

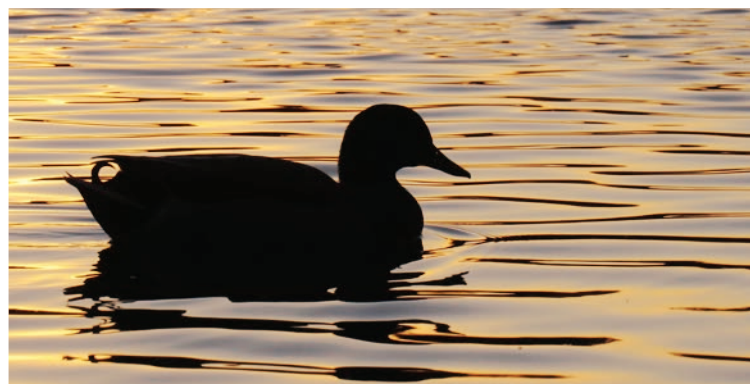


ELKHART COUNTY
PARKS

SPRING/SUMMER 2021

NEWS & NOTES

vol.2 no.1



Our Mission

INSPIRING
CONNECTIONS
WITH
CULTURE & NATURE



Administration Office

Hours: Mon–Fri / 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (Closed weekends & County holidays)

Office Location: 211 W. Lincoln Avenue, Goshen, IN 46526-3280

Phone: 574-535-6458



Park Hours (Subject to change without notice)

Jan / Feb / Nov / Dec
9 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Apr / Sept
9 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Mar / Oct
9 a.m. – 7 p.m.

May / Jun / Jul / Aug
9 a.m. – 9 p.m.

Note: Boot Lake Nature Preserve closes one hour before all other parks.

Elkhart County Parks

211 W. Lincoln Ave.
Goshen, IN 46526-3280

PHONE / 574-535-6458
FAX / 574-535-6616
TDD / 574-535-6420

WEBSITE / elkhartcountyparks.org
EMAIL / parksinfo@elkhartcounty.com

DIRECTOR / Ronda DeCaire
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF PARK OPERATIONS / Bernard J. Cunningham IV
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF INTERPRETIVE SERVICES / Dr. Kelby Rose

Elkhart County Parks Board

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MEMBERS / Jeff Burbrink, John Hardy, Karen Mackowiak, & Will Wilson

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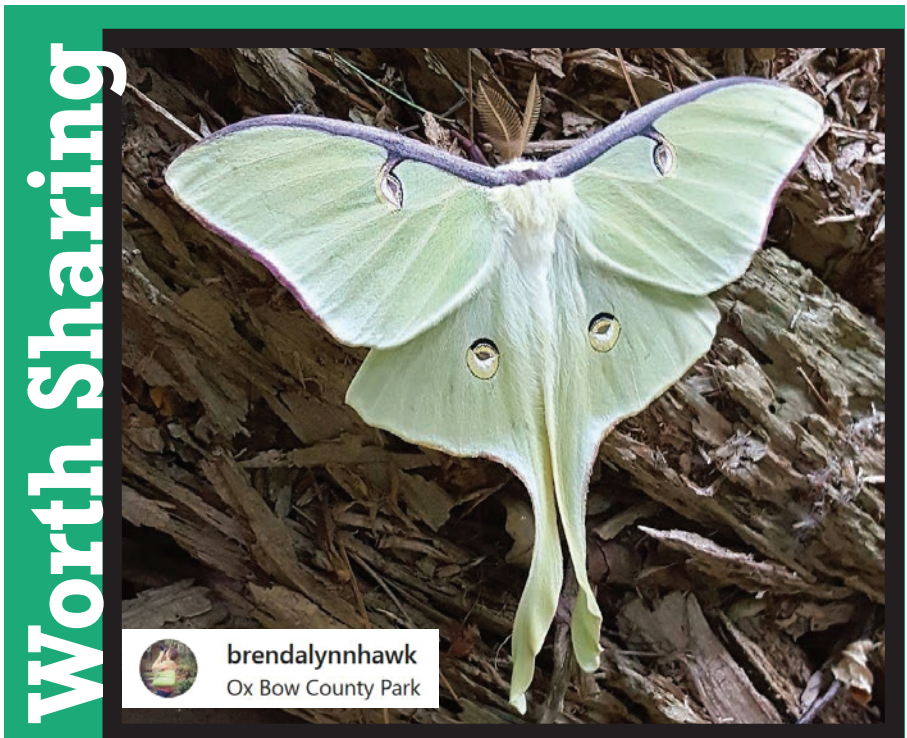


News & Notes is responsibly printed.

Let's keep in touch.

[f](#) + [i](#) /elkhartcountyparks

visit > elkhartcountyparks.org



brendalynnhawk
Ox Bow County Park

Nature can sometimes throw you showstoppers, like this breathtaking Luna Moth found by hawk-eye observer, Brenda Hawkins in Ox Bow County Park. Wow! What a spectacular find! ❤️

#elkhartcountyparks
Facebook/Instagram

On the Cover / Photos by (clockwise from top): Ellen Stevens, Carbon Gull, Michael Wesco, Audrey McGuire, Mark McGuire, and Johnathan Wesco II.

LETTERS FROM OUR DESKS



DIRECTOR RONDA DECAIRE

Spring brings hope. Budding trees. Emerging flowers. A time for renewal.

As we move

into summer I hope we can continue to blossom into a healthier community and see signs the pandemic is behind us.

One thing we can celebrate from 2020 is the rise in number of park users. Staff noticed cars full of families, many dog walkers, and people getting a healthy workout. We hope the parks and trails have become a part of your daily, weekly, or monthly

routine and you continue to visit often.

Increased users means the need for upgrades as well. We have a busy year ahead with Master Plan projects to get started including development of Corson Riverwoods County Park, expansion of kayak facilities at Six Span Bridge, replacement of a wetland boardwalk at Ox Bow, installation of new restrooms, shelter roofs, and completion of several feasibility studies. All of these require multiple resources, staff, and grants, and we appreciate the support of our partners.

I'm also excited about the establishment of an Elkhart County Parks Legacy

Fund. Catherine Metzger gifted the Park Board unrestricted funds when she passed away in early 2019. Cathy had a deep love for all things nature and was always full of wisdom. She was an ordinary woman who left an extraordinary gift (read more about her on page 12). The seed she planted will grow into a perpetual endowment fund to support programs and projects. You can help the Legacy Fund via the Community Foundation of Elkhart County who will match it 25% (your gift of \$100 becomes a gift of \$125!).

Your support is always appreciated.

INTERPRETIVE SERVICES

KELBY ROSE

Every day, I am humbled by the knowledge and passion of the Interpretive Services staff. Although the pandemic has shaken up the ways we typically engage with the community, we have embraced the challenge of seeking new ways to inspire connections to local culture and nature.

This time apart has been especially difficult because we thrive on the energy and curiosity of our community. Talking with park visitors, birding enthusiasts, amateur historians, and nature geeks of all ages gives us a steady stream of new ideas for programs, events, and experiences that respond to the interests of the community.



I encourage anyone who is curious about local culture and nature to reach out to a member of the Interpretive Services team and let us know what you would like to learn more about. You can start with me – send me an email at kröse@elkhartcounty.com – I would love to hear what you are curious about and your ideas for recreation experiences in the parks.

PARK OPERATIONS

BERNARD J. CUNNINGHAM IV

be focused on keeping areas of our parks accessible, and new construction and repairs will open areas that have been closed off and allow for a greater usable area for visitors to spread out.

Some of the projects we will be focusing on this spring and summer are replacement and repair of large boardwalks, new roofs on two shelters, repairing of the Goshen Dam, and very likely new bathrooms in Ox Bow County Park.

As we continue to work in these challenging times, please communicate any concerns or suggestions you have in how the Parks Department can better serve this community.



Spring and Summer of 2021 will bring some changes in our usual maintenance and upkeep of park properties. With Covid still firmly in our community, people are a little less inclined to use public restaurants, gyms, entertainment, and even schedule vacations. The parks, in turn, have seen significant increase in attendance filling in as a replacement. This increase has us regularly evaluating our custodial and maintenance needs, as well as changing priorities. Cleaning will increase as things open to prevent the spread of Covid. Projects will

SNAP SHOTS

OF THE MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

BY MICHELLE NASH, CURATOR OF COLLECTIONS

The Elkhart County Historical Museum houses our community's largest collection of local history artifacts and documents. Museum collections require specialized care to ensure they are preserved and accessible for future generations. Here are some recent snapshots of that work.

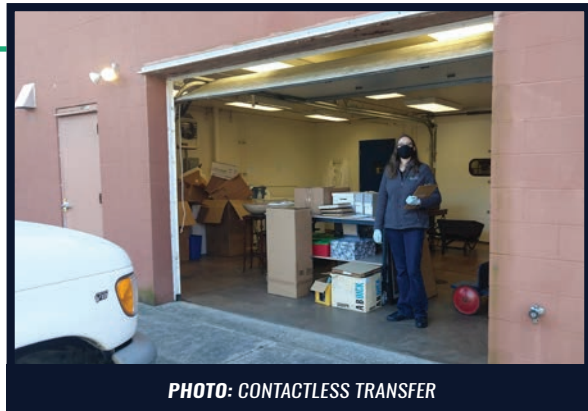


PHOTO: CONTACTLESS TRANSFER

COLLECTIONS WORK DURING A PANDEMIC

Though the museum was closed to the public for several months due to the pandemic, we continued to accept and process new donations to the collection. To facilitate a contactless transfer, staff met with donors outside of the museum's quarantine room.

Quarantining new donations has always been the practice for the safety of the collections, to make sure no mold or pests are brought into collection storage, but now it is useful for keeping the staff and donors safe too.

2020 DONATIONS

Despite the pandemic, or perhaps even because of it, with folks staying home and going through their family keepsakes, the Elkhart County Historical Museum received more new

artifact donations in 2020 than any of the last nine years! Donations of yearbooks and other high school memorabilia were especially frequent this year as well as collections of photographs.



PHOTO: NEW DONATIONS IN PROCESS



PHOTO: RECENTLY DONATED PHOTOGRAPH OF THE NAPPANEE HIGH SCHOOL BAND POSED IN FRONT OF THE SCHOOL.

HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPH DRIVE

In 2021, the Elkhart County Historical Museum launched an active collecting initiative to bring more balance to its historic photograph collection. The museum seeks to represent the whole county, but its collections tend to skew to the larger cities and the town of Bristol where the building is located. If you have

photographs from the underrepresented communities of Benton, Dunlap, Foraker, Jimtown, Locke, Middlebury, Midway, Millersburg, Nappanee, New Paris, Simonton Lake, Southwest, Vistula, Wakarusa, or Waterford Mills, please consider donating them to the museum and help us tell a more complete story of Elkhart County!

For more info, contact Curator of Collections Michelle at
☎ 574-848-4322 -OR- ✉ michelle@elkhartcountyhistory.org



BOOT LAKE ↗



OX BOW ↗



BONNEYVILLE MILL ↗

WETLAND WONDERS

BY KRISTA DANIELS
INTERPRETIVE NATURALIST

The Elkhart County Parks are rich with amazing water resources such as fens, ponds and marshes – all of which are wetland-types teeming with life and biodiversity. Even though each wetland has unique qualities, they all provide these same great benefits: water storage during rain events to prevent flooding, filtration of excess nutrients and pollutants before going downstream, habitat for many species of plants and animals (including very sensitive and endangered ones) and recreational spaces for people. Now, let’s take a closer look at a few of these amazing assets to our county...

BOOT LAKE

NATURE PRESERVE

HYDRIC PEATY MUCK FLAT

Boot Lake was once a kettle lake formed by glaciation. Over the years, it has gradually and naturally filled in, creating an ecosystem called a hydric peaty muck flat. This type of wetland forms when soils are very wet and plants decompose very slowly, leaving behind incredibly rich soils. These soils support a wide array of wetland species, including the rare Purple Bladderwort and the endangered Blanding’s Turtle. National Audubon Society has named Boot Lake Nature Preserve an “Important Bird Area” due in part to this very unique wetland which provides a much-needed sanctuary for many resident and migratory birds, including the majestic Sandhill Crane.

OX BOW

COUNTY PARK

FEN

A “fen”, or “wet prairie”, is a unique wetland type characterized by a continuous flow of cool groundwater into an open sunny location along a slope. As the water bubbles out of the ground, it saturates the soil, which over time develops into a thick layer of peat. From this “springy” peat layer, grows a diverse collection of plants perfectly suited to live in this wet environment. The runs, or streams, from this constant source of groundwater can be seen flowing from the fen into the river all year long, even in drought conditions.

BONNEYVILLE MILL

COUNTY PARK

VERNAL POND

Vernal ponds are temporary pools of water, usually appearing in the spring, that are short lived and dry up later in the year. They are a very distinctive type of wetland, usually devoid of fish. This is vital for the safe and successful breeding of some of our local amphibian species, like the Eastern Tiger Salamander. Without these vernal ponds, the numbers of amphibians able to survive to the adult stage of their lifecycle would be drastically diminished. Many invertebrate species, like the Fairy Shrimp, also thrive in these small but mighty wetlands.

MEET VISITOR BRETT MITCHELL

By Courtney Franke, Mill Manager

Let's catch up with Brett who has been hiking the parks since their establishment.

Q: What draws you to outdoor activities and parks?

A: I have always enjoyed outdoor activities involving nature since growing up in the East Goshen neighborhood. I enjoy parks because they are properties preserved for the enjoyment of nature. I like the variety of terrain in those parks and nature preserves.

Q: How long have you been enjoying the Elkhart County Parks?

A: Since Ox Bow opened in the late 1960s; the others as I was introduced to them.

Q: How long have you been involved with the Hiking Club?

A: Since it started in 2015. I have attended 33 of the 44 hikes held since then.



PHOTO: COURTNEY FRANKE AND BRETT MITCHELL AT HIKING CLUB IN OX BOW COUNTY PARK

Q: Tell us a little about your quest to hike the entire Pumpkinvine Nature Trail.

A: I had walked most sections of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail multiple times before 2020, but there were 2 sections I had not walked before. One was the section from CR37 to MM9 – the other was from CR28 to CR26/CR31. Since there are no parking trailheads at either end, I had to be dropped off at CR26, and walked one way back to Abshire Park.

Q: What physical barriers challenge your love of hiking?

A: The barriers I face are my disability, and some of the trails and terrain in the different park properties.



PROGRAMS + EVENTS ALL IN ONE PLACE:



ELKHART COUNTY
PARKS
.ORG

FAUNA OF ELKHART COUNTY

ELKHART COUNTY IS HOME TO SOME TRULY INCREDIBLE CREATURES, BIG AND SMALL. FROM THE PRAIRIES TO THE FORESTS, OUR BEAUTIFUL NATURAL LANDSCAPES PROVIDE A BUSTLING ECOSYSTEM OF LOCAL WILDLIFE. HERE ARE SOME COOL FACTS ABOUT SOME OF OUR COUNTY'S AMAZING FAUNA.

300 BIRD SPECIES INCLUDING:

- 33 SHOREBIRDS 37 WATERFOWL
- 20 SPARROWS 50 STATE-ENDANGERED / THREATENED
- 25 RAPTORS
- 36 WARBLERS

COOL FACT:

ELKHART COUNTY'S 25TH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT TALLIED A GRAND TOTAL OF 23,105 BIRDS AND A RECORD-BREAKING 86 SPECIES FOR THIS REGION'S COUNT (BEATING THE PREVIOUS RECORD BY 4 SPECIES).



8 BAT SPECIES

- BIG BROWN BAT
- INDIANA BAT
- LITTLE BROWN BAT
- NORTHERN LONG-EARED BAT
- EASTERN RED BAT
- EVENING BAT
- HOARY BAT
- SILVER-HAIRED BAT

COOL FACT: APART FROM THE BIG BROWN BAT, ALL SPECIES LISTED HERE ARE STATE-ENDANGERED OR THREATENED.

15 SNAKE SPECIES

- EASTERN GARTER SNAKE
- BUTLER'S GARTER SNAKE
- RIBBON SNAKE
- NORTHERN WATER SNAKE
- QUEEN SNAKE
- KIRTLAND'S SNAKE
- DEKAY'S BROWN SNAKE
- RED-BELLIED SNAKE
- BLUE RACER
- BLACK RAT SNAKE
- EASTERN MILK SNAKE
- RING-NECKED SNAKE
- EASTERN HOGNOSE SNAKE
- EASTERN MASSASAUGA RATTLESNAKE

COOL FACT:

THE LONGEST SNAKE IN ELKHART COUNTY (AND THE STATE) IS THE BLACK RAT SNAKE – IT CAN GROW OVER 7 FT!

17 RODENT SPECIES

- EASTERN CHIPMUNK
- GROUNDHOG
- 13-LINED GROUND SQUIRREL
- EASTERN GRAY SQUIRREL
- RED SQUIRREL
- EASTERN FOX SQUIRREL
- AMERICAN BEAVER
- WHITE-FOOTED MOUSE
- DEER MOUSE
- PRAIRIE VOLE
- MEADOW VOLE
- WOODLAND VOLE
- SOUTHERN BOG LEMMING
- NORWAY RAT
- SOUTHERN FLYING SQUIRREL
- HOUSE MOUSE
- MEADOW JUMPING MOUSE

COOL FACT: THE BEAVER IS THE LARGEST RODENT IN NORTH AMERICA AND SECOND IN THE WORLD!



5 OUT OF 20

FEDERALLY-ENDANGERED & THREATENED WILDLIFE SPECIES OF INDIANA CAN BE ENCOUNTERED IN ELKHART COUNTY:

- NORTHERN LONG-EARED BAT
- INDIANA BAT
- WHOOPING CRANE
- EASTERN MASSASAUGA RATTLESNAKE

85 FISH SPECIES



ELKHART COUNTY SUPPORTS 3 STATE-ENDANGERED OR SPECIAL CONCERN SPECIES OF GREATER REDHORSE, NORTHERN BROOK LAMPREY, LONGNOSE DACE

COOL FACT: 2 COLD-WATER TROUT STREAMS FLOW THROUGH THE ELKHART COUNTY PARKS: COBUS CREEK & THE LITTLE ELKHART RIVER.

11 SALAMANDER SPECIES



- EASTERN TIGER SALAMANDER
- SPOTTED SALAMANDER
- JEFFERSON'S SALAMANDER
- BLUE-SPOTTED SALAMANDER
- SMALLMOUTH SALAMANDER
- EASTERN NEWT
- FOUR-TOED SALAMANDER
- REDBACK SALAMANDER
- WESTERN LESSER-SIREN
- MUDPUPPY
- UNISEXUAL/TRIPLOID HYBRID

COOL FACT: ELKHART COUNTY IS HOME TO THE LARGEST LAND-DWELLING SALAMANDER IN NORTH AMERICA – THE EASTERN TIGER SALAMANDER CAN BE UP TO 13 INCHES LONG!

OF THE 2678 BEETLE SPECIES IN INDIANA,

1/2 CAN BE FOUND IN ELKHART COUNTY





ADDRESS
 53373 C.R. 131
 BRISTOL, IN

BUSINESS HOURS
 WEDNESDAY-SUNDAY
 10 A.M.-5 P.M.
 MAY-OCTOBER

PHONE
 574.825.9324

QUALITY FLOUR

GRITS

YELLOW & WHITE

1 lb for \$3.00
 2 lb for \$5.00
 5 lb for \$8.00

CORNMEAL

YELLOW & WHITE

1 lb for \$3.00
 2 lb for \$5.00
 5 lb for \$8.00

RYE

1 lb for \$3.00
 2 lb for \$5.00
 5 lb for \$8.00

SCOTTISH OATS

1 lb for \$4.00
 2 lb for \$6.00
 5 lb for \$12.00

BUCKWHEAT

1 lb for \$4.00
 2 lb for \$6.00
 5 lb for \$12.00

CRACKED WHEAT

1 lb for \$3.00
 2 lb for \$5.00
 5 lb for \$8.00

WHOLE WHEAT

*HARD RED, HARD WHITE
 & SOFT WHITE*

1 lb for \$3.00
 2 lb for \$5.00
 5 lb for \$8.00

SPELT

1 lb for \$4.00
 2 lb for \$6.00
 5 lb for \$12.00



THE WATER THAT POWERS BONNEYVILLE MILL

BY COURTNEY FRANKE
• MILL MANAGER •



ON any given day, Bonneyville Mill visitors often repeat similar questions. Where is the “big” wheel? Does the mill still run? Where are the grind stones? Do you still make all the flour here? One aspect of the mill and its operation that is rarely questioned is how the water is brought into the mill where it is needed to turn the water wheels. A complex water system that includes the dam, mill pond, head race, control gates, pit and tail race are essential to the operation of Bonneyville Mill and help create its scenic atmosphere.

Establishing reliable water delivery to the wheel is critical in the planning and construction of a water powered mill. Most often, this is achieved by diverting a natural source of water into an engineered waterway. Bonneyville Mill uses the Little Elkhart River as its source of power.

If you walk the Levee Trail at Bonneyville, you walk on, over, and around the rubble dam that was constructed to “pile up” water in the mill pond, creating stored energy to turn the water wheel. If you venture across the foot bridge that leads from the main parking lot to

Feedlot Shelter, you will cross the channel that brings water from the mill pond over to the mill. The section of this channel that flows under the foot bridge and brings a supply of water to the mill is called the “head race”. Once the water reaches the mill, turbine-style water wheels harness the power of moving water to turn grindstones and power the mill’s machinery. The water flowing away from the mill in the tail race rejoins the river just below the mill.

The entire mill race was excavated using hand tools and mule powered slip scoops in the 1830s. It’s thought that the

construction of the dam and mill race were as laborious as constructing the actual mill building.

Today the mill race seems like a natural extension of the Little Elkhart River. Many different animals and plants make the mill race their home. Fish, frogs, turtles, ducks, and geese are common in and around the mill race. Last summer there was a very large snapping turtle that made a regular appearance in the tail race behind the mill.

On your next visit, make sure to take time to appreciate the mill race and everything it adds to the beauty and function of Bonneyville Mill.



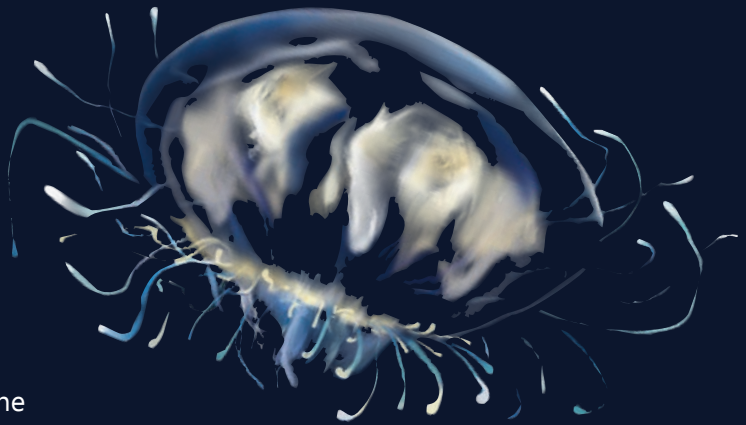
Nature's Calendar

SPRING



- The best time to harvest sap for making maple syrup is in early spring when daytime temperatures are in the 40's and nighttime temperatures are below freezing. This is called **maple sugaring** season.
- The wet days of spring allow **amphibians** to journey to a suitable wetland habitat to breed and lay eggs. With no fish present to prey on their eggs, spring's vernal pools are a great place to see amphibians.
- April and May each contain one of the year's three **supermoons**. A supermoon occurs when the moon is at its closest point to earth, or "perigee". During perigee, the moon is about 226,000 miles from earth.
- By May, **Baltimore Orioles** and **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** will have migrated back to Elkhart County from as far south as Central America. Both bird species like their meals on the sweet side, so be sure to have your nectar and orange feeders ready.

- Elkhart County is home to several carnivorous plants, one of which is the **Northern Pitcher Plant**. This plant lures insects into its digestive juices with purple, pitcher-shaped leaves and a sweet smell. Its large flower blooms in early summer.
- **June Beetles**, sometimes called "June Bugs", are named for when they emerge from the ground. These beetles hatch underground and feed as larva and pupa for 2 years before emerging as adults. June beetles are nocturnal and very attracted to light, making them routine porch light visitors.
- Even though all mammals have sweat glands, not all of them have enough to effectively cool off in the summer heat like humans can. Many mammals beat the heat by being nocturnal or staying sheltered in the shade during the day, like **Gray Foxes** and **Raccoons**.
- During the months of August and September, be on the lookout for harmless **Freshwater Jellyfish**. These small, 5-25 mm-sized translucent creatures have sporadically appeared in bodies of water all over Indiana, including in Elkhart County.



SUMMER

—Just add— WATER

Experience the great outdoors from a different perspective paddling through Elkhart County's scenic waterways. Whether by canoe or kayak, our region's network of rivers and canals offer unspoiled scenery to traverse on your next streamside adventure.



1

OX BOW —COUNTY PARK—

This stretch provides a great short-trip experience for paddlers of all skill levels. Watch for Barred owls as you launch from the starting point and listen for the tapping of woodpeckers among the old trees that line the shore.

EXPERIENCE LEVEL: Beginner

LAUNCH AT: Boat launch near Fisherman's Camp Shelter
GPS: 41.6317, -85.9019

ROUTE 1 [FOR A SHORTER RIDE • 6.5 MI]
END AT: Elkhart Environmental Center
GPS: 41.6669, -85.9450

ROUTE 2 [FOR A LONGER RIDE • 7.7 MI]
END AT: Studebaker Park
GPS: 41.6764, -85.9508

EXPERIENCE LEVEL:
Intermediate–Advanced

ROUTE [5.2 MI]

LAUNCH AT: Hermance Park
Bristol (Boat Ramp)
GPS: 41.7230, -85.8146

END AT: Six-Span Bridge (Boat Ramp)
GPS: 41.7059, -85.8880

2

SIX-SPAN —BRIDGE—

The Six-span site provides easy access to the St. Joseph River. At the halfway point (2.6 mi), on your right, scan the treetops for the giant nests made by a colony of Great Blue Heron. This river system can be heavily used by boaters, so paddling experience is recommended.



3

RIVER PRESERVE —COUNTY PARK—

For an all-day adventure, paddle through peaceful woodland corridors and countryside canals along the Little Elkhart River. Access sites are dotted along the river in a linear formation, providing some of the longest water trails within the Elkhart County Parks system. As you meander along these gentle waterways, keep your eyes open for wildlife, like River Otter, basking turtles, and colorful songbirds in spring and summer.

EXPERIENCE LEVEL: Advanced

ROUTE 1 [FOR A SHORTER RIDE • 1.7 MI]
LAUNCH AT: Benton Spillway (Parking Lot)
GPS: 41.5006, -85.7700

END AT: Benton Hydro (Fishing Pier)
GPS: 41.5060, -85.7990

ROUTE 2 [FOR A LONGER RIDE • 3.5 MI]
To continue from Route 1, put-in 30 yards west at the forest trailhead, below the dam and falls

LAUNCH AT: Benton Hydro (Below Dam & Falls)
GPS: 41.5059, -85.7995

END AT: Baintertown Hydro
GPS: 41.5202, -85.8202

PLAN AHEAD

WEAR A LIFEJACKET *It's the law!*

CHECK LOCAL REPORTS *Since conditions on the water change dramatically with the seasons, always make sure to check the weather forecast before heading out.*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**INDIANA DEPARTMENT
OF NATURAL RESOURCES**
in.gov/dnr/outdoor/4236.htm

ELKHART COUNTY WATERWAYS ALLIANCE

facebook.com/Elkhart-County-Waterways-Alliance-173410066698783

PADDLE MICHIANA

facebook.com/groups/paddlemichiana



CATHY'S LEGACY

By Ronda DeCaire, Director

Some teachers stand above others. Environmental educators can always tell when those teachers plant the extra seed in a child by sharing their love for nature and the outdoors.

Catherine Metzger was one of those teachers. Cathy had a Master's Degree in Special Education from IU and was a teacher for more than twenty years with the Elkhart Community Schools. One thing she enjoyed throughout her career was connecting students with animals and plants during field trips to area nature centers and county parks.

After early retirement and caring for her parents and sister, Cathy once again wanted to make connections with people and nature. In 2014, she registered for the Elkhart County Indiana Master Naturalist class and was delighted by the close-knit connections she made with like-minded individuals. Attending meetings, volunteering, and using her skills to explore her own land and area parks became her favorite pastime.

When a position opened as a gate attendant at Ox Bow County Park, Cathy applied and happily accepted. Her fantastic customer service became well-loved by visitors. She was always thrilled to help

answer questions and pass out biscuits to their dogs. She made new friends and one regular visitor even taught Cathy how to ice skate and kayak for the first time in her life.

Cathy was instrumental in starting a book club at the park, assisting with Nature Nuts, and wondering how 'we could do things better' with programs and repairs. She was full of ideas she shared with fellow staff. She also often surprised them with a written thank you note of her appreciation.

When Cathy passed suddenly in February of 2019, the hearts of co-workers, customers and good friends were broken. She was remembered for the special moments and joy she brought to people.

Cathy not only left good memories, she left a legacy. Cathy graciously gifted her estate to three Michiana organizations that connect people with animals and nature. The Elkhart County Parks was honored to be one of those recipients. In July 2020, Tammy Tidey, a past co-teacher, friend, and estate trustee presented the Elkhart County Parks and Recreation Board with a check for more than \$190,000.

In the spirit of Cathy's planning for the future and wishes to assist with programs and projects, the Elkhart County Parks

and Recreation Board made the decision to invest her gift. The Elkhart County Parks Legacy Fund will soon be established with the Community Foundation of Elkhart County. Cathy's gift will be a perpetual source of support to the Elkhart County Parks and is one last seed she was able to plant to connect people with nature.

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♥ If you would like to help grow Cathy's gift and contribute to the Elkhart County Parks Legacy Fund, please reach out to the Elkhart County Parks administration staff at 574-535-6458 or visit the Community Foundation of Elkhart County at: inspiringgood.org



PHOTO: TAMMY TIDEY (R) PRESENTS PARKS BOARD PRESIDENT, WILL WILSON, WITH A CHECK.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT:

CARLOS R. NEGRON VEGA

By Andy Langdon, Interpretive Naturalist

We would like to thank Carlos for his hard work and dedication to our parks. Carlos's journey began in summer 2020 when he visited Ox Bow County Park for the first time. Since then, he has worked with both the naturalist and operations staff maintaining trails, picking up litter, and finding tangible ways to help the wildlife. Carlos built and installed three beautiful Barred

Owl nesting boxes throughout Ox Bow and plans to build more for other species of birds.

When asked why he enjoys volunteering, Carlos replied "This is my community, my home and my backyard". He says he loves the people and the animals – especially the Barred Owls! He even compared Ox Bow County Park to Yellow-

stone National Park saying there are so many animals to see here. Although his health has slowed him down recently, he plans to continue his work in whatever way he can. Thank you, Carlos, for your unfailing dedication to our community, Ox Bow County Park and for the wildlife here in Elkhart County. We all appreciate you so much.



HELP US GROW

Has the Elkhart County Parks touched your life in some way? Maybe there's a park you love to visit, or a fun event you fondly remember, or a workshop that taught you something new.

If these are experiences you value, consider showing your support.



GIVE TODAY FOR A BRIGHTER TOMORROW.

100% of your gift will be used to create a stronger and sustainable Elkhart County Parks system.

HELP THE FRIENDS OF THE

ELKHART COUNTY PARKS

Please mail checks payable to:
Friends of the Elkhart County Parks

🏠 Address:

**211 W. Lincoln Ave.
Goshen, IN 46526**

PARK INFORMATION

Come experience the Elkhart County Parks! Each site offers fantastic recreational opportunities—from scenic hikes to family picnics. Discover more about our park sites on our website at elkhartcountyparks.org/destinations

Boot Lake Nature Preserve

51430 C.R. 3 • Elkhart, IN Acres: 300



Experience the natural beauty of Boot Lake now restored to its former natural state of wetland, forest, and prairie habitat. The state-dedicated nature preserve hosts a wide variety of plants and wildlife.



Ox Bow County Park

23033 C.R. 45 • Goshen, IN Acres: 200



Mere minutes from Elkhart and Goshen, Ox Bow County Park offers countless ways to make the most out of your visit—from nature programs and woodland hikes to archery and disc golf, you'll be spoiled for choice on what to do next.



Bonneyville Mill County Park

53373 C.R. 131 • Bristol, IN Acres: 222



A unique blend of regional history and natural beauty can be found at Bonneyville Mill County Park. Gently rolling hills, woodlands, marshes, and open meadows form a perfect background for picturesque Bonneyville Mill.



Pumpkinvine Nature Trail

1302 E. Lincoln Ave • Goshen, IN Miles: 16.5



The Pumpkinvine Nature Trail is a linear park and greenway on the former Pumpkinvine railroad corridor. Take a stroll or bike ride through lush woodland corridors surrounded by rolling farmland on this scenic 16-mile trail running from Goshen to Shipshewana.



Cobus Creek County Park

30680 C.R. 8 • Elkhart, IN Acres: 84



Spend the day by the creek and take in the natural beauty of the region in this local Elkhart gem. Once farmland, the park now features a diverse landscape, including a Sensory Garden, restored prairie, woods, wetlands, and a cold water trout creek for which it is named.



River Preserve County Park

67380 C.R. 29 • New Paris, IN Acres: 358



Historic canals, dams, and foundations blend seamlessly with wild beauty in this vast linear park that runs along the Elkhart River. Get away from the crowds, and let your inner-explorer go wild for these timeless landscapes rich in history and natural splendor.



DeFries Gardens

17477 C.R. 46 • New Paris, IN Acres: 13



Nestled in River Preserve County Park, DeFries Gardens is a reminder of our human connection to the environment. Explore seasonal gardens of ornamental flora and native plant collections at this picturesque property.



Treasure Island

56226 Armour Ave. • Elkhart, IN Acres: 4



Located on the banks of the lower St. Joseph River, Treasure Island offers a place for visitors to relax and enjoy nature. The park is closed in winter from December thru March (dependent on weather conditions).





FRIENDS OF THE
ELKHART COUNTY PARKS

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