



# Nature Notes



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF DARKE COUNTY PARKS



September – November 2016

## 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 P.A.L.S.	4
Jr. Naturalist	4
Outdoor Skills	5
Special Events	5
3 Months At A Glance Calendar	6&7
Nature Programs	8
Pioneer Living Programs	9
Naturalist Corner	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

## 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.



## PRAIRIE DAYS

Saturday, September 24: 10am - 5pm

Sunday, September 25: 12pm - 5pm

Shawnee Prairie Preserve

**You're invited to Prairie Days!** Enjoy a weekend celebrating prairies and the pioneer way of life! See apple butter cooked over the fire, take a horse-drawn wagon ride, compete in children's games, view local artists' creations,

listen to live music and entertainment. Enjoy folk music from local artists, a unique production by the Darke Co. Civic Theater, or just sit a spell with our pioneer volunteers in the log house. Take a stroll through the 18th century encampment, watch a tomahawk & knife throwing competition, and what is a festival without food?! Participate in a pie-baking contest. Take a stroll among the non-profit food vendors for a wide range of tasty treats, or enjoy fresh produce from Downing's Fruit Farm. Try your luck at the annual basket raffle and so much more!

**Admission and parking are FREE.**

**Ohio**  
Magazine



## THE GREAT PUMPKIN HUNT

Saturday, October 22: 1pm

Shawnee Prairie Preserve

Pre-registration Required / Fee: \$6

**Pumpkins, pumpkins everywhere!** Looking for an alternative to scary Halloween events? The Great Pumpkin Hunt is fun for the whole family. Spend the afternoon wandering through the woods at Shawnee Prairie Preserve on a scavenger hunt filled with tons of fall goodies. You will also receive a pumpkin to decorate and take home.

## CANDLELIT DINNERS ON THE PRAIRIE

Saturday, Oct 22: 5pm

Saturday, Nov 5: 5pm

Pre-registration Required

Fee: \$50/person or \$90/couple

Fees due: October 13

**The table is set**, the servants are in position, and we are poised to provide you a remarkable historical evening in our log house. You'll enjoy a hearty, hearth-cooked meal served family style and fabulous period entertainment during this unique Candlelit Dinner on the Prairie. The evening is a fund raising event with all proceeds going towards maintenance, repairs, and cultural programming within the log house. Space is limited, so please call to reserve your place today.



## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK...

Darke County Parks is always in a state of change and growth in programming just like the changes in our four seasons in Ohio. Each season brings new and exciting activities for our park visitors to enjoy and learn. We continue to grow and bring our educational presentations to more schools and more grade levels. Our volunteer ranks are expanding, and it is encouraging to see the next generation of park stewards step forward to assist with projects and programs.

This fall is no different as park district employees and volunteers have taken on additional responsibilities by growing two acres of sorghum, broom corn, and Indian corn in collaboration with our neighbors at Country Side Gardens. In the spirit of our Prairie Days Festival on September 24th and 25th you will see apple butter boiled and sorghum pressed as it was done in the late 1800's and early 1900's and then boiled down into sorghum molasses at Shawnee Prairie's Sugar Shack. Broom corn will get woven into brooms along with several other crafts presented under the big tent. Our encampment area will provide a look into the past and visitors can walk through the encampment to ask questions and review each camp. A schoolmarm will also conduct lessons for visiting children along with historical games. Take a ride on the horse drawn wagon or tractor and wagon rides through the prairie to see all the activities offered before taking time to explore each. Stop and visit our log house and blacksmith shop to watch different projects and crafts made or how the blacksmith was truly the jack of all trades during the period. (Remember strike while the iron is hot!) Don't miss the opening ceremonies at 10am on Saturday as we salute the fifteen stars and stripes with a volley of black powder musket fire. As a reminder there are no fees for parking or entrance to Shawnee Prairie Preserve. Free family fun is guaranteed. Parking for the event will once again be off-site except for those needing handicap parking which will be on the Nature Center grounds. Don't miss this year's activities as the amphitheater stage will be busy both days with performing artists.

I would be remiss if I did not thank the over 150 volunteers that make this event possible for the Darke County region. If you have not attended before, don't miss this year, and if you have never volunteered, please consider this event as a great start to your volunteering career. Contact us by email or phone, and we will help you get involved. This year will be extraordinary for Prairie Days 2016!

**Roger M. Van Frank**  
Director

P.S. Visitors are beginning to enjoy the new pollinator gardens planted on each side of the road coming into Shawnee Prairie. I am excited to see it's already doing its job for the pollinators that surround us. Hummingbirds, honeybees, and butterflies have been busy! Thanks to Justin Crowell for collaborating with the park staff to create this needed change.

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR KINDNESS...

### Memorials / Honorariums

*"In Memory" of*  
Zane D. Arnold  
- Ann Burns/MVRPC

*"In Memory" of*  
Jerome Morrow  
-James Rumbaugh & Madeline Morrow

### Monetary Donations

Greenville Public Library  
Mercer Savings Bank  
Family Health Services  
West Central Ohio Gourd Patch  
Donna Winner  
Charles James

### Programming Materials

Cindy Ploch - *Storage tubs & totes* / Amy Grogan - *Hummingbird sugar* / Brandi Brumbaugh - *Hummingbird sugar* / Gary Lee Young - *Hummingbird sugar* / Cheryl Emmons - *Hummingbird sugar* / Carol Brining - *Hummingbird sugar* / Rayna Whistler - *Hummingbird sugar* / Gail Shafer - *Hummingbird sugar* / Ansonia Lumber - *Granite counter slab* / Robb & Angie Clifford - *Black walnuts, honeybear, & storage totes* / MacKenzie Fries - *Aquarium* / Bonnie Barga - *Native American Books* / Mike & Torri Brown - *Owl pellets* / Crop Production Services: Darrell Gower Mgs. - *Fertilizer for sorghum & broomcorn plot* / Pam Siegel - *Herb signs for giftshop* / Rita Sullenbarger - *Lewis & Clark DVD* / John R. Labig - *Bottled water & snacks for camps* / Ed Ault - *Tanned deer skins* / Stelvideo Christian Church - *Beeswax candles* / Dan Meeks - *Applebutter stirring paddle* / Marilyn Robbins - *Historical clothing*

### Grants

Darke County Endowment for the Arts, Inc. -  
*Grant towards Prairie Days Entertainment*

# 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 Let's Hear it for Herps

The difference between reptiles and amphibians (includes live animals)

### 4-6 All About Owls

Ohio's owls and their role in the food chain

### 4-6 Get to Know Mammals

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

## SCOUTS AND OTHER GROUPS

Darke County Parks' Naturalists are available for weekday, evening, and weekend programs for your group. We will work with you to adapt any one of our public or school programs for your group's needs, whether it is a badge requirement, meeting entertainment, or a recruitment event. Programs are usually one hour in length and are held at the Nature Center. Some programs are subject to materials fees. For further details, please call 937.548.0165, and ask to speak with Robb.



# 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. **Pre-registration is required**, and each class has a fee of \$2.00.

### SEPTEMBER - SEARCHING FOR SPIDERS

Wednesday, September 7 (2-3 yr. olds); 10-11am  
Thursday, September 8 (4-5 yr. olds); 10-11am  
Shawnee Prairie Preserve

On early fall mornings we happen to find an abundance of spiders. Whether the webs are intricately created or messy cob webs, spiders are intriguing and useful. We will be searching for different types of webs and a variety of colorful spiders.



### OCTOBER - FALL FUN

Wednesday, October 12 (2-3 yr. olds); 10-11am  
Thursday, October 13 (4-5 yr. olds); 10-11am  
Shawnee Prairie Preserve

Celebrate fall at the park. We'll discover leaves, nuts, seeds, apples, and more during this one hour exploration of autumn. Through hikes and hands-on activities, your preschooler will fall in love with fall.



### NOVEMBER - GIVE THANKS FOR TURKEYS

Wednesday, November 16 (2-3 yr. olds); 10-11am  
Thursday, November 17 (4-5 yr. olds); 10-11am  
Shawnee Prairie Preserve

Gobble, gobble, gobble. The Wild Turkey is once again part of the landscape of Darke County. Through stories, games, and a craft we'll learn more about the largest game bird in Ohio.



## PARK P.A.L.S.

Park P.A.L.S. is a series of monthly programs designed for children in grades K-2 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 offered one Saturday of every month and are supervised by staff & adult volunteers. A materials fee of \$3.00 is charged for each program, and **pre-registration is required**.

### SEPTEMBER - PRAIRIE POLLINATORS

Saturday, September 17, 10am-12pm; Shawnee Prairie Preserve

Butterflies, bees, and more! Discover the importance of pollinators while we hike the trails and get up close with these winged wonders. We will also do a cool craft, so bring your creativity, sense of adventure, and a friend!



### OCTOBER - BATS

Saturday, October 29, 10am-12pm; Shawnee Prairie Preserve

With Halloween myths and everyday legends, the bat has a wicked reputation. Learn why bats are actually beneficial and what we can do to help keep them in our backyards. Explore bat biology, and take a peek around Shawnee Prairie to see if there are any winged residents sleeping the day away.



### NOVEMBER - OWL BE SEEING YOU

Saturday, November 12, 6-8pm; Shawnee Prairie Preserve

During this special night time edition of Park P.A.L.S., join a naturalist as we explore the forest after dark in search of owls. Listen for their distinct calls, and discover if you see them, before they see you.

**\*\*NOTE SPECIAL TIME\*\***



## JUNIOR NATURALISTS

Jr. Naturalists is a series of monthly, two and a half-hour long programs designed to give grades 3-6 a hands-on introduction to natural resource management. Hikes, work projects, and independent study are all part of this fun-filled nature study club. Programs are offered one Saturday of every month and are supervised by staff & adult volunteers. A materials fee of \$3.00 is charged for each program, and **pre-registration is required**.

### SEPTEMBER - HISTORY HIKE

Saturday, September 10, 9:30am-12pm; Prairie Ridge Meadow

Every corner of this county is bursting with history, and our parks are no exception. We'll check out Prairie Ridge Meadow and Tecumseh Point discovering why it is so important not only in our county's history but also in our nation's history.



### OCTOBER - JR. ASTRONOMERS

Saturday, October 8, 7-9:30pm; Shawnee Prairie Preserve

We'll look to the heavens this month discovering space, our solar system, constellations, and even a meteor shower if we have clear skies. Dress for the cool evening temperatures, and bring along a flashlight and an old blanket to lay on the ground.

**\*\*NOTE SPECIAL TIME\*\***



### NOVEMBER - ORIENTEERING

Saturday, November 19, 9:30am-12pm; Shawnee Prairie Preserve

A compass and map can take you anywhere if you know how to use it. From the cardinal and ordinal directions, to degrees, to taking (and maintaining) a bearing, we'll practice the basics. Then we'll play some exciting games to test our skills.



# YOUR GUIDE TO SPECIAL PROGRAMS

## PROJECT WILD TRAINING

Saturday, October 1: 9am

Shawnee Prairie Preserve / Pre-registration Required / FREE

*We invite you* to explore the fascinating world of wildlife and ecosystems using fun and hands-on educational activities. Whether you are a teacher or informal educator, you will learn adaptable activities for all age levels and receive both the Project WILD and Project Aquatic WILD k-12 activity guides. Find new ways to get kids outside and learning while meeting curriculum standards, networking with others in the field, and earning continuing education credits. Pre-registration required by September 9. This workshop will run from 9am to 4pm. \*Lunch is not provided, so please bring your lunch. Microwave and refrigerator are available.



## SURVIVAL SERIES: FIRE STARTING BASICS

Thursday, October 20: 6pm

Shawnee Prairie Preserve / Pre-registration Required / FREE

*Join us to re-learn* the crucial and very basic skill of fire starting without matches. We welcome Rob Simpson of the local "Canteen Shop" back to Shawnee Prairie Preserve for this hands-on workshop. During the program, he will introduce a variety of techniques for starting fire and how to use them. Fire plays an important role in our outdoor life. Whether it's a planned overnight or an emergency; don't be left out in the cold! This program will take place rain or shine. Call to reserve your spot today!

## 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.

### FLOATING FOR COLORS

Friday, October 7: 11am - 5pm

Meet at Shawnee Prairie / Pre-registration Required

Pack a Lunch / Fee: \$5

*One more time!* Let's try for one more float this season! We'll carpool and enjoy a picnic lunch at Lake Loramie State Park and then paddle the lake in search of the best fall colors. The islands and channels of the lake will provide a variety of habitats to explore and enjoy. As usual, dress for the weather and in synthetic clothing. Due to the nature of this float, it is more suited for those with some experience.



## STAYING FIT AND HEALTHY

We all want to lead healthier lives, but sometimes life just gets in the way! Use these programs as an "excuse" to schedule yourself (and family) some outdoor exercise time. Each of these programs focuses more on fitness than nature, with everyone moving at their own pace.

### NATURALLY FIT

Sept. 26, 4:30pm @ Worth Family Nature Preserve (1.2miles)

Oct. 24, 4:30pm @ Shawnee Prairie Preserve (2.25miles)

Nov. 28, 4:30pm @ Routzong Preserve (1.5miles)

*We'll start our hikes a little earlier* this season due to the earlier sunsets. In September we'll check out Worth which has 1.2 miles of loop trail. Stop by Shawnee Prairie in October to check out the trails of our largest park. On the Monday after Thanksgiving, we'll hike off all that turkey at Routzong which has 1.5 miles of trail through mature woodland. Meet at the designated park, and bring a water bottle.

# DOWN TO EARTH BOOK CLUB

Do you like reading books by nature writers, books about the outdoors, or maybe even about pioneers settling Ohio? "Down to Earth" will feature a different book every quarter. Everyone is welcome to come discuss the work, enjoy some yummy treats, and suggest future books.

## MY FIRST SUMMER IN THE SIERRA

Monday, Nov. 7, 6:30pm  
Shawnee Prairie Preserve  
Pre-registration requested



In our fourth season, we invite you to read *My First Summer in the Sierra* by John Muir. First published in 1911, it is based on the diary Muir kept during a four month stay with sheep herders in the high Sierra Nevada Mountains in 1869. It tells of the magnificent vistas, diverse wildlife, and wild country that would one day become Yosemite National Park. Please give us a call to let us know you plan on participating.



## EARLY MORNING DISCOVERY HIKES

TUESDAYS @ 8AM; BEGINNING AT SHAWNEE PRAIRIE PRESERVE PARKING LOT

Do you desire to learn more about the natural world around you? These morning hikes allow adults to watch the seasons change and to discover the many lifeforms in their own backyards. Crisp mornings and low humidity make this a great time to enjoy and learn about nature. These walks focus on bird watching, trees, fungi ID, and more. Bring binoculars if you have a pair; otherwise some are available for loan. We hike rain or shine.



# 3 Months At A Glance

YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S HAPPENING IN DARKE COUNTY PARKS

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
September				Goldenrods & Asters <sup>1</sup> 6pm @ Turkeyfoot Preserve Canoe & Kayak Meeting 7pm	2 Butterfly Monitoring 2pm	3 Monarch Migrations 2pm* Log House Open 1-4pm
4 Nature Center & Park Office -Closed -	5 -Labor Day- Nature Center & Park Office -Closed -	6 Early Morning Discovery Hike 8am Friends of DCP Meeting 6:30pm	7 Little Explorers Preschool 10am*	8 Seedlings Preschool 10am* DCP Board Meeting 4p	9 Butterfly Monitoring 2pm	10 Jr. Naturalists 9:30am* Historical Clothing 2pm Log House Open 1-4pm
11 Nature Center & Park Office -Closed -	12	13 Early Morning Discovery Hike 8am Gardeners Meeting 12pm   Photo Club 7pm	14	15	16 Butterfly Monitoring 2pm	17 Park PALS 10am* Log House Area Open 1-4pm
18 Nature Center & Park Office -Closed -	19 Volunteer Gathering: Prairie Days Training 10am* -OR- 6pm*	20 Early Morning Discovery Hike 8am	21	22 ~Autumnal Equinox~	23	24 Prairie Days 10am-5pm Greenville Art Guild
25 Prairie Days 12 - 5pm Greenville Art Guild Exhibit	26 Naturally Fit 4:30pm @ Worth Family Nature Preserve	27 Early Morning Discovery Hike 8am Birders Meeting 7pm	28	29	30 Butterfly Monitoring 2pm	
				Programs marked with an (*) require pre-registration. ● - New Moon ◐ - First Quarter ○ - Full Moon ◑ - Last Quarter		



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>October</b>						1 Project WILD Workshop 9am*
2 Nature Center & Park Office -Closed -	3	4 Early Morning Discovery Hike 8am ----- Friends Meeting 6:30pm	5	6 Canoe & Kayak Meeting 7pm	7 Floating for Colors 11am* ----- Butterfly Monitoring 2pm	8 Alien Arrangments 10am* ----- Jr. Naturalists 7pm*
9 Nature Center & Park Office -Closed - Olde Thyme Gardeners Fall Tea - 2pm*	10	11 <u>Volunteer Eco-Tour*</u> ----- Gardeners Meeting 12pm   Photo Club 7pm	12 Little Explorers Preschool 10am*	13 Seedlings Preschool 10am* ----- DCP Board Meeting 4p	14 Butterfly Monitoring 2pm	15
16 Nature Center & Park Office -Closed -	17	18 Early Morning Discovery Hike 8am ----- Full Harvest Moon Hike 8pm @ Routzong Preserve	19	20 Fire Starting Basics 6pm*	21 Butterfly Monitoring 2pm	22 The Great Pumpkin Hunt 1pm* ----- Candlelit Dinner on the Prairie 5pm*
23 Nature Center -Closed - ----- Nature Center -Closed -	24 <u>Volunteer Gathering: Bats</u> 10am* ----- Naturally Fit 4:30pm	25 Early Morning Discovery Hike 8am ----- Birders Meeting 7pm	26	27	28 Sunrise Hike 7:30am ----- Butterfly Monitoring 2pm	29 Park PALS 10am* ----- <u>Volunteer Gathering: Bats</u> 2pm*
30	31					

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>November</b>			 <p><i>Calling all birders! Project FeederWatch is an annual 'Citizen Science' program organized by Cornell University which studies winter bird populations. No matter your birding level, beginner or expert, we need YOUR help! We'll gather inside the Nature Center and count the birds that visit our bird-feeding station.</i></p>			
		1 Early Morning Discovery Hike 8am ----- Towhees & Tombstones 5:30pm ----- Friends Meeting 6:30pm	2	3 Canoe & Kayak Meeting 7pm	4	5 Candlelit Dinner on the Prairie 5pm*
6 Nature Center & Park Office -Closed - Daylight Savings Time Ends	7 Down to Earth Book Club 6:30pm*	8 Early Morning Discovery Hike 8am ----- Gardeners Meeting 12pm   Photo Club 7pm	9	10 DCP Board Meeting 4pm	11	12 Author James Thom Book Signing 1pm* ----- Park PALS 6pm*
13 Nature Center & Park Office -Closed -	14 <u>Volunteer Gathering: Winter Tree ID</u> 10am* ----- Full Beaver Moon Hike 5:30pm @ Eidson Preserve	15 Early Morning Discovery Hike 8am ----- <b>Project FeederWatch - 9:30am-11:30am</b>	16 Little Explorers Preschool 10am*	17 Seedlings Preschool 10am*	18	19 Jr. Naturalists 9:30am* ----- Tracking and Blood-Trailing 101 2pm*
20 Nature Center & Park Office -Closed -	21	22 Early Morning Discovery Hike 8am ----- <b>Project FeederWatch - 9:30am-11:30am</b> ----- Birders Meeting 7pm	23	24 Nature Center -Closed -  <b>thanksgiving</b>	25 Nature Center -Closed -	26 Winter Tree ID 10am*
27 Nature Center & Park Office -Closed -	28 Naturally Fit 4:30pm @ Routzong Preserve	29 Early Morning Discovery Hike 8am ----- <b>Project FeederWatch - 9:30am-11:30am</b>	30			

**Mark Your Calendars!**

**Walkin' in a Winter Wonderland  
Holiday Luminary Event  
December 3rd, 2016 - 6pm -9pm**

**Music  
Food  
Fun**



# YOUR GUIDE TO NATURAL HISTORY PROGRAMS

## MONARCH MIGRATIONS

Saturday, September 3: 2pm  
Shawnee Prairie Preserve / FREE



*Fall migration has begun.* As Monarch butterflies are making their journey to Mexico, join a naturalist to tag, record data, and release the winged beauties. As a part of MonarchWatch, Darke County Parks participate in the research of local Monarch populations. During this afternoon program, learn more about the natural history, conservation status, and citizen science projects that focus on the Monarch butterfly.

## ALIEN ARRANGEMENTS

Saturday, October 8: 10am  
Shawnee Prairie Preserve / Pre-registration Required / Fee:\$3

*Shawnee Prairie Preserve* is no stranger to invasive plants, also known as aliens. The woods, wetlands, and prairies are home to teasel, honeysuckle, creeper, garlic mustard, and more. Parks and preserves spend countless hours trying to control the spread of these alien plants. We've decided to take an additional approach by creating beautiful arrangements with these prolific plants. Bring gloves, clippers, and your imaginations as we take to the wild to collect our supplies to make our masterpieces!



## TOWHEES & TOMBSTONES

Tuesday, November 1: 5:30pm  
Pre-registration Required  
Greenville Union Cemetery

*On All Saints' Day*, join us at Greenville Union Cemetery to pay respect to our history and to check out a birding hotspot. From philanthropist, Fred Coppock to the county's early pioneers and from six US congressmen to the only man ever legally hanged here, these names have quite the stories to tell. While we wander back in time, we'll also keep an eye out for late fall migrating birds and arriving winter residents. Whether you're a birder, a history buff, or both, bring your binoculars for this quiet evening hike through the cemetery. Meet at the cemetery office on the corner of West St. and Main St.



## WINTER TREE ID

Saturday, November 26: 10am  
Pre-registration Required  
Shawnee Prairie Preserve

*Trees are all around us*, and yet many do not know a Maple from an Oak. As many trees lose their leaves in the winter months, this only adds to the difficulty. Join us for an informative program as we learn how to ID a tree in the winter months through bark, twig, and growth pattern. We will complete our workshop by heading outside to practice our new identification skills.



## AUTUMN EXPLORATIONS: FALL HIKING SERIES

**Goldenrods & Asters** – Sept 1, 6pm @ Turkeyfoot Preserve  
**Full Harvest Moon** – Oct 18, 8pm @ Routzong Preserve  
**Sunrise Hike** – Oct 28, 7:30am @ Shawnee Prairie Preserve  
**Full Beaver Moon** – Nov 14, 5:30pm @ Eidson Woods Preserve

*The air is crisp, and mosquitoes are a thing of the past.* It's time to hike! Autumn can provide the best time to get out of doors, and we have a variety of walking programs to offer. In early September, we'll explore the stunning colors of the fall-blooming asters and goldenrods. In late October, join us at sunrise for an early walk in the woods of Shawnee Prairie to enjoy the fall colors, active critters, and the glow from the morning sun. Finally, full moon hikes will return in October and November. (Dress for cooler nights, and bring a flashlight if you would like.) Call the Nature





# Naturalist Corner



## ALIENS AMONG US

Did you know that aliens truly exist? They're even here in Darke County, alien plants and animals, or invasive species, that is!

An invasive species is any species of plant or animal that is not native to a particular area, are usually introduced from other areas, and can cause damage to native plants and animals. A native species is typically defined as a species which has been in the area since or before 1750. Out of more than 2,700 species found in Ohio, less than 100 of these species are classified as invasive, but they can still have a huge impact on the native environment, including displacing rare species, loss of biodiversity, and alteration of soil and water cycles.

One of the most common invasive plants found in this area is honeysuckle, of which two different species are found in Darke County: Amur and Morrow's honeysuckle. These invasive species of honeysuckle are native to Korea and Japan and were introduced to North America in the late 1800s as ornamental plants. Both Amur and Morrow's honeysuckle have hollow stems, while the two native species, bush and Canada fly honeysuckle, have solid stems. All honeysuckle plants have alternating leaves that are about an inch to two and a half inches long contained in standing bushes which can be from six to fifteen feet tall. The Amur species of honeysuckle has dark green leaves which end in a long, pointy tip, while Morrow's honeysuckle has oval shaped leaves. These plants produce small flowers which bloom in the spring, and dark-red to yellow berries in August to



October.

Because woods and pastures that have been grazed or otherwise disturbed are more vulnerable to invasion, honeysuckle has made a lot of advancement in this area of Ohio. The fruit that the invasive species of honeysuckle produces is attractive to birds, who help scatter the seeds over a wide area. For light infestations, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources recommends carefully hand-removing the entire plant or repeatedly cutting or mowing during the growing season. For larger infestations, an application of herbicide such as Roundup or AquaNeat on the offending plants may be more helpful. However, if you choose to cut the plant down to the ground, Garlon 4 or Pathfinder, applied to the cut stem, has proved to be the most effective at eliminating the invasive species.

*My name is Jessalyn Besecker, and I was the Naturalist Intern for the summer of 2016! I am currently studying biological sciences at Wright State University. During my internship, I got to go camping, kayaking, mountain biking, and zip lining all for the first time! I gained so much experience, and I'm so grateful to the staff at Darke County Parks for letting me absorb some of their knowledge!*



**-Jessalyn Besecker, Naturalist Intern**

### They Wore What?!

Saturday, September 10: 2pm  
Pre-registration Required / FREE

*Have you ever wondered why* our ancestors wore all those layers? What was the point, and how could they ever be comfortable? Join us for a peak into 200 year old wardrobes. After a primer on underclothes, we'll look at ladies' fashions in Paris at the time and how those styles translated to frontier life. We'll also see the transition in men's fashion from ostentatious to subdued. From shifts to waistcoats and bonnets to pantaloons, learn what it took to be properly dressed during the early 1800s and even how you can go about replicating those styles today with living history.



### Tracking and Blood-Trailing 101

Saturday, November 19, 2pm  
Shawnee Prairie Preserve

Deer season is almost upon us, and it's time to dust off those old tracking skills. Whether you're a hunter or just enjoy investigating tracks, you are practicing one of the most ancient arts known to man. Animals leave all kinds of other signs for us to interpret too, like game trails, rubs, runs, beds, and droppings.



Along with studying deer and other animal tracks, we'll discuss stalking, wind awareness, and camouflage to maximize the odds of seeing the animal being followed. We'll also brush up on blood trailing a wounded deer, discussing color, consistency, and technique, so everyone is ready for opening day on November 28th.

# 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:

This season I'm announcing an easy fundraiser called "Amazon Smile". When you purchase through Amazon, the Amazon Smile Foundation donates 0.5% of your purchase price to your charitable organization. Just choose "the Friends of the Darke County Parks" before you buy. Go to <http://smile.amazon.com> to enroll.

The cobb oven crew is baking bread and cookies for sale at Prairie Days. If anyone is interested in learning to use the oven, please contact Volunteer Coordinator, Kathi McQueen. We could always use additional hands and are currently perfecting wood-fired pizzas for a fundraiser. Don't miss the chance to taste test!

In other news the Friends thank Michelle Stevenson for the donation from her father, Mike Beard's, estate and Dr. Brown for his United Way donation. Also check out Ohio Magazine's July, August, or September issues for ads with great photos from Prairie Days and The Gathering. Recently the Friends voted to share the cost of sending Kathi to a four-day raptor husbandry training which will grow the Parks' raptor program.

Attention volunteers! Prairie Days will be here soon, and Kathi needs volunteers for many stations, set-up, and tear down. If you are willing to help with our biggest event of the year, please give her a call. Finally, I would like to thank the Parks' staff, particularly Kathi, for the Volunteer Appreciation bingo and ice cream social in July. It was a fun time enjoyed by all.

*~Barbie Hansbarger, President*

## Meetings

September 6 @ 6:30pm

October 4 @ 6:30pm

November 1 @ 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. Contact them at:

Blog- <http://oldethymegarden.blogspot.com/>

E-mail- [oldethymegardener@gmail.com](mailto:oldethymegardener@gmail.com)



## Meetings

September 13

October 11

November 8



## Fall Tea:

### Tied by the Apron Strings

The Olde Thyme Gardeners are excited to have Jan Brady return for her presentation "Tied by the Apron Strings". This will include a short history of aprons and women's changing role in society. We will be serving desserts and tea or coffee as you listen to Jan's fascinating talk on Sunday, October 9 at 2:00pm.

Registration in advance is required, and the cost is \$10.

Please look for more information on our blog.

## 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. The club is open to all experienced paddlers. Beginning paddlers can learn through the parks' instructional programs. 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.

## Meetings

September 1

October 6

November 3



## Field Trips

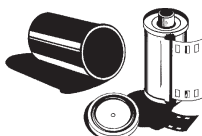
September 15 - Paddle Mad River: Try, Try Again?!

October 29 - Hike at John Bryan State Park

November 19 - Hike Eidson Woods Preserve

## DARKE COUNTY PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB

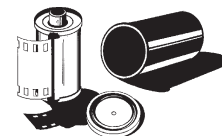
The Darke County Photography Club was formed in 1995 and promotes photography in & around Darke County. Presentations are also given by guest speakers on all subjects of photography. Whether you are a beginner or advanced photographer, all are invited to attend the monthly meetings held the second Tuesday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



September 13

October 11

November 8



Meet Ron Gross, this quarter's Volunteer in the Spotlight! A volunteer in the parks for more than 6 years, Ron enjoys working with interesting people throughout the park and gets a feeling of satisfaction knowing he is doing something worthwhile. Ron spends most Saturdays doing demonstrations in our period-correct blacksmith shop and has assisted with several building projects over the years as well. When talking with friends or potential volunteers, Ron focuses on the "feel good" aspect of volunteering to inspire them to get involved. In his spare time, he enjoys woodworking, blacksmithing, and going to garage sales. Ron believes in the parks' mission and sees the path we are on as a continuation of our current success. Thank you for your dedication Ron!

## VOLUNTEER IN THE SPOTLIGHT



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

What is the best part of volunteering? The answers vary but are similar. For many years, my own volunteerism was a way to experience life outside my comfort zone. I've learned, through some tough lessons, that my comfort zone was holding me back. If you think of your life as a bulls-eye with the center as the "danger" zone and the outer edges as your "comfort" zone, I am talking about putting yourself right outside of the center. Your comfort is what you already know, have experienced, and trust. The danger zone is what could harm you. Right on the crust is the sweet spot where your adrenaline is pumping, you're learning you're strong, and dusting off the dirt when you fail. So how does this relate to volunteering at the DCPD? Whether you realize it or not, I've witnessed many of you living on the crust of the danger zone, when you're asked to do a program that you have never done, when you volunteer in a new area, and when you participate in a volunteer training that you thought you had very little interest in. As I go outside my own comfort zone to plan and execute unfamiliar programs and events, you are right there with me. Thank all of you for being my partners in this journey.

-Kathi McQueen: Volunteer Coordinator



### VOLUNTEERS IN THE FIELD

Carol Hathaway, Kay Poeppelman, Regina Schiletz, Margaret Hensel, and Mandy Martin enjoy blooming Wild Lupine flowers during the Oak Openings Volunteer Eco-tour spring 2016.



## GATHERINGS & TRAININGS

Each month, we offer a different and exciting volunteer training or outing on the second and fourth Mondays. These workshops will allow you to grow your skills, explore other nature centers and parks, help with group projects, and have fun! Even if you aren't sure about the topic, join us for an enjoyable, social gathering. Most trainings will last two hours. The occasional day-trip will have special times. We hope you will attend often and see this as a small reward for all that you give us. Thank you.

*Pre-register with Kathi, so we know you are coming!*

- ❑ *Sept 19, 10am* - Prairie Days Preview & Training
- ❑ *Sept 19, 6pm* - Prairie Days Preview & Training\*
- ❑ *Oct 11, 7am-7pm* - Eco-Tour: Colors of Hocking Hills
- ❑ *Oct 24, 10am* - Bats of Ohio
- ❑ *Oct 29, 2pm* - Bats of Ohio\*
- ❑ *Nov 14, 10am* - Trees of Ohio
- ❑ *Nov 26, 10am* - Trees of Ohio (public program)\*

\* indicates alternative time and/or date



## 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.

### Labor Day Birding

Monday, September 5, 12pm

Bird Darke County in the morning and then meet at McDonalds North to share your findings at noon.

### Butler County Birding

Sunday, September 11, 7am

We'll carpool south for birding hot spots. What will we find?

### Meeting

Tuesday, September 27, 7pm

6pm: Pre-meeting hike at Chestnut Street Marsh

7pm: Birding Borneo: Margaret Hensel will present the program with her "new functional laptop".

### Fall Campout

October 8-9

We'll head to Lake Erie for a week-end checking out birding spots at Maumee Bay, Oak Openings, Magee Marsh, and other bird-friendly sights. Contact Steve Miller for info.

### Sparrow Walk

Saturday, October 22, 12:30pm

Sparrows migrate later in the fall, and this annual hike often finds varied species of this easily overlooked bird family.

### PROGRAMS, MEETINGS, & TRIPS

### Meeting

Tuesday, October 25, 7pm

6pm: Last pre-meeting hike at Chestnut Street Marsh for 2016

7pm: Parks' Progress: Park Director Roger Van Frank brings us up to date on the happenings in the District.

### Half Day Trip

Saturday, November 5, 12:30pm

November is a great month for unexpected species.

### Birding Brookville

Sunday, November 20, 8am

An often popular annual trip to Whitewater State Park and Brookville Lake.

### Meeting

Tuesday, November 22

7pm: Winter is for the Birds: Crafts and games to prepare for winter.



# 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



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## Quarterly Question:

This orange, black, and white moth-larva can be found outside of the Nature Center and commonly feeds on milkweed and dogbane. Can you name it?

Email your answer to [info@darkecountyparks.org](mailto:info@darkecountyparks.org)

*Last quarter's correct answer: C; Three species of goldenrod can be found around the Nature Center's gardens. Congrats to Davis Maynard for submitting the correct answer!*

## 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 for feeder station
- ☐ Clean "Milk" jugs (translucent style)
- ☐ 100% cotton (white) sheeting (second-hand OK)
- ☐ 100% wool (medium/light weight solid color)
- ☐ Glass hummingbird feeders
- ☐ Pumpkins/gourds for decorations Sept-Oct
- ☐ Large plastic totes w/ lids
- ☐ Split rails for fencing near log house
- ☐ 10oz washed soup cans

### 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, Craig Kinnison, Ray Bradbury

### Board of Park Commissioners

Roger L. Brocious, President

L. Stephen Shaltry, Vice-President

John M. Cook, 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](mailto:info@darkecountyparks.org).