15pm: Bish Discovery Center  
Registration Required Ages: 8-11 FREE

## DARKE SIDE OF THE MOON

### TOTAL ECLIPSE ON THE PRAIRIE

April 8 Shawnee Prairie Preserve  
1pm - 4pm

-Tickets: \$25/vehicle  
-Music and food trucks!

### TOTAL ECLIPSE AT BEAR'S MILL

April 8 Historic Bear's Mill  
1pm - 4pm

-Tickets: \$25/person  
-Music and food truck!

### TOTAL ECLIPSE AT PRAIRIE RIDGE

April 8 Prairie Ridge Meadow  
1pm - 4pm

-NO TICKET REQUIRED  
-Entertainment and food trucks!

Scan QR for details!



### PARENT & PRESCHOOLER ADVENTURES: SEARCH FOR SIGNS OF SPRING

April 10, 10am Ages 2-5  
Registration Required Fee: \$4

### COFFEE & CAKE

April 20, 10am Shawnee Prairie Preserve  
Registration Required FREE

### GOURD ART WORKSHOP

April 27, 10a-4p Shawnee Prairie Preserve  
Registration Required FREE

## May

### BIRDING WITH THE DIRECTOR

May 1, 8am  
Shawnee Prairie Preserve FREE

### CONSERVATION KIDS - POLLINATOR POWER

May 2, 4:15pm: Bish Discovery Center  
Registration Required Ages: 8-11 FREE

### BEAR'S MILL SPRING OPEN HOUSE

May 4, 11am-5pm  
Historic Bear's Mill FREE

### DOWN TO EARTH BOOK CLUB: "KILLERS OF THE FLOWER MOON" BY DAVID GRANN

May 6, 1pm Shawnee Prairie Preserve  
Registration Required FREE

### WATERCOLOR WILDFLOWERS W/ ARTIFACTS INK

May 11, 11am Shawnee Prairie Preserve  
Registration Required FREE

### MOTHER'S DAY CANDLELIGHT DINNER ON THE PRAIRIE

May 11, 5pm Shawnee Prairie Preserve  
Registration Required  
Fee: \$50/person or \$90/couple

### BIRDING WITH THE DIRECTOR

May 15, 8am  
Historic Bear's Mill FREE

### WILDFLOWER HIKE

May 18, 1pm Shawnee Prairie Preserve  
Registration Required FREE

### PARENT & PRESCHOOLER ADVENTURES: TALKING ABOUT TURTLES

May 22, 10am Ages 2-5  
Registration Required Fee: \$4

## FITNESS IN NATURE

### TOUR DE DARKE BIKE TOUR

Aug. 4 Start times: 6:30a-9a

-Early Bird Deadline: April 22  
-4 Routes for all abilities



### RAPTOR RUN/WALK 5K

Oct. 19 Race Starts: 9am

-Early Bird Deadline: July 4  
-Meet the raptors at the finish line!



Scan QR for details and registration or visit [DarkeCountyParks.org](http://DarkeCountyParks.org)

## BASH AT BISH

SAVE THE DATE

June 22nd, 12pm - 7pm  
Bish Discovery Center

# Yours To Discover...

## Historic Bear's Mill Updates

In 2023, Second Lady Tina Husted, wife of Lt. Governor Jon Husted, hand-painted a beautiful image of Historic Bear's Mill. This painting was a part of a project she calls her "88 County Project." She has chosen one site in each county that reflects special history and/or unique beauty in that county, and will make a painting of it. That painting is then donated to the county for generating funds for a cause. The painting she created of Bear's Mill will be printed on mugs and 12"x16" prints and is available for purchase in the Mill store. All proceeds from these sales will go towards children's education programs held by the Darke County Parks.

Thank you, Mrs. Husted, for your generous contribution!



## SUMMER CAMPS!

**AGES 4-5:** JULY 15, 17, 19 10AM-12PM  
"KNEE DEEP IN NATURE"

**AGES 6-7:** JUNE 24-28 10AM-12:30PM  
"BIRD BRAINS"

**AGES 8-9:** JULY 22-26 10AM-12:30PM  
"GEOLOGY ROCKS!"

**AGES 10-12:** JULY 8-12 1PM-4PM  
"CANOE & KAYAK ADVENTURES"\*

**AGES 10-12:** AUGUST 5-9 10AM-12:30PM  
"THE SCIENCE OF GROSS"

**AGES 12-15:** AUGUST 6-8 9AM-3:30PM  
"GET REAL - A Girls Camp"

Final details, pricing and registration can be found on our website. Camps with an \* denote a planned tent camping overnight experience

## Thank You for Your Generosity

### In Memory of Karen Jo Maule:

Betsy Smith; Terry Tonovitz; Louis Mohr; Connie Sinclair; Mike Henderson; Deb Shiverdecker; Roger Van Frank; Paula Akerman; Jerry & Norma Maule; Jim & Karen Holsapple; William Fillers

### Thank You for Your Donations:

Tina White; Dan Schipfer; Arcanum Garden Club; Cub Scouts; Friends of the Library; Jack Cornell; Ohio Association of Garden Club; Ed and Gloria Ault; Jeff and Lisa Hesson; Jim Poepelman; Tom Nisonger; Darke County Rabbit Raisers 4-H Club; Regina Schieltz; Arcanum Parents Club; Erica Holderman; Greg Billing

Thank you to ALL who donated supplies and time towards the Winter Wonderland event



## Volunteer in the Spotlight

This quarter's Volunteer in the Spotlight is Claudia! Claudia has been volunteering at the front desk of the Nature Center for two years and always greets visitors with a smile. She enjoys seeing youth participate and gets excited about school programs. In fact, her grandkids' love for the parks are what encouraged her to start volunteering in the first place! Claudia encourages you to volunteer because the Darke County Parks are great places to meet friends, both new and old. She also adds that visitors from out of town always have great stories to share when they visit. When asked where she would like to see the Darke County Parks in 10 years, she says, "I would love to see the Parks continue with educating our youth about the importance and care of the environment."

Thank you, Claudia!





# NATIVE PLANT SALE

June 1, 10am-4pm  
Bish Discovery Center

There are so many benefits to planting native! From increasing biodiversity in your landscape to limited maintenance requirements, native plants continue to soar in popularity. This year, our native plant sale will be better than ever!

Instead of a limited number of species available for pre-sale, we are welcoming four native plant vendors who plan to bring a large variety of native plants, trees and shrubs. Mark your calendar now, you don't want to miss this sale.

## Vendors Include:

- ~ Down Nature's Path
- ~ The Milkweed Patch
- ~ Native Ohio Plants
- ~ Deeply Rooted Landscapes



# A Word from the Director

Spring has sprung! Fresh green leaves, a blanket of flowers in all colors and sizes, and a symphony of birdsong welcome us with open arms inviting a return to the outdoors. I can never decide if spring or autumn is my favorite, but for today, it's definitely spring!

I may have moved into the Director's role, but my programming roots can't be completely ignored. I hope to see some of you on my upcoming spring bird walks as we look for spring migrants.

I'm excited to announce that the Nature Center Gift Shop now stocks select products from Bear's Mill! Store favorites like cornmeal, pancake mix, shirts, mugs, and COFFEE are now also sold at Shawnee Prairie. In addition to these items from the mill, maple syrup will soon be stocked... yum! Maybe the most convenient news; credit cards are now accepted at our gift shop!

This year marks the 175th anniversary of Historic Bear's Mill! As such, we have a variety of special events taking place all year long in celebration! We will have musical guests, open houses, the return of Soup N' Bowl, and more! And after 175 years, it's time for some restoration work. This February the Buhr stones, the heart of the mill, will be resurfaced to improve their grinding abilities. This is the first time in over 40 years this has occurred. An expert historical miller visited from Virginia to train our staff on this process. Keep an eye on the mill this year and be sure to stop in and tell it "Happy birthday"!

I'll see you on the trails!



~Robb Clifford

# FRIENDLY GATHERINGS

## Friends of The Parks

The Friends of the Darke Co. Parks was organized in 1995. As a non-profit 501(c)3 corporation, our mission is "To promote and support the mission of the Darke County Parks through volunteerism and fundraising". Our goal is to increase public awareness and appreciation of the beauty of Darke Co. Parks and to help preserve open spaces in Darke Co. It's the best way to know what's going on in YOUR county parks. Meetings are the first Tuesday of each month 6:30pm at Shawnee Prairie Nature Center, unless otherwise stated below.

March 5, 6:30pm  
April 2, 6:30pm  
May 7, 6:30pm



Join the Friends today!  
Scan this QR Code or ask at  
Nature Center.



# DARKE COUNTY BIRDERS CLUB

The Darke County Birders Club is open to beginning and experienced birders alike. The club meets the 4th Tuesday of each month at Shawnee Prairie Preserve Nature Center. For trip details: Steve Miller 937-547-3340.

March 9, 12pm - Darke Duck Drive

March 20, 8am - Lima Reservoirs

March 26, 6pm - Pre-meeting Walks resume

7pm - MEETING: "Minnesota's Sax Zim Bog" - Steve & Regina

April 17, 6:30pm - Evening Sounds Walk (Chestnut Street Marsh)

April 23, 6pm - Pre-meeting Walk

7pm - MEETING: "Concretions" - Chad Arment

April 24-26 - Tar Hollow Campout: *contact Steve Miller for details*

May 4, 6am - Morning Sounds Walk (Chestnut St. Marsh)

May 9-11 - Crane Creek Campout: *contact Steve Miller for details*

May 28, 6pm - Pre-meeting Walk

7pm - MEETING: "New Zealand Visit" - Michelle Young

May 29, 12pm - Dragonfly Walk (Maple Ridge Reserve)

# OLDE THYME GARDENERS

The club has a strong interest in heritage gardening techniques of the 19th century. They maintain the heirloom garden at Shawnee Prairie Preserve. No special training is necessary to become a member. Meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at 12pm.