



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



Nature Notes



Prairie Days
Saturday, September 23:
10am - 5pm
Sunday, September 24:
12pm - 5pm

You're invited to **Prairie Days!** Celebrate the pioneer way of life in and around 1780-1810. Come out to Shawnee Prairie Preserve and enjoy free crafts, games, and live music. Grab a bite to eat from one of our food trucks and stroll through the living history encampment to travel back in time. There's fun for the whole family at Prairie Days! *Admission and parking are FREE.*



Director's Corner

It's now August as I begin to write my next-to-the-last Director's Corner in my tenure as Director of Darke County Parks. I will soon have 21 years of service to this community and will retire in December of 2023. The search committee for a new director has already begun and will have decided on my replacement this autumn.

I cannot begin to thank my Park staff and many, many, Park volunteers for their help and support during this 21-year period. I will especially remember those volunteers and staff who are no longer with us, and certainly miss them daily. I have learned what an important role each of us plays in the successful collaboration of our Park District events. Whether we realize it or not, we have an important role in inspiring our stewards of tomorrow!

I look forward to retirement and to engage in the next chapter of my family's lives. Until Next Time... Remember the Benefits of Parks and Recreation Are Endless!

~Roger Van Frank, Director



Discovery Awaits...



September

TRY IT TUESDAY: KAYAKING

Sept. 5, 5:30-7pm Alice Bish Park
FREE

HERBS FOR WINTER

Sept. 7, 6:30pm Shawnee Prairie Preserve
Registration Required FREE

MARCH FOR MONARCHS

Sept. 9, 3pm
Shawnee Prairie Preserve
Registration Required FREE

PAWSPORT TO DCP

Sept. 9, 10am Worth Family Nature Preserve
Registration Required FREE
Join us for a dog walk thru the preserves

PARENT & PRESCHOOLER ADVENTURES: ALL ABOUT APPLES

2-5 Year Olds: Sept. 13, 10am
Registration Required \$4

BISH COOPERATIVE MARKET

Sept. 14, 4-7pm Bish Discovery Center

LATE SUMMER PADDLING

Sept. 15, 5:30pm \$10/paddler
Registration Required

CYCLING & COFFEE

Sept. 16, 9am
Bish Discovery Center
Registration Required FREE

PRAIRIE DAYS

Sept. 23, 10am-5pm & Sept. 24, 12pm-5pm
Shawnee Prairie Preserve
FREE ADMISSION

October

BISH DISCOVERY CENTER: WINTER HOURS

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10am-5pm

FIND THE PUMPKIN PASSPORT

Oct. 1-30 FREE
Registration Required

CONSERVATION KIDS: NEW LIFE FOR OLD LEAVES

Oct. 5, 4:15pm Bish Discovery Center
Registration Required Ages: 8-11 FREE

BEAR'S MILL FALL OPEN HOUSE

Oct. 7, 11am-5pm & Oct. 8, 1-5pm FREE

INTO THE ARACHNID-VERSE

Oct. 7, 2pm Shawnee Prairie Preserve
Registration Required FREE

BISH COOPERATIVE MARKET

Oct. 12, 4-7pm Bish Discovery Center

SEEDS OF THE PRAIRIE

Oct. 12, 6pm Turkeyfoot Preserve
Registration Required FREE

CAMPFIRE STORIES

Oct. 13, 6:30pm Shawnee Prairie Preserve
Registration Required Fee: \$2

PAWSPORT TO DCP

Oct. 14, 11am Routzong Preserve
Registration Required FREE

INTUITIVE ART WORKSHOP

Oct. 14, 1pm Turkeyfoot Preserve
Registration Required Fee: \$22

PARENT & PRESCHOOLER ADVENTURES: FALL PRAIRIE WALK

2-5 Year Olds: Oct. 18, 10am
Registration Required \$4

OUTDOOR ESCAPE ROOM

Oct. 21 Sessions run 10am-3pm
Shawnee Prairie Preserve
Registration Required Fee: \$10

BRICK-FIRED PIZZA

Oct. 26, 5pm Historic Bear's Mill
Registration Required Fee: \$15

AUTUMN PADDLING

Oct. 28, 1pm \$10/paddler
Registration Required

November

PROJECT FEEDERWATCH

Tuesdays & Wednesdays 9-11am
Shawnee Prairie Preserve FREE

CONSERVATION KIDS: LEAVE NO TRACE

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

DAY OF THE DEAD

Nov. 4, 2pm Shawnee Prairie Preserve
Registration Required FREE

DOWN TO EARTH BOOK CLUB: "JOHNNY APPLESEED: THE MAN, THE MYTH, THE AMERICAN STORY" BY HOWARD MEANS

Nov. 6, 1pm Shawnee Prairie Preserve
Registration Required

THE SECRET LIVES OF SNAKES

Nov. 8, 6pm Shawnee Prairie Preserve
Registration Required FREE

CANDLELIGHT DINNER ON THE PRAIRIE

Nov. 11, 5pm Shawnee Prairie Preserve
Registration Required
Fee: \$50/person or \$90/couple
Annual Fundraiser - Details on website.

PREPARING FOR TOTAL ECLIPSE 2024

Nov. 14, 6pm Shawnee Prairie Preserve
Registration Required FREE

PARENT & PRESCHOOLER ADVENTURES: FAIRY HOUSES & GARDENS

Nov. 15, 10am 2-5 Year Olds
Registration Required \$4

PAWSPORT TO DCP

Nov. 18, 1p Shawnee Prairie Preserve
Registration Required FREE

BEAR'S MILL CHRISTMAS PREVIEW

Nov. 18, 11am-5pm

RAPTOR TALK & WALK

Nov. 28, 6pm Shawnee Prairie Preserve
Registration Required FREE



Luminary Events: Candlelight Walk Open House

December 1: 6-9pm
Historic Bear's Mill

Walkin' in a Winter Wonderland
December 2: 6-9pm
Shawnee Prairie Preserve
Registration Required

Yours To Discover...

"Ohio's Edible Fungi" ~Johnna Siegrist, Intern

Fungus is a multi-celled organism that lives alongside plants, animals, and bacteria. Common forms include yeasts, molds, truffles, and mushrooms. Mushrooms are the equivalent of flowers or fruits of certain types of fungus. Fungi is immobile, they are unable to walk like animals. In order to move their range, they must disperse their spores or grow larger.

Some types of fungi are important decomposers. Like other living organisms, fungi need a source of nutrients. They do this by growing upon or into their food source, which is organic materials (dead plants, animals, other fungi) that they break down into nutrients. The nutrients that are not utilized by the fungi will benefit plants in the spring. When breaking down nutrients, fungi help aid in nitrogen fixation and phosphorus mobilization, which are two processes that use microorganisms as biofertilizers (small organic organisms that help promote plant growth).

Ohio has a variety of edible fungi that can be found in all seasons. The giant puffball (*Calvatia gigantea*) can be found from June to early October in parks, meadows, pastures, open woods, and urban areas. This fungus has no stem and is shaped like a soccer ball. The giant puffball is typically white in color with a leathery texture, but will turn a yellow or olive-brown color with age. Giant puffballs must be completely white and firm to eat. Chicken-of-the-woods (*Laetiporus sulphureus*) is a fan-shaped fungus that is yellow with a salmon-colored center. They can be found on dead wood from May through November. If collected from black locust or conifer trees, severe vomiting will occur if consumed. When chicken-of-the-woods grows on one of these trees, it can absorb the harmful oils from the tree. Chicken-of-the-woods should be collected from cherry, maple, oak, or beech trees to ensure that there are no digestive issues. Turkey tail (*Trametes versicolor*) is a fan shaped fungi that has multi-colored rings that vary in color from white, brown, and red. It can be found from June to November on decaying wood. This fungus is generally safe to eat without any reactions occurring. Turkey tail mushrooms have also been used in and as supplements. Dryad's saddle (*Polyporus squamosus*) is a fungus that has large, flat, tan caps with reddish-brown scales. They can be found on hardwood trees from May through November. This fungus is only considered edible when it is young, which is before the brackets become 6 cm (2.4 in) across.

There are many "rules of thumb" when trying to figure out which fungi are edible and which ones are not. Assume that all of those rules, tips, and tricks are false. Again, there is not an easy way to figure out which species of fungi are edible and which are not. The only way to know which are edible is by knowing which species are and which are not.

Before consuming any type of wild fungi, please take note of the possible side effects of consuming a non-edible or a fungus that has been wrongly prepared. Reports have ranged from indigestion and gastrointestinal symptoms that include cramping, nausea, diarrhea, and vomiting. In some cases, fatalities have occurred, however, there has only been around a dozen species in North America that has resulted in that outcome. Make sure that you are able to identify the fungus with utmost confidence before consuming any wild fungus and remember that some require special preparation to be considered edible. Do your own research before attempting to consume any wild fungus. Once you have been able to successfully identify a specific fungus, only eat a little bit at a time until you know that it is safe to eat. As a final reminder: Collecting/harvesting of anything within Darke Co. Park District Preserves is not permitted at this time.

My name is Johnna Siegrist. I am the 2023 Summer Naturalist Intern. I am a senior at Ball State University, with a graduation date set for May 2024. I am majoring in Biology with three concentrations: Zoology, Wildlife Biology and Conservation, and Aquatic Biology and Fisheries. As you can probably tell from my list of major concentrations, I love everything to do with nature and wildlife. My love for nature started at a very young age. It started by being forced to play outside with my twin brother, gardening with one grandpa, and walks and talks with the other. I think some of it stemmed from listening to my dad and grandpa debate about what birds and trees are at his house, which I now participate in those debates and often times win, but who's counting! Without all of this, I'm not sure I would have developed the deep love and passion that I have for nature today.



Thank You for Your Generosity

Monetary / Material / Service Donations:

DCCA Supporter; Tom Brown; Ansonia Schools; Aggressive Pest Control; Susan Ballinger; Roger Van Frank; Sandy Hoying; John & Patti Clifford

Bash at Bish Sponsors:

Francis Furniture; Winner's Meat Farm; Jafe Decorations; Andersons Marathon; VFW Post 7262; Beauty Systems Group; Family Health; Darke Co. Visitor's Bureau; Midmark; Leis Realty; BASF; Timmons Water; Micon Construction; Ohio Dreamfest; Fitzwater Tree & Lawn Care; Brumbaugh Construction; Ansonia Lumber; MPrint; Open Water; Mote & Associates; Greenville Ace Hardware; Darke Pipes Emporium

In Memory/Honor of:

In Honor of Pat McCarthy:
David Cox; Roger Van Frank; Tina White; Mike Henderson; Sandy Hoying

In Memory of Judy A. Burns:
West Central Gourd Club

Raptor Run 5k Sponsors:

Choice One Engineering; American Legion - Post 140; Park National Bank; Dave Knapp Ford; Spirit Medical Transport; Snap Fitness - Greenville; Win Nutrition; Eikenberry's

Tour de Darke Sponsors:

Choice One Engineering; American Legion - Post 140; GNB Banking Centers; Countryside Bike Shop; Darke Co. Visitor's Bureau; Wayne Healthcare; Dave Knapp Ford; Doss Business Services; Twenty One Barrels

Volunteer in the Spotlight

For several years the Park District has hosted a living history encampment to support the Gathering at Garst which is one of the museum's best fundraising events. A loyal group of period re-enactors assist a park district organizer in keeping this event alive. The encampment at the Gathering at Garst portrays a timeline of history from ancient Native American cultures to the Civil War Period. Many of the participants have spent many years or a lifetime studying history and learning how to do historical crafts or skills or just storytelling to teach about history. They are an amazing group of people who want to share their knowledge with you! They purchase/make their own clothing and tools of the trade, research on their own and such that add to their story telling. The Park District is very lucky to have this group in support of the historical part of its mission statement. They not only volunteer their time but their talents, skills and knowledge as well. This month we would like to recognize these volunteers: Dudley and Barbie Hansbarger, Lee Wise, Andy Kenworthy, Gary Moore, Bob Besecker, Larry Young, Tom Smith, Diana Kozuh, Pam Brown, John & Karen Burkett. I know they invite you to join them in their quest to teach history in an exciting way! Being at least 200 years old or more, they are all tired and looking for young pioneers to join their ranks! Gathering at Garst is July 29-30!



Historic Bear's Mill Updates

Bear's Mill will once again be under construction this fall. Millrace Project Phase 1, was completed in the fall of 2021, replacing the concrete walls under the mill, on the upstream side of the millrace. The millrace is the body of water that runs under the mill, and powers the underwater turbines. Millrace Project Phase 2 will replace/repair the foundation pillars and walls holding the building up on the downstream side of the millrace. There will also be some repairs done to the two turbines during this time (photo). We do not have the specific dates yet. This construction should not affect trail and mill access, but will prevent us from making flour during this time. Please be patient with us and use caution when visiting during these necessary repairs. Without a sturdy foundation, we can't preserve and grow our beloved, Historic Bear's Mill!



Volunteer Updates

Well, it's fall, and you all know what that means! Prairie Days will be upon us sooner than you think! I will soon begin calling volunteers to help with stations, preparations, and to ensure the event goes off without a hitch! If you have a way you would like to help out, please let me know and I will get you signed up! The sign-up form will most likely go out in August, so be checking your email! To all who have helped with the many events that we had this summer, a BIG THANK YOU is given! We could not hold these special events without your help.



~Kathy Cool, Volunteer Coordinator

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 Darke Co. Parks and to help preserve open spaces. 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.

Sept. 5, 6:30pm - Meeting

Oct. 3, 6:30pm - Meeting

Oct. 15, 12pm-2pm - Chicken Dinner Carry-out Fundraiser

Nov. 8, 6:30pm - Meeting



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 547-3340.

Sept. 4, 12pm - Labor Day Birding (Meet at McDonald's north)

Sept. 16-18, 8am - Hawk Watch (Nature Center hilltop)

Sept. 26, 6pm - Pre-meeting Walk

7pm - MEETING: Butch Clark

Sept. 27-29 - End of Summer Camping. Contact Steve for details 547-3340

Oct. 11, 7am - Limberlost

Oct. 24, 6pm - Pre-meeting Walk

7pm - MEETING: "Birding Guyana" - Margaret Hensel

Oct. 25, 8am - Darke County Fall Colors Drive

Nov. 8, 8am - Englewood Park

Nov. 28, 7pm - MEETING: "Birding Florida"

Nov. 29, 8am - Birding Brookville Lake & Whitewater State Park

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.

Darke County Photo Club

The club was formed in 1995 to promote photography in & around Darke County. Whether a beginner or advanced photographer, all are invited to attend the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7pm at the Shawnee Prairie Preserve Nature Center.