



ELKHART COUNTY
PARKS

FALL/WINTER 2021

NEWS & NOTES

vol.2 no.2





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

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DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF PARK OPERATIONS / Bernard J. Cunningham IV
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF INTERPRETIVE SERVICES / Donny Aleo

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News & Notes is responsibly printed.

Let's keep in touch.



visit > elkhartcountyparks.org



There's a lot to love about Elkhart County when everything gets colored by fall. Beautifully captured by Carrie at Cobus Creek County Park. ❤️

[#elkhartcountyparks](https://www.facebook.com/elkhartcountyparks)
Facebook/Instagram

On the Cover / Photos by (clockwise from top): Emily Miller, Joshua Petrillo, John J. Smith, Carrie Kobb, and Natasha Tucker.

Greetings
from the

ELKHART COUNTY PARKS



As summer winds down, we look forward to field trips from area schools, changing leaf colors, 5K crosscountry meets, and the first snowflakes of the season. We have had another incredible season of increased visitation throughout the park system as local residents and tourists continue to go for long walks in the parks, toss their Ultimate Frisbees, and use parks as an access to waterways in Elkhart County. In this issue, you will read about the award-winning places that are right here in your own backyard. From the vast prairies of Boot Lake to the updated exhibits at the Elkhart County Historical Museum we have much to share with the community this fall and winter. We invite you to join us in your search for things to do whether that is exploring forests on foot or skis, attending the Holiday at the Mill event, or visiting the Historical Museum. We have something for everyone in your family!

Sincerely,
Elkhart County Parks Staff

P.S. Check it all out
on our website at
elkhartcountyparks.org



Post Card

Welcome Donny!

The Elkhart County Parks welcomes Donny Aleo as the new Deputy Director of Interpretive Services. Donny joined the staff in August of 2021 and oversees the interpretive division of the department. He grew up in Nappanee and brings with him a passion of working for local government, the outdoors, and history. Donny has previously served as the

Superintendent of Parks for Nappanee and has experience in the environmental health field as well. One of his recent accomplishments was fundraising and building a splash pad for the Town of Arcadia. Donny shared that this position brings together all that he loves about parks and he is excited to take on new challenges with the interpretive team.

EMMA MOLLOY

A NEWS-WORTHY LEGACY

BY JULIE PARKE, MUSEUM ADMINISTRATOR

A new historic marker is coming to downtown Elkhart. The marker, from the Indiana Historical Bureau, will highlight the life and career of Emma Molloy.



Molloy was born in South Bend and moved around the Midwest before coming to Elkhart in the 1870s. During her time in Elkhart, Emma Molloy, working alongside her husband Edward, established the *Elkhart Observer* newspaper, making her the first female newspaper editor in northern Indiana.

From the office above Elkhart's post office, Molloy used the *Observer* to advocate for important causes. Molloy published editorials and articles that pushed for female equality, women's suffrage, and temperance. During the four-year run of the paper, Molloy underwent a transformation from newspaper editor to public advocate. Molloy began to speak publicly and became a featured speaker in the region. This notoriety catapulted her to the national and international stage.

Leaving Elkhart in the mid-1870s, Molloy would speak throughout the country, go on



a speaking tour of England and become a champion of women's rights.

To celebrate the new historic marker and the life of Emma Molloy, the temporary exhibit, *Emma Molloy: In Her Own Words* opens this fall.

Visit the museum and learn about Molloy's fascinating life and her never-ending crusade.

MUSEUM RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD

In June 2021, the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) announced that the Elkhart County Historical Museum was the recipient of an Award of Excellence for the *Crossroads of Elkhart County* exhibition. The AASLH Leadership in History Awards, now in its 76th year, is the most prestigious recognition for achievement in the preservation and interpretation of state and local history.

Crossroads of Elkhart County is a three-phase reimagining of the museum's main floor galleries that strives to help visitors gain a grounding in the history of the area, give voice to the people who lived here, and find relevance to today. The project took three years to

complete and owes its success to many partners – including Goshen College, the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi and the Community Foundation of Elkhart County, to name only a few. The first gallery, *Forging at Path*, introduces the Paleo people and continues through the Archaic and Woodland periods. In a transformational shift for the museum, the exhibit presents, in their own words, the cultural foundations in this area of the Miami and Potawatomi, ending just before the arrival of the French in 1670. *Claiming the Land* chronicles the experiences of Native cultures, specifically the Miami and Potawatomi, as European and American groups moved into this region during

the 1700s and 1800s. The final gallery, *Making a Place* begins with the arrival of trains in 1851 and continues into the present. The gallery highlights the rise of industry, weaves in African American, Latinx and Anabaptist voices, and gives visitors a place to share their own stories.

This year, AASLH is conferring thirty-eight national awards honoring people, projects, exhibits, and publications. The winners represent the best in the field and provide leadership for the future of state and local history. The AASLH awards program was initiated in 1945 to establish and encourage standards of excellence in the collection, preservation, and interpretation of state and local history throughout the

United States. Tamara Hemmerlein, Director of Local History Services for the Indiana Historical Society shared her warm wishes on hearing about our selection,

"The award is well-deserved and a great model for transformational partnerships and the power of letting go and sharing authority. Congratulations to everyone involved in the project!"

The awards will be presented at a reception during the AASLH annual conference in September. Curator of Education, Patrick McGuire will be in attendance to accept the award on behalf of all the Museum's staff and the many partners who made this recognition possible.

They can be beautiful, but deadly.

They are hiding in plain sight in our parks and neighborhoods. These dangers in our midst, are invasive species, of course. Invasive, or alien, species are plants or animals that are introduced into an ecosystem where their reproduction causes harm to the natural environment. Invasive species can displace the natural vegetation around it as it multiplies. This, in turn, limits or annihilates the variety of native vegetation available to wildlife leading to an undesirable or even an unsustainable ecosystem, as the invasive plants have little to no food value. Many have been introduced intentionally over the years as fence row plants, aesthetically pleasing additions to our yards and wildlife cover. Others have made their way here by accident.

One of our most beautiful aliens is the Bradford Pear (Callery Pear) Tree. It has, unfortunately, also become one of our

most familiar trees. You can't miss it in spring-time as it is one of the first trees to blossom in the spring where its lovely, white flowers cover the landscape. This tree is planted as an ornamental in neighborhoods and along roadsides. It has escaped cultivation and is growing everywhere like other invasive plants, such as the Bush Honeysuckle, Garlic Mustard, Oriental Bittersweet, and Multiflora Rose. Due to its quick spread and growth rate, it outcompetes native species, thus creating a huge problem and disrupting the balance in our ecosystems.

Plants are not the only invasive species. The European Starling and House Sparrow compete for cavity-nesting songbird sites, often displacing or even aggressively killing native species. Even the beautiful Mute Swans are an invasive, introduced species. They can be aggressive to native wildlife, domestic pets, and people.

In the United States alone, about 2 million acres of land are taken over every year by invasives. The United States spends about \$138 billion in environmental damage and control of invasive species. Almost half of all native species listed as endangered or threatened is a result (to some degree) of invasive species.

Please remember, only plant native or non-invasives, and properly remove as many invasive species as you can from your property.

For a list of Indiana invasive species and native alternatives, please visit **The Indiana Native Plant Society** at indiananativeplants.org

You can also join us in the removal of invasive species at one of our upcoming **Volunteer Work Days**.

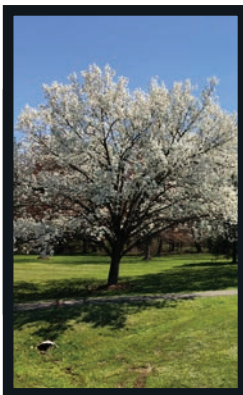
For more information, visit: elkhartcountyparks.org/about/how-to-help/volunteer



BY ANDY LANGDON
INTERPRETIVE NATURALIST

ALIENS IN INDIANA

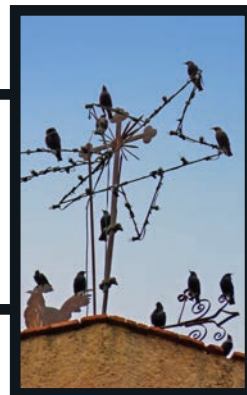
THIS LARGE PATCH OF MUSK THISTLE AT OX BOW WAS RECENTLY REMOVED.



BRADFORD PEAR



GARLIC MUSTARD



EUROPEAN STARLING

MEET VISITOR RON GEYER

By Krista Daniels, Interpretive Naturalist

A chat with Ron about his daily hikes at Ox Bow County Park.

Q: How long have you been visiting Ox Bow?

A: I've been walking at the park for 30 years, but pretty much daily for the past 20 years, since my retirement.

Q: Do you have a favorite place in the park?

A: Everywhere is my favorite! I enjoy hiking from one end to the other. Each trail is different.

Q: What do you see every time you go for a hike?

A: I always see deer. I have not seen an adult buck, but I have seen many young ones over the years. Occasionally I see an owl or a large turtle, which are both pretty exciting.



PHOTO: RON GEYER AND HIS HIKING PARTNERS (KIANA & PAXTON) IN OX BOW COUNTY PARK

Q: How far do you typically hike at Ox Bow each day?

A: Depending on the weather and mosquitos, my hikes are from 1–2.5 miles long.

Q: What is one thing you'd like to see improved in the park?

A: An updated, improved canoe launch is what I'd like to see. I kayak with friends, and we use this launch quite a bit on our trips from Rogers Park in Goshen to Studebaker Park in Elkhart.

Q: Who are your hiking partners?

A: My dogs, Kiana and Paxson. They love all the wildlife to watch and smell. They get excited for their visits and the dog biscuits from the gate attendants.

BOOT LAKE NATURE PRESERVE RECEIVES REGIONAL AWARD

Earlier this year, the Elkhart County Parks accepted an honor from the Great Lakes Park Training Institute (GLPTI) which is hosted by the Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands and the Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Studies at Indiana University. The department received a *Park, Facility, & Program Award* for the major transformation and improvements of the 300-acre Boot Lake Nature Preserve.

The preserve has a long history of public use, but a short history with the Elkhart County Parks. The preserve was transferred from the City of Elkhart's Public Works and Utilities department to the Elkhart County Parks and Recreation Board in the fall of 2017, when it no longer had EnviroCorps members, staff, and resources to care for the site.

Many worked together to achieve the goal of the transfer. Donations from private citizens and the Community Foundation of Elkhart County supported the major improvements needed. Safety and security were one of the first measures implemented at the nature preserve with regular open hours and staff on-site daily. Staff replaced the wetland boardwalk, repaired kiosks, created wayfinding signage, reconstructed an accessible trail, and built a restroom. Volunteers assisted staff by

expanding their efforts from prairie burns to graffiti removal and repairing amenities. Interpretive naturalist staff also implemented public programs offering everything from bird hikes to prairie walks.

The Elkhart County Parks also continued the relationship with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources to help manage the land for rare species such as the state-endangered Blanding's Turtle, Henslow's Sparrow, and Pipewort plant. A brochure was created to increase awareness about the site's history, walking trails, and rare plants and animals the nature preserve protects. In recent years, Boot Lake became a part of the Indiana Audubon Society's statewide Birding Trail program.

Boot Lake Nature Preserve is the third park in the system to receive this honor. DeFries Gardens and Cobus Creek County Park are past recipients of the *Park, Facility, and Program Award*, as well. Boot Lake is located at the end of Williams Lane, a quarter-mile east of CR 3, north of CR 5. For current hours, a trail map, and more information visit elkhartcountyparks.org or call 574-535-6458.

— Boot Lake — PRAIRIE

Boot Lake Nature Preserve has a wide range habitats including wetland, forest, and prairie. Each kind is distinguished by a variety of factors, one of which is the abundance of plant species. Below are facts specific to Boot Lake's prairies and the plants found within.

IN ALL TALLGRASS PRAIRIES,
THERE ARE 4 MAJOR GRASSES



**INDIAN
GRASS**



**LITTLE
BLUESTEM**



**BIG
BLUESTEM**



**SWITCH
GRASS**



STIFF GOLDENROD

Topped with golden-yellow blooms, this species differs from other goldenrods in that it has a tall, stiff stem.



BUR OAK

Bur oaks are the dominant tree species found in Boot Lake's prairies. To tell it apart from others in the oak family, note its deeply-lobed leaves, and large acorns with fuzzy caps resembling straw hats.



WHITE WILD INDIGO

White wild indigo blooms in early spring. It's hard to miss with its tall stalk of white pea-like flowers. By summer, its fruit appears as large oval seed pods making it just as easy to identify.



SILPHIUM PLANTS

Some of the tallest flowering plants of Boot Lake belong to the genus *Silphium*. These sunflower-like plants can grow to 8 feet tall and have large showy yellow flowers.



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



"VERY KIND AND
AWESOME
DEMONSTRATION.
THANKS FOR THE
FRESH COOKIE."

- THE GARRETTS,
PLAINWELL, MI

"LOVELY—
HOT FRESH
CORNBREAD."

- THE ANDERSONS,
FREELAND, MI

"FOUND ON OUR
SUNDAY DRIVE."

- THE WIEGARTS,
CHURCHVILLE, IA

"BEAUTIFUL DAY
TO ENJOY THE MILL."

- GENTIT FAMILY,
SHERWOOD, OH

"YOUNG MAN DID
AN **EXCELLENT JOB**
EXPLAINING
AND ANSWERING
QUESTIONS."

- THE STINSONS,
TIPTON, IN

"MY WIFE'S UNCLAS
RAN THE MILL."

- CECIL Y.,
MIDDLEBURY, IN

"BEAUTIFUL PIECE OF
DETAILED HISTORY.
GREAT SERVICE!"

- THE JOYCES,
MIDDLEBURY, IN

"I GREW UP HERE,
LOVE TO VISIT."

- KIDD FAMILY,
DEL RIO, TX

from the **GUEST**
BOOK

WE LOVE OUR MILL VISITORS AND WANTED TO SHARE
JUST A HANDFUL OF THEIR WONDERFUL WORDS...

"LOVE THE **OLD**
RECIPE BOOKS."

- TEMPERO FAMILY,
KONA, HI

"LOVE THE **DAHLIAS.**"

- HINEN FAMILY,
COLUMBIA CITY, IN

"BEAUTIFUL
& IMPRESSIVE."

- THE KRUEGER FAMILY,
ALBUQUERQUE, NM

"WE LOVE STOPPING
HERE FOR OUR
PICNIC."

- DENISE A.,
TAMPA, FL

"AMAZING THAT
{180+} **YEARS** LATER,
IT'S STILL OPERATIONAL
AND A FAVORITE PLACE
TO VISIT. THANK YOU."

- THE DILLINGERS
AVON, IL

"COOL AND
GRISTY!"

- DAN H.,
ELKHART, IN

"LOVE IT!
MEMORIES OF MY
CHILDHOOD."

- CHRISTINA G.,
PORT CHARLOTTE, FL

"EDUCATIONAL! SO FUN!
LOVE THE CRAFTSMANSHIP."

- THE SEXTON FAMILY,
VIOLA, AR

"ONCE IN A
LIFETIME
EXPERIENCE."

- JOY J.,
STEPHENVILLE, TX

"GREAT
RESTORATION
AND GUIDES."

- JIM C.,
KALAMAZOO, MI

"BEAUTIFUL AND
GOT TO SHOW MY KIDS
A **PART OF MY**
CHILDHOOD"

- THE BEANT FAMILY,
CASTALIA, OH

"GREAT
HISTORIC
SITE."

- BRENDA R.,
GOSHEN, IN

"FIRST TIME
HERE {SINCE}
42 YEARS AGO."

- THE BROWN FAMILY,
GRANDVILLE, MI

"FANTASTIC!
COURTNEY DID
A WONDERFUL
JOB EXPLAINING
EVERYTHING!"

- THE KNOECHELS,
FT. MYERS, FL

"THE KIDS
LOVED IT."

- GROWING KIDS
LEARNING CENTER,
ELKHART, IN



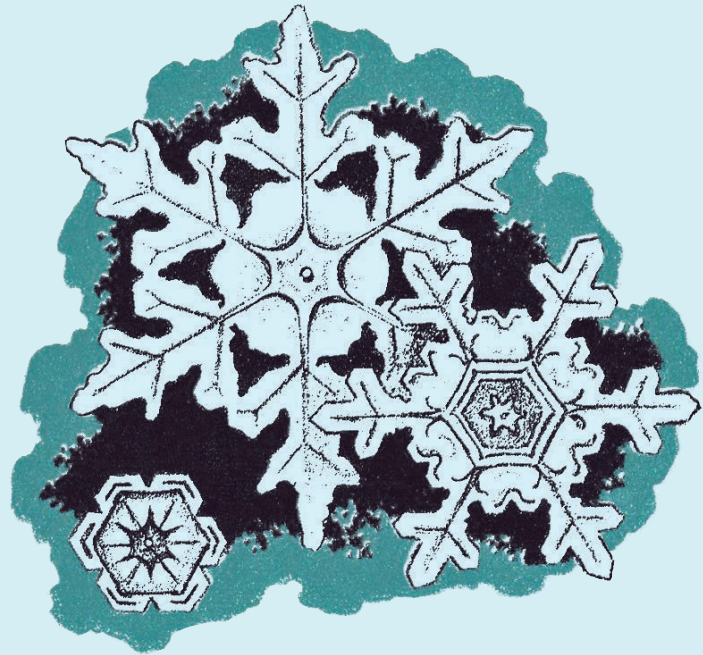
Nature's Calendar

FALL



- After multiple hard freezes, large **hornet nests** may be safely removed from tree branches or eaves of buildings, if desired.
- In the forest, look for short trees with clusters of tasty fruit from the **Pawpaw**. The fruit is often referred to as the "Indiana Banana" and ripens in the very early fall.
- **Sandhill Cranes** begin to congregate in preparation for their migration south. Many can be seen and heard in the fall at Boot Lake Nature Preserve.
- Due to seasonal changes in daylight length and temperature, tree leaves stop their food-making, photosynthesis process. As the chlorophyll breaks down, the green color disappears, and the **yellow to orange colors** become visible, giving leaves their fall splendor.

- Many **Eastern Bluebirds** actually stay all winter in northern Indiana and are often seen in groups under the cover of trees and shrubs or at backyard bird feeders (if mealworms are on the menu).
- Become a citizen scientist and watch for birds at our annual **Christmas Bird Count** on Saturday, January 1, 2022. Feeder and field observers are needed to help make every bird count during this one-day survey. Stay tuned for details at elkhartcountyparks.org
- When it snows, catch a **snowflake** on a piece of black paper and look for the intricate six-sided crystal structure. During colder days, you might just see a plate or needle-shaped flake.
- While many animals in Elkhart County go through a partial **hibernation** (state of rest) in winter, there are a select few who are true hibernators. Some of these champion nappers include the groundhog, bat, frog, and toad.



WINTER

SHARED — WINTER — TRAILS

By Krista Daniels, Interpretive Naturalist

From hiking to cross-country skiing, the snow provides a beautiful backdrop for fun activities in your Elkhart County Parks. As a way to encourage outdoor winter activity, we groom (or prep) many trails for your use when there is at least 6 inches of packable snow on the ground. These groomed trails are what we call shared winter trails, meaning they are open and available to all winter trail users: skiers, hikers, dog walkers, etc... A successful shared winter trail also requires more care and attention by the user, so we've created a list of shared winter trail etiquette to make sure we are all on the same page and making the most of our winter weather:

- Follow posted signs and rules
- Be courteous and kind to other trail users
- Hikers & dog walkers walk to the side of the set ski track (do not walk on the track)
- Slower skiers yield to faster skiers
- Downhill skiers have the right of way
- Repair trail damage from falls
- Dog walkers pick up after your dog

We hope you join us this winter to enjoy the beauty and opportunity these shared winter trails can provide. Here are a few to try out:



BONNEYVILLE MILL — COUNTY PARK —

If looking for a little adventure is on your agenda, you will definitely enjoy the rolling hills of Bonneyville. Travel through open meadows or under the cover of thick forests...there's a little bit of everything for the adventure-seeker here.

TRAIL HEADS: Briar Patch Shelter & Main Parking Lot

LENGTH: Trails ranging from 0.5 mile – 3 miles



OX BOW — COUNTY PARK —

If looking for a well-traveled loop, Ox Bow is the place for you. This trail is a one-way (follow the arrows) trip through forest, meadow, wetland, and open field. Ox Bow's shared trail is busier than most, so be prepared to see others out and about.

TRAIL HEAD: Fisherman's Camp Shelter

LENGTH: 2 mile loop



BOOT LAKE — NATURE PRESERVE —

If you are hoping for some fresh air and open skies, the trails at Boot Lake are not to be missed. Trails will take you along the border and through the amazing and expansive prairie, a rare treasure in Elkhart County.

TRAIL HEAD: Main parking lot

LENGTH: Trails ranging from 2-3 miles

PLAN AHEAD



These are the conditions when we groom (or prep) the trails...

1. When snow on the ground is packable and at least 6 inches deep (in the woods, too)
2. When the snow is forecast to last more than overnight
3. Right after the snowfall event...we do not continually groom, we just prep it for your use

Follow our Facebook page for grooming updates and announcements.



IMN PARTNERSHIP

BY JENNA WAIT, ELKHART COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

One of the best things about working for Elkhart County is the partnerships that are built between organizations, people, and departments. Partnerships like these create a stronger sense of community within Elkhart County. The Elkhart County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) and the Elkhart County Parks partner each year to host the annual Indiana Master Naturalist (IMN) course.

The IMN course is eight classes over eight weeks that serve as an introductory course on Indiana's natural resources. Some of the topics covered are zoology, botany, water, geology, and natural resources. Each class has a different speaker from the local community who

speaks about the chosen topic. This course is designed to be hands-on and interactive, so that students may feel a deeper connection with what they are learning. To create an even deeper connection, each class is held at a different county park so that students can see all the natural ecosystems that we protect.

Although it is too late to take this year's class, there is always next year.

If you would like to be notified on when the next Indiana Master Naturalist course will be, please email jwait@elkhartcounty.com

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT:

RITA PARSONS

BY MICHELLE NASH, MUSEUM CURATOR



Rita answered the call in May of 2017 when the museum was looking for help with a massive photograph digitization project. She has been a powerhouse in this effort, logging over eight hundred hours and bringing the meticulous organizational skills and attention to detail needed to digitize the museum's 8000+ historic images.

"I have really enjoyed seeing all of the Museum's photos, helping to organize them and put them into a digital format. These pictures really do let us look beyond ourselves, to imagine ourselves in the place of the people who lived in earlier times."

This project just reached a major milestone as we move into making the digitized images available online.

"I am very excited that the photos are now becoming accessible to everyone through the Indiana Memory project. It took us all several years of work to reach this goal, and it was worth the effort. I hope everyone takes advantage of the chance to browse through Elkhart County's past."

We couldn't have done it without you, Rita!



If you would like to help grow Cathy's gift and contribute to the Elkhart County Parks Legacy Fund, please reach out to **the Community Foundation**

☎ 574-295-8761

or visit

🌱 inspiringgood.org/GiveOnline

and select "Elkhart County Parks Legacy" under "Choose a Fund"

ELKHART COUNTY PARKS

LEGACY FUND

PLANTING A SEED



FOR OUR FUTURE

The Elkhart County Parks Legacy Fund was established with an estate gift of the late Catherine Metzger who loved the natural world. She was a teacher, co-worker and friend to many. Her generosity planted the seed of an Elkhart County Parks Legacy Fund at the Community Foundation of Elkhart County. This endowed fund will nurture Elkhart County Park projects and programs for decades to come. We invite you to help plant more seeds to help us grow!



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

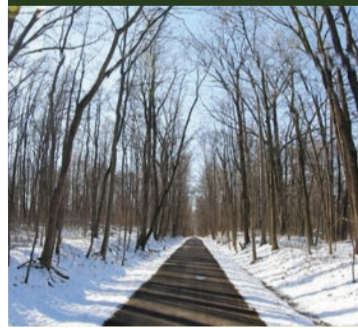


A unique blend of regional history and natural beauty can be found at Bonneyville Mill County Park. Gently rolling hills, woodlands, marshes, and open meadows form a perfect background for picturesque Bonneyville Mill.



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 Shippshewana.



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).



Bonneyville Mill

53373 C.R. 131 • Bristol, IN



Mill Hours (open May–Oct)
Wed–Sun • 10 a.m.–5 p.m.
Bonneyville is the oldest continually operating grist mill in Indiana, producing quality flour for more than 180 years. Interpretive staff are on duty to lead visitors through the “daily grind.” While you are there, purchase freshly ground flour for a taste of local history.



Elkhart County Historical Museum

304 W. Vistula St. • Bristol, IN



Museum Hours (closed Sun–Mon)
Tues–Sat • 9 a.m.–5 p.m.
The Museum fosters appreciation and preservation of local history and culture through exhibits, educational programs, and an accessible library and archives. Come hear the stories of the many people, places, and events that make up the history of Elkhart County.



LEGEND

THINGS TO DO



BIKING



CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING



FISHING



KAYAK / CANOEING

SITE AMENITIES



PLAYGROUND



RESTROOM



SHELTER



ACCESSIBLE

Boot Lake Nature Preserve

51430 County Road 3
Elkhart IN, 46514

Bonneyville Mill County Park

53373 County Road 131
Bristol, IN 46507

Cobus Creek County Park

30680 County Road 8
Elkhart, IN 46561

DeFries Gardens

17477 County Road 46
New Paris IN, 46553

Ox Bow County Park

23033 County Road 45
Goshen IN, 46528

Pumpkinvine Nature Trail

1302 E. Lincoln Ave
Goshen IN, 46526

River Preserve County Park

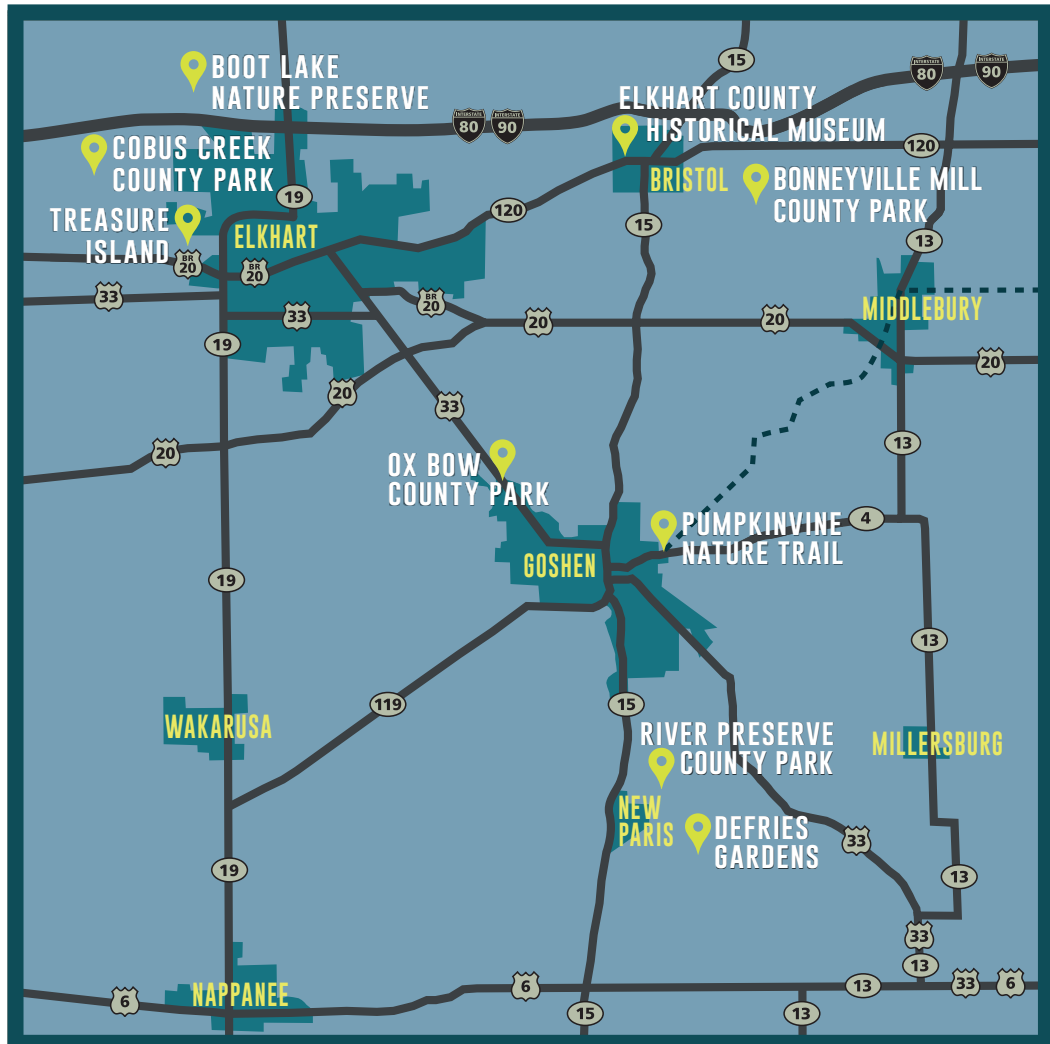
67380 County Road 29
New Paris, IN 46553

Treasure Island

56226 Armour Ave.
Elkhart, IN 46516

Elkhart County Historical Museum

304 West Vistula Street
Bristol, IN 46507





FRIENDS OF THE
ELKHART COUNTY PARKS

📍 211 W. LINCOLN AVE,
GOSHEN, IN 46526-3280

✉️ PARKSINFO@ELKHARTCOUNTY.COM

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