

ELKHART COUNTY PARKS

SPRING / SUMMER '24

# COMPASS

GUIDE



**RIVER  
PRESERVE**

**BOOT  
LAKE**

**OX  
BOW**

**COBUS  
CREEK**

**CORSON  
RIVERWOODS**

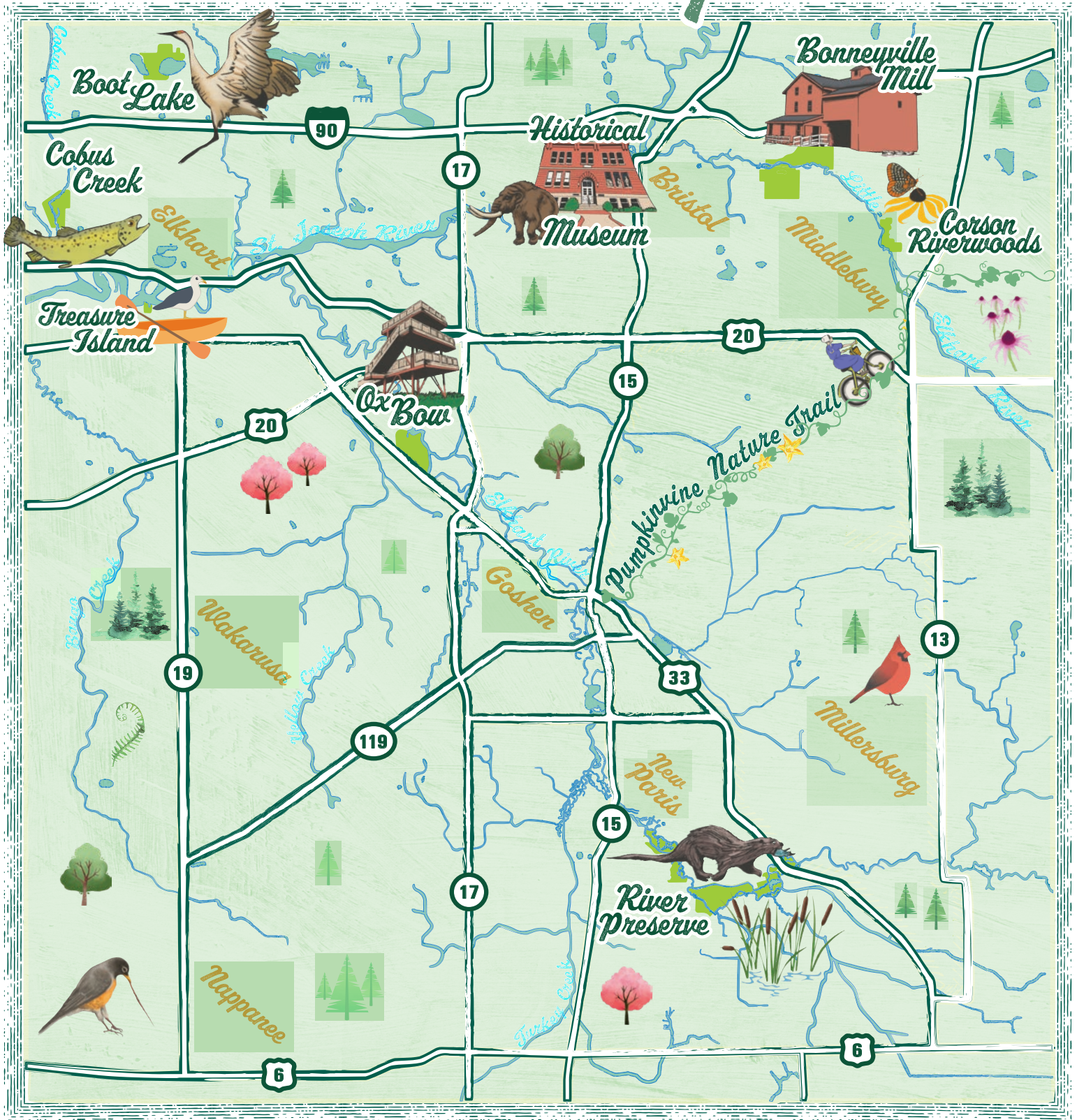
**BONNEYVILLE  
MILL**

**PUMPKINVINE  
NATURE TRAIL**

**HISTORICAL  
MUSEUM**



# EXPLORE THE *Elkhart County Parks*







## Ox Bow

23033 C.R. 45 • GOSHEN, IN

ACRES: 200



## Bonneyville Mill

53373 C.R. 131 • BRISTOL, IN

ACRES: 222



## River Preserve

17477 C.R. 46 • NEW PARIS, IN

ACRES: 358



## Boot Lake

51430 C.R. 3 • ELKHART, IN

ACRES: 300



## Cobus Creek

30680 C.R. 8 • ELKHART, IN

ACRES: 84



## Pumpkinvine Nature Trail

COUNTY-WIDE • SEE WEBSITE FOR ACCESS POINTS

MILES: 16.5



## Elkhart County Historical Museum

304 W. VISTULA ST. • BRISTOL, IN

🕒 TUES-SAT • 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.



## Treasure Island

56226 ARMOUR AVE. • ELKHART, IN

ACRES: 4



## Corson Riverwoods

12773 C.R. 12 • MIDDLEBURY, IN

ACRES: 82



PLAN  
YOUR  
VISIT

## 🕒 HOURS

[ SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE ]

NOTE: BOOT LAKE NATURE PRESERVE CLOSSES 1 HR BEFORE ALL OTHER PARKS

**JAN / FEB / NOV / DEC**

9 a.m. – 6 p.m.

**MAR / OCT**

9 a.m. – 7 p.m.

**APR / SEP**

9 a.m. – 8 p.m.

**MAY / JUN / JUL / AUG**

9 a.m. – 9 p.m.



## OFFICE

[ CLOSED WEEKENDS + COUNTY HOLIDAYS ]



**MON-FRI**

8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.



**LOCATION**

211 W. Lincoln Avenue  
Goshen, IN 46526-3280



**PHONE**

574-535-6458



## TRAIL INFO

ELKHART  
COUNTY  
PARKS  
.ORG





# Our Mission

INSPIRING CONNECTIONS with CULTURE and NATURE

## 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](http://elkhartcountyparks.org)

**EMAIL** / [parksinfo@elkhartcounty.com](mailto:parksinfo@elkhartcounty.com)

**DIRECTOR** / Ronda DeCaire

**DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF PARK**

**OPERATIONS** / Bernard J. Cunningham IV

**DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF INTERPRETIVE SERVICES** / Donny Aleo

## ELKHART COUNTY PARK BOARD

**PRESIDENT** / Klaus Mueller

**VICE PRESIDENT** / Karin Frey

**SECRETARY** / Karen Mackowiak

**MEMBERS** / Robert Kelly, Larry Andrews, John Hardy, & Will Wilson

## ELKHART COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS

**DISTRICT 1** / Douglas S. Graham

**DISTRICT 2** / Randall D. Yohn

**DISTRICT 3** / Darryl J. Riegsecker

**DISTRICT 4** / David L. Hess

**AT LARGE** / Adam Bujalski

**AT LARGE** / Thomas Stump

**AT LARGE** / Steven Clark

## ELKHART COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**PRESIDENT** / Brad Rogers

**VICE PRESIDENT** / Suzie Weirick

**MEMBER** / Bob Barnes

## FRIENDS OF THE ELKHART COUNTY PARKS

**MEMBERS** / Judy Ferrell, Larry Ford, Patricia Frank, Carol Rayl

## ELKHART COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**PRESIDENT** / Wayne Stubbs


**VICE PRESIDENT** / Dan Boecher

**TREASURER** / John Thompson

**SECRETARY** / Rita Parsons-Rice



Worth Sharing

 **luvanurse443**  
Bonneyville Mill

Instagrammer luvanurse443 snapped this delightful Dahlia at the garden in front of the mill. ❤️

#ELKHARTCOUNTYPARKS

## CONNECT WITH US!

[elkhartcountyparks.org](http://elkhartcountyparks.org)

  @elkhartcountyparks

## PRODUCTION TEAM

**EDITORS** / Donny Aleo, Annie Aguirre, Krista Daniels, Marlene Lantzer, Julie Parke

**ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTORS** / Ronda DeCaire, Courtney Franke, Sarah Gothe, Andy Langdon

**CREATIVE DESIGN** / Annie Aguirre

THE COMPASS NEWSLETTER IS A BIENNIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ELKHART COUNTY PARKS.



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ON THE COVER / BONNEYVILLE / PHOTO BY JOSHUA PETRILLO



Greetings  
from the  
**ELKHART COUNTY  
PARKS**



Warm months remind me that a new season of insects are about to emerge. Although most people feel they could live without flies, ticks, and mosquitoes, all insects are the base of the food chain and life on earth. Without them, certain parts of our ecosystem would collapse and pollination of many crops worldwide would be disrupted.

For many of us who have been fascinated by insects our entire lives, we notice each summer seems to bring fewer butterflies and native bees. It is true. Insect populations have been in decline over the past 50 years. At the Elkhart County Parks, we are doing our best to protect and create natural areas for native pollinators. Preserving land, removing invasive species, planting native trees, and sowing meadows are a few of the things we have been working on. The new Corson Riverwoods County Park is another great example as former cornfield is being transformed into a field of native prairie and more than 7,000 tree seedlings have been planted.

We hope the next time you visit an Elkhart County Park you are able to take time to notice the little six-legged creatures around you and appreciate their important role in a healthy ecosystem.

Sincerely, *Ronda*  
RONDA DECAIRE  
DIRECTOR OF PARKS

Post  
**5 Year  
Master Plan**



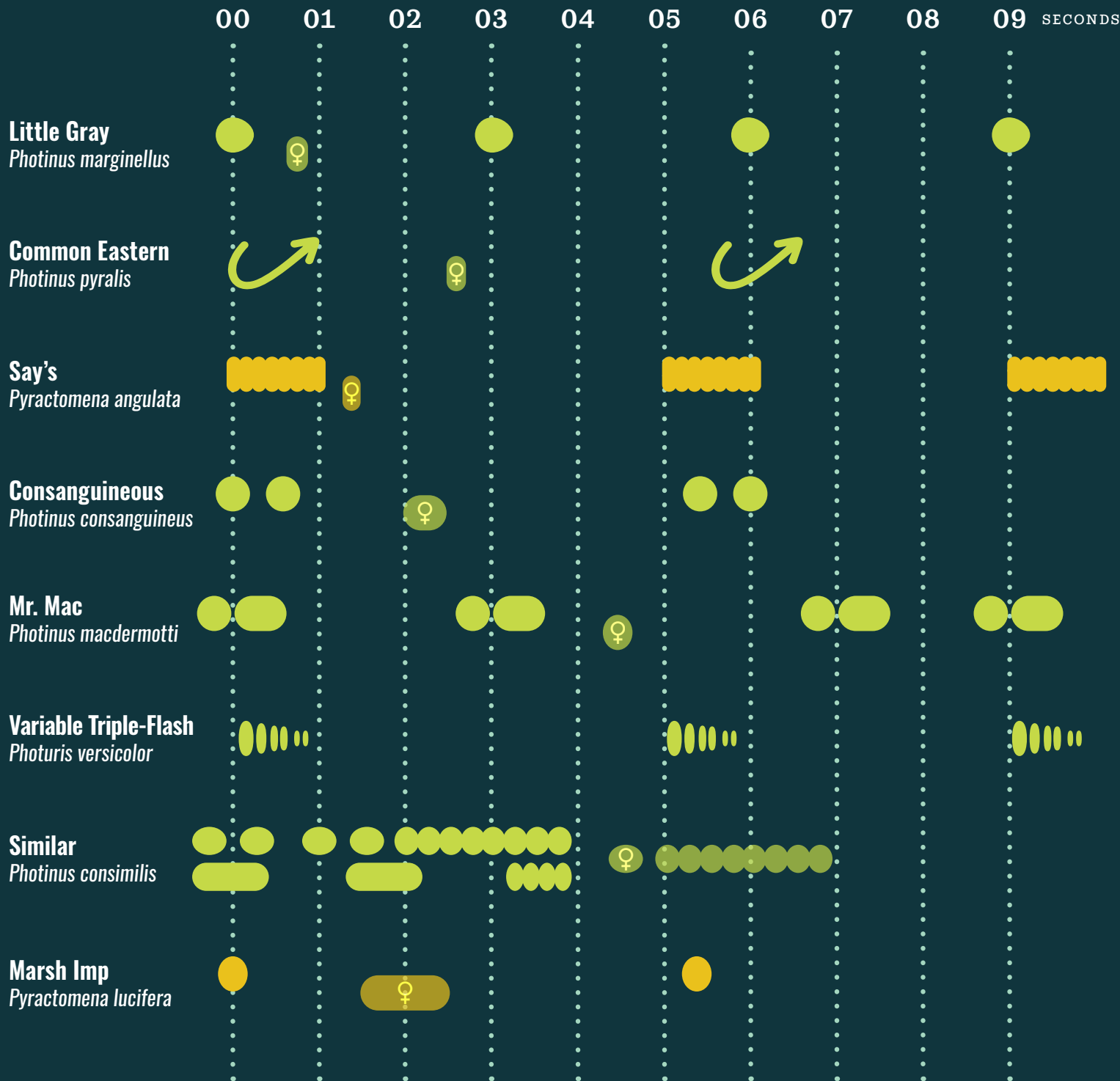
The Elkhart County Park and Recreation Board wishes to thank the community for their participation in the creation of the 2024-2028 Elkhart County Parks Five Year Master Plan. More than 500 residents took the Community Input Survey and dozens more attended the public meetings and gave input. Reviewing and updating the Master Plan is always an important chapter in developing the park system for the future.

The final plan is a working document for the staff and park board to use as a guide for developing projects and programs as funding opportunities become available.

You can read the current Master Plan on our website at [elkhartcountyparks.org](http://elkhartcountyparks.org)



# FLASH PATTERNS OF INDIANA FIREFLIES



♀ SYMBOL REPRESENTS FEMALE RESPONSE



# APRIL

sun

mon

tue

wed

thu

fri

sat

6

**NATURE NOTEBOOKS**

1

**WILDFLOWER BIOBLITZ KICKOFF**

2

3

**WED. BIRD WALK: MINDFUL BIRDING**

4

**CHAIR YOGA**

5

**BOOKS & BOOTS**

7

**GEOLOGISTS DAY**  
SCAN THE SHORES OF THE ELKHART RIVER FOR COOL ROCKS AND FOSSILS

8

**TOTAL ECLIPSE**

**PARK BOARD MEETING**

9

**NATURE NUTS: THE SUN**

10

**NATURE NUTS: THE SUN**

11

**CHAIR YOGA**

12

**WOODEN DOG PLANTER**

**SHAKEDOWN HIKE**

13

**FOREST BATHING**

14

**NATIONAL GARDENING DAY**  
TIME TO ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES AND START DIGGING! GARDEN SEASON HAS ARRIVED

15

**TRAIL TREKKERS: INVASIVE SP.**

16

**HIKING CLUB**

17

**BAT APPRECIATION DAY**  
LET'S GIVE THESE MOSQUITO-EATERS A WING OF APPLAUSE.

18

**CHAIR YOGA**

**MUSEUM SPEAKER**

**POW! WILD EDIBLES**

19

**LYRID METEOR SHOWER**  
[ RUNS APR 16-22 ]  
STARGAZE EARLY THIS WEEK BEFORE THE BRIGHT FULL MOON LIGHT INTERFERES

20

**VOLUNTEER DAY**

21

**BIRD LANGUAGE LESSONS**

22

**EARTH DAY**  
"NATURE IS NOT A PLACE TO VISIT. IT IS HOME."  
- GARY SNYDER

23

**FULL MOON**  
PINK MOON - NAMED IN HONOR OF THE BRIGHT PINK WILDFLOWERS THAT COLOR OUR WOODS

24

**FREE FISHING DAY**  
[ RUNS JUN 1-2 ]  
CHECK OUT THE DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES WEBSITE TO LEARN MORE

25

**CHAIR YOGA**

**CREATURES OF THE NIGHT: AMPHIBIANS**

26

**ARBOR DAY**  
CONSIDER PLANTING A NATIVE TREE IN YOUR YARD

27

**PANCAKE BREAKFAST**

**WILDFLOWER WALK**

**TROUT DAY**

28

29

**ASK A CURATOR**

30

**ASK A CURATOR**



**REGISTER ONLINE**





# MAY

sun

mon

tue

wed

thu

fri

sat



REGISTER  
ONLINE



**5**  
**WILD EDIBLES**

**6**  
**ETA AQUARIDS METEOR SHOWER**  
[ PEAKS MAY 5<sup>TH</sup> THRU TONIGHT ]  
WAKE BEFORE DAWN TO SEE PEAK ACTIVITY

**7**  
**NATURE NUTS: ANIMAL BABIES**

**8**  
**NATURE NUTS: ANIMAL BABIES**

**9**  
**BAINTERTOWN HISTORY HIKE**

**10**

**11**  
**GUIDED TOUR**  
  
**Dogzilla**

**12**  
**MOTHER'S DAY**  
LET'S HEAR IT FOR THOSE HARD-WORKING MOMS!

**13**  
**PARK BOARD MEETING**

**14**  
**HERBALISM**

**15**  
**MUSHROOM SEASON BEGINS**  
AS TEMPERATURES RISE, SCAN THE FOREST FLOORS FOR DELICIOUS MOREL MUSHROOMS

**16**  
**CHAIR YOGA**  
**OPEN HOUSE**  
**P.O.W.I. CAMPING**

**17**  
**MAPLEHEART BIKE HIKE**

**18**  
**GUIDED TOUR**  
**FEATURE GRAND DAY**  
**HOOSIER RIVERWATCH**

**19**  
**WORLD BAKING DAY**  
STOCK UP ON FRESHLY-GROUND FLOUR MADE AT BONNEVILLE MILL

**20**  
**TRAIL TREKKERS: WILD EDIBLES**

**21**  
**HIKING CLUB**

**22**  
**INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIODIVERSITY**  
DISCOVER LOCAL SPECIES WITH THE INATURALIST APP

**23**  
**CHAIR YOGA**

**24**  
**COBUS FAMILY CAMPOUT**

**25**  
**GUIDED TOUR**  
**VOLUNTEER DAY**

**26**

**27**  
**MEMORIAL DAY**

**28**

**29**  
**WORLD OTTER DAY**  
TAKE AN EARLY MORNING OR EVENING PADDLE ALONG THE ELKHART RIVER FOR A CHANCE TO SEE ONE

**30**  
**CHAIR YOGA**  
**YOGA IN THE PARK**  
**CREATURES OF THE NIGHT**  
**MARSH MAMMALS**

**31**

**31**

**1**  
**WBW: MIGRATION MANIA**  
**ASKA CURATOR**

**2**  
**CHAIR YOGA**  
**ASKA CURATOR**

**3**  
**BOOKS & BOOTS**  
**ASKA CURATOR**

**4**  
**VOLUNTEER DAY**  
**BACK-PACKING TRIP**  
**PLANT EXCHANGE**  
**GUIDED TOUR**



# JUNE

sun

mon

tue

wed

thu

fri

sat



**REGISTER  
ONLINE**

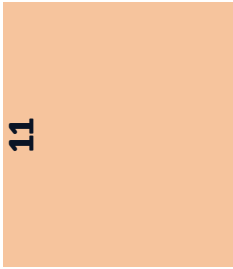


**2**  
**FREE FISHING DAY**  
[ RUNS JUN 1-2 ]  
CHECK OUT THE  
DEPT. OF NATURAL  
RESOURCES WEBSITE  
TO LEARN MORE

**3**  
**WORLD BICYCLE DAY**  
TAKE A RIDE  
THROUGH THE SCENIC  
COUNTRYSIDE ON THE  
25-MILE PUMPKINVINE  
NATURE TRAIL



**9**  
**NATIONAL CAMPING MONTH**  
BOOK THOSE  
CAMPSITES EARLY  
BEFORE THEY'RE  
SNATCHED UP FOR  
THE SUMMER!



**12**  
**TURTLES ACTIVE LAYING EGGS**  
IF HELPING A TURTLE  
CROSS THE ROAD,  
ALWAYS MAKE SURE  
TO MOVE IT THE  
SAME DIRECTION IT'S  
TRYING TO GO!



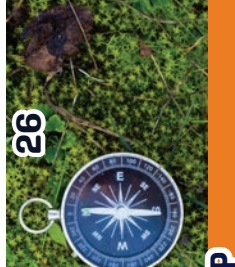
**16**  
**FATHER'S DAY**  
LET'S HEAR IT  
FOR THOSE HARD-  
WORKING DADS!



**19**  
**JUNETEENTH**



**22**  
**INTERNATIONAL RAGWEED DAY**  
BRACE YOURSELVES...  
HAY FEVER SEASON  
IS COMING



**28**

**29**  
**NATIONAL CAMERA DAY**  
SAY "CHEESE"!





# JULY

sun ..... mon ..... tue ..... wed ..... thu ..... fri ..... sat

7

**1**  
**FIREFLIES BEGIN TO EMERGE**  
 TAKE A NIGHTTIME STROLL IN MEADOWS AND WOODS TO CATCH THE LIGHT SHOW



**4**  
**INDEPENDENCE DAY**  
 (1834) INDIANA'S 1ST RAILROAD



14



**9**  
**BLUEBERRIES READY FOR PICKING**  
 VISIT BOGS OR SANDY WOODLAND MEADOWS FOR A TASTE OF SUMMER

**10**



15



**17**  
**PEAK MUSHROOM SEASON**  
 AFTER RAINY DAYS, SEARCH FOR THE BRIGHT ORANGE CHICKEN OF THE WOODS MUSHROOMS



**21**  
**FULL MOON**  
 BUCK MOON - SEARCH THE FOREST FLOORS FOR ANTLERS SHED BY BUCKS (MALE DEER)

**22**  
**MERCURY AT GREATEST ELONGATION**  
 SCAN FOR MERCURY LOW ON THE HORIZON BEFORE SUNRISE OR RIGHT AFTER SUNSET

**23**  
**NATIONAL SPROUT DAY**  
 TRY EATING SOME FRESH GREENS WITH YOUR MEAL TODAY - THEY'LL GROW ON YOU

**24**



**26**  
**ELKHART COUNTY 4-H FAIR**  
 [ RUNS JUL 19-27 ]  
 COME SAY HI AT OUR FAIR BOOTH!



**28**  
**WORLD NATURE CONSERVATION DAY**  
 "PRESERVE AND CHERISH THE PALE BLUE DOT, THE ONLY HOME WE'VE EVER KNOWN"  
 - CARL SAGAN

**29**

**30**

**31**  
**PRAIRIES IN FULL BLOOM**  
 VISIT BOOT LAKE NATURE PRESERVE TO SEE COLORFUL WILDFLOWERS AND BUTTERFLIES



**26**  
**ELKHART COUNTY 4-H FAIR**  
 [ RUNS JUL 19-27 ]  
 COME SAY HI AT OUR FAIR BOOTH!



**REGISTER ONLINE**





# AUGUST

sun

mon

tue


wed

thu

fri

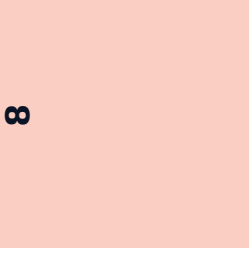
sat

**REGISTER ONLINE**



**4** **N E W**  
**M O O N**  
[ BEGINS 7:13 A.M. ]  
SCAN THE NIGHT SKIES  
FOR DEEP SKY OBJECTS, LIKE  
STAR CLUSTERS, GALAXIES,  
AND NEBULAE, NORMALLY  
HIDDEN BY MOONLIGHT

**5**  
1ST GOVERNOR OF  
INDIANA (1816)  
JONATHAN JENNINGS,  
INDIANA'S FIRST  
GOVERNOR IS ELECTED  
TO OFFICE



**11**



**14**  
WORLD  
LIZARD DAY  
VISIT THE LAKEFRONT,  
KANKAKEE SANDS, OR  
NATURE AREAS IN THE  
SOUTHERNMOST PART  
OF THE STATE FOR A  
CHANCE TO SEE ONE



**17**

**18**



**21**  
PEAK ACTIVITY  
FOR SINGING  
INSECTS  
LEARN HOW TO PICK  
OUT THESE EVENING  
SERENADERS AT  
SONGSOFINSECTS.COM



**25**  
NATIONAL  
PARK SERVICE  
FOUNDERS DAY  
CELEBRATING 108 YEARS!  
WHAT NATIONAL PARKS  
DO YOU MOST WANT  
TO VISIT?

**26**

**27**  
PEAK MOTH  
ACTIVITY  
SCAN YOUR PORCH AND  
WINDOWS AT NIGHT  
FOR THESE BEAUTIFUL,  
DELICATE CREATURES

**28**



**31**



# SEPTEMBER

*sun*

*mon*

*tue*

*wed*

*thu*

*fri*

*sat*

**1**  
PAW PAWS READY  
TO HARVEST  
GIVE INDIANNA'S BANANA  
TREE A SHAKE. RIPE  
PAW PAW FRUIT WILL  
READILY FALL

**2**

**3** **NEW**  
**MOON**  
[ BEGINS 9:55 P.M. ]  
SCAN THE NIGHT SKIES  
FOR DEEP SKY OBJECTS,  
LIKE STAR CLUSTERS AND  
NEBULAE, NORMALLY  
HIDDEN BY MOONLIGHT

**4**

**WED. BIRD WALK:**  
**FALL FRENZY**

**5**

**CHAIR**  
**YOGA**

**6**

**BOOKS &**  
**BOOTS**

**7**

**CROSSROADS**  
**GUIDED TOUR**

**8**  
**GENE STRATTON-**  
**PORTER DAY**

**9**

**PARK & RECREATION**  
**BOARD MEETING**

**10**

**NATURE**  
**NUTS**  
**BONNEYVILLE**  
**ART SHOW**

**11**

**NATURE NUTS:**  
**CATERPILLARS**

**12**

**CHAIR**  
**YOGA**

**13**

**SUMMER**  
**ASTRONOMY**

**14**

**BONNEYVILLE**  
**BIRD FEST**  
**GUIDED**  
**TOUR**

**15**

**16**  
**TRAIL TREKKERS:**  
**SEED WALK**

**17**

**HIKING**  
**CLUB**

**18**

**FULL**  
**MOON**  
HARVEST MOON  
- NAMED FOR ITS  
ORANGE GLOW AND  
PROXIMITY TO THE  
AUTUMN SOLSTICE

**19**

**CHAIR**  
**YOGA**  
**POW!!**  
**PHOTOGRAPHY**  
**YOGA**  
**IN THE**  
**PARK**

**20**

**PUMPKIN VINE**  
**BIKE HIKE**

**21**

**CROSSROADS**  
**GUIDED TOUR**

**22**

**WORLD**  
**RIVERS DAY**  
GO EXPLORE OUR  
COUNTY'S INCREDIBLE  
WATER TRAILS. VISIT  
NEIWATERTRAILS.COM  
FOR TRIP ROUTES AND  
A MAP OF ACCESS SITES

**23**

**TREELAND**  
**HIKE**

**24**

**TREES BEGIN**  
**TO SHOW FALL**  
**COLORS**  
WATCH FOR THE  
SUBTLE SHIFT OF  
GREENS TO GOLDS IN  
OUR FORESTS

**25**

**CHAIR**  
**YOGA**  
**CREATURES OF THE**  
**NIGHT: SPIDERS**

**27**

**WORLD**  
**TOURISM DAY**  
OH, THE PLACES  
YOU'LL GO!

**28**

**CROSSROADS**  
**GUIDED TOUR**

**29**

**AUTUMNAL**  
**EQUINOX**  
"AUTUMN IS A SECOND  
SPRING WHEN EVERY  
LEAF IS A FLOWER"  
- ALBERT CAMUS

**30**



**REGISTER**  
**ONLINE**







# ASK A NATURALIST ( SKY + WEATHER PHENOMENA )

• BY THE INTERPRETIVE NATURALIST TEAM •

**Q** What is a solar eclipse?

**A** A solar eclipse occurs when the moon passes between the earth and the sun, temporarily blocking the light, either fully or partially. This year, on April 8, we will be very close to witnessing a total eclipse here in Elkhart County. Due to the alignment and our viewing angle, we will only see 98% coverage, however. To see full coverage or totality, you will have to travel further south. Always wear eye protection when viewing an eclipse as damage to your eyes could occur from direct sun viewing.

**Q** I sometimes see two bright lights to the right and left of the sun. What is that?

**A** This phenomenon is called a "sun dog." These bright spots are caused by the refraction of the sun's rays off ice crystals in the atmosphere. It most commonly occurs when the sun is close to the horizon and can be an indicator that rain is on the way. It can appear as a halo or ring around the sun and can form around the moon, if the conditions are just right.

**Q** What exactly are the northern lights? Are we able to see them in Indiana?

**A** The northern lights or aurora borealis are caused by electrically charged particles released by the sun called solar flares. Most of these particles are reflected away from earth by the earth's magnetic field but some

escape into the earth's atmosphere and interact with the gasses there. These interactions create the bright lights we see in the sky. Oxygen gasses light up as green, which is the most common color seen. Nitrogen lights up as blue, red or pink, and neon lights up as orange. If conditions are just right, we do occasionally see the aurora in Indiana, though it is most common nearest to the north and south poles, where the earth's magnetic field is the strongest.

**Q** What is a blue moon? Is it actually blue?

**A** There are two kinds of blue moons – seasonal and monthly. Neither refer to the actual color, but rather their timing and frequency outside the once-a-month format that is typical for the moon cycle. A seasonal blue moon is the fourth full moon that occurs during a season of the year and a monthly blue moon is a second full moon that occurs within a single month. Regardless of the kind, both occur every 2-3 years. Our next blue moon will occur on May 31, 2026.



**HAVE A NATURE QUESTION?**

SHOOT US AN EMAIL AT  
[PARKSINFO@ELKHARTCOUNTY.COM](mailto:PARKSINFO@ELKHARTCOUNTY.COM)



# N A T U R E ' S A R

BY SARAH GOTHE  
INTERPRETIVE NATURALIST

## AIR

As spring temperatures rise, we likely get the urge to bask outdoors. A 45° day might seem warm, but back in autumn, that same temperature may have made you shiver. This magic trick of perspective is called **ACCLIMATION**. Throughout winter, our bodies become accustomed to the cold. A temperature that gives a feeling of warmth in spring, our summer-warmed skin would find chilly.



## FIRE

April 8<sup>th</sup> will be the next opportunity to experience a **SOLAR ECLIPSE**, which happens when the moon passes between the sun and earth, casting a temporary shadow from the light of day. Here in Elkhart County, we will see 98% of the eclipse. For a total eclipse we will have to travel a few counties to the south. It is important to not look at the sun unless wearing certified solar viewing glasses.

## WATER



The Elkhart River is a vital part of our ecosystem. Some of the creatures that live in the river are called **MACROINVERTEBRATES**, and each has a different tolerance to pollution. Try finding a snail shell by the river and hold it in your hand with the tip of the shell pointed away from you and the opening towards you. If the opening is on the right, that snail species is very sensitive to pollution. Their presence tells us the water is healthy.



TROUT LILY

TRILLIUM

JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT

## EARTH

**SPRING EPHEMERALS** are a good challenge to walk slowly and look patiently. Try taking a walk in the woods to find each of these small wonders:

- HARBINGER OF SPRING
- BLOODROOT
- HEPATICA
- TRILLIUM
- TWIN LEAF
- SPRING BEAUTY
- DUTCHMAN'S BREECHES
- JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT
- CUTLEAF
- TOOTHWORT
- MAYAPPLE
- LARGE-FLOWERED BELLWORT
- TROUT LILY
- WILD GINGER



## SPACE

Each summer, earth passes through debris the comet Swift-Tuttle left in our orbital path. **METEORS** light on fire as they enter earth's atmosphere, creating a light display of shooting stars. If you find yourself wishing for a way to celebrate this phenomenon with other people, check out the Perseids Party at Bonneyville Mill County Park on August 9<sup>th</sup>.





# OUTDOOR APPS

The idea of using your phone to enjoy the outdoors may sound like a weird concept, but for many of our park naturalists, a smartphone app can be just as handy as bringing along a compass or pocket field guide. Here are a few of our favorites.

FOR  
BUDDING  
BIRDERS



MERLIN

Merlin is designed to coach birders of every level on the different ways to identify birds. A step-by-step guide walks you through your mystery bird I.D. by size, shape, color, and behavior. The app can also detect a species by photo, or by the sounds your phone mic picks up.

FOR  
NATURE  
FINDERS



SEEK

A field guide for pretty much everything, Seek is fantastic to have on hand while out exploring and getting familiar with the flora and fauna you encounter. The photo I.D. tool is surprisingly accurate and suggests species based on visual field marks and nearby observations.

FOR  
SKY  
WATCHERS



SKYVIEW

This app quickly pinpoints the light sources and I.D.s the closest stars and planets using your phone's camera. The map displays objects within your visual range, making it easy to track down what you're actually seeing in the sky. Once centered onscreen, a caption reveals what object you're looking at, or you can tap it for more info.

BIRDSEYE



Ever wanted to go find a specific bird? This app does just that. Birders can see a list of birds recently seen in their area, along with a map of GPS pins where each was found. Use the "Browse by Location" section to find out what birds have been observed at a specific site and what months they are most frequently found there.

INATURALIST



Seek's big sister, iNaturalist is part field guide, part research network. It uses the same I.D. tools as Seek, but lets you to share your observations with the community. Even if you're not 100% sure on an I.D., fellow iNaturalists will help confirm or make alternate suggestions, so it's a great way to quickly learn new species.

CLOUD-  
A-DAY



A handy guide to better understand all that "weird weather" we've been having. Cloud-a-Day walks you through the different clouds types, how to pick them apart, and what weather is tied to them. Along with cool visuals and info on curious weather phenomena, this app will definitely broaden your view of the skies.



RECIPE

## NO-BAKE ENERGY BITES

[ MAKES 20-25 ]

BASE MIXTURE:

- 1 Cup Rolled Oats (Bonneyville Mill Scottish Oats Work Great!)
- ½ Cup Creamy Nut or Seed Butter (Peanut, Almond, Sunflower, Cashew, Hazelnut)
- ½ Cup Ground Flaxseed
- ⅓ Cup Natural Sweetener (Honey, Agave Maple Syrup)

ADD-ONS (2 CUPS):

Mix and match any of the ingredients below to make the perfect snack. Adjust proportions to taste, but keep the add-on mix under 2 cups.

[ For Crunch ]

- ¼ Cup Diced Nuts (Almond, Macademia, Cashew, Walnut, Hazelnut)
- ⅔ Cup Shredded Coconut
- 1 Tbsp. Seeds (Chia, Sesame, Hemp, Pumpkin, Sunflower)

[ For Sweet ]

- ½ Cup Chocolate Chips or Mini Candy Pieces (M&Ms, Peanut Butter Cups, Chocolate Bars, Cookie Crumbles)

[ For Zest ]

- ¼ Cup Dried Fruit (Blueberries, Raisins, Cranberries, Strawberries, Cherries, Apples, Banana, Mango, Apricot, Dates, Etc.)
- 1 Tbsp. Lemon Zest or Juice

[ Seasonings ]

- Pinch of Seasonings (Vanilla, Cinnamon, Pumpkin Spice, Sea Salt, Cacao Powder, etc.)

[ DIRECTIONS ]

- ▶ Stir all ingredients in a large mixing bowl.
- ▶ Cover bowl and chill in fridge for 1-2 hours, or until the mixture is firm (This will help the mixture stick together in the next step).
- ▶ Roll mixture into 1-inch balls.
- ▶ Serve immediately or store in a sealed container in the fridge for up to 1 week or freezer for up to 3 months.





# CORSON RIVERWOODS

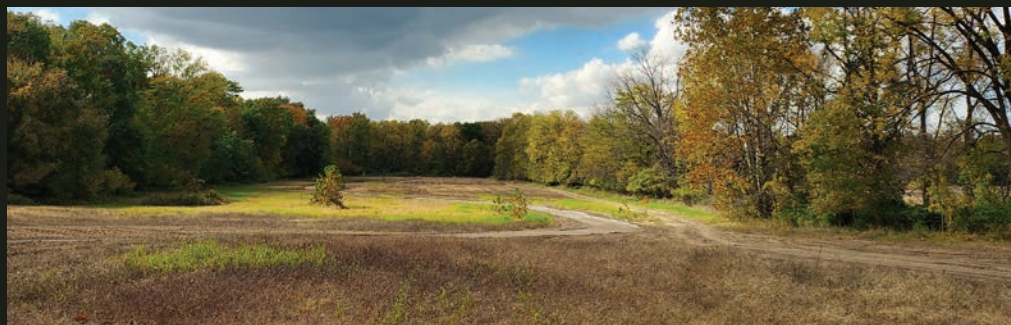
BY RONDA DECAIRE, DIRECTOR

**IN** the fall of 2023, the Elkhart County Parks opened the gates to Corson Riverwoods County Park and welcomed walkers and nature browsers to the newest addition of the County Parks. The concept of the park grew in its infancy as a gift from the late Mr. Tom Corson, the founder of Coachmen and a local philanthropist. He gifted the 82 acres of property to the Elkhart County Parks in

2018, a year before he passed away. Over the past five years the department has been raising funds by writing grants and seeking donors, as well as designing and developing the property. The pandemic delayed some of the grant releases and construction, but the project moved forward with the completion of the parking lot and looped trails in the fall of 2023.

Over the coming year, new additions will take place such as the installation of a Pollinator Playpath, which includes a series of four play areas along a mile walking route to help families move together, as well as a modern restroom, small shelter, picnic areas, and interpretive signage.

The park is located at the junction of County Road 37 and County Road 12, northwest of Middlebury.







# FOUND SPECIES

## SIGNS OF A HEALTHY ECOSYSTEM

*The presence of certain species can be a sign of a healthy habitat. While there is still much restoration work to do at Corson, here are a few species seen on-site that are promising for the future health of the park:*

### OSTRICH FERN & WILD GINGER



WANT TO HELP THESE SPECIES THRIVE? HELP US RESTORE THEIR HABITAT AT OUR UPCOMING EVENT.

## VOLUNTEER DAY

**AUGUST 10**  
10 AM-12 PM  
**REGISTER BY:**  
AUGUST 5

WORK WITH PARK STAFF TO CLEAN UP IN THE WOODS OF OUR NEWEST PARK PROPERTY. PLAN TO BRING WATER, WORK GLOVES, AND INSECT REPELLANT. SNACKS WILL BE PROVIDED.

SCAN CODE TO SIGN UP!



### SOLITARY SANDPIPER



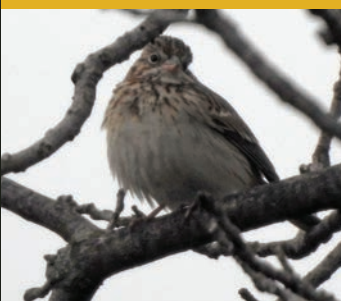
### SKUNK CABBAGE



### ACTIVE NEST OF A RED-TAILED HAWK



### VESPER SPARROW



### LARGE OWL PELLETS



### MARSH MARIGOLD







# CLUES THROUGH THE LENS

BY THE MUSEUM TEAM

DOING GOOD HISTORY IS AN ONGOING PROCESS OF ASKING QUESTIONS. PHOTO COLLECTIONS CAN BE ESPECIALLY EVOCATIVE, BOTH ANSWERING AND SPARKING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PAST. THIS IS THE BIG IDEA THAT UNDERPINS THE NEWEST EXHIBIT AT THE ELKHART COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM, *CLUES THROUGH THE LENS*.

At its core, history that leaves a lasting impact is an ongoing process of asking questions. Historians investigate, evaluate, and question sources to create as complete an understanding of the past as possible. As time passes, new sources are often discovered that call for a reexamination of what we believe. It is through this reexamination that historians validate or revise our perceptions of history.

*Clues Through the Lens* encourages visitors to participate actively in this process. Using the museum's image collection, museum staff selected pieces that document our past and have examined them with the most up-to-date knowledge of sources and information. Visitors to the exhibit are

encouraged to think about how they view these images and the thoughts they spark in their minds.

Themes explored in the exhibit include values, perceptions, and changing landscapes. The exhibit outlines the history of photography and includes several interactive features such as a matching game to help people date photos, photo puzzles, and an invitation to write captions for interesting images from the collection. Also in the gallery will be a computer station for delving deeper into the museum's photo collection through our site on Indiana Memory: <https://indianamemory.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16066coll63>

*This photograph shows a holiday celebration in Elkhart. Notice Santa in the foreground. When you visit Clues Through the Lens, you can explore clues like clothing to date this and other images.*

ECHM invites you to visit the museum and check out *Clues Through the Lens*, which will be open through 2026. It may just change how you understand our history.

*UNDERWRITING FOR CLUES THROUGH THE LENS PROVIDED BY THE ELKHART COUNTY CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU, ROBERT WEED CORPORATION, MR. BOB MARTIN / THOR INDUSTRIES, CENTIER BANK, AND THE ELKHART COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY.*





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*Phone*

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- LIMITED EDITION -  
**BONNEYVILLE  
MILL FLOUR**

BY COURTNEY FRANKE, MILL MANAGER

**If** you have visited Bonneyville Mill on a Feature Grain Day, you have experienced grinding demonstrations of a specific grain accompanied by baked samples made from that particular flour. In 2024, all Feature Grain Days will highlight grinding demos and samples of grains not normally part of our grain line up. These different grains will be milled one day only during the 2024 season. The limited edition flour will be offered for sale until it is gone. The featured grains for 2024: Durum Wheat, Barley, Triticale, and Blue Corn.



**DURUM WHEAT**

The hardest of the hard wheats. It has a relatively high protein content but is not the best choice for recipes that use yeast as the leavening agent. Modern food industries use durum to produce a variety of pasta and pizza dough. With a slightly nutty, wheat flavor, Durum is a good source of protein, phosphorous, magnesium, manganese, and selenium.



**BARLEY**

One of the earliest cultivated grains. Cultivation began 10,000 years ago. The food industry uses barley for malt in beer and vinegar production. Barley flour is good in cookies, muffins, quick breads and pie crusts. Barley is a good source of protein, dietary fiber, thiamin, magnesium, and manganese.



**TRITICALE**

A relatively new grain hybrid. It is a cross between wheat and rye. Experimentation with triticale started in the 1800s. Triticale takes advantage of the high yield potential of wheat and the hardness of rye. Flour uses include bread, crackers, and pie crusts. Triticale is a good source of protein, phosphorous magnesium, and manganese.



**BLUE CORN**

One of several varieties of Flint Corn. Blue Corn is grown mostly in the southwestern United States and Mexico. Blue Corn has a lower glycemic index than Yellow Corn. It also has a slightly higher protein content. Blue cornmeal can be used in any recipe calling for yellow or white cornmeal. It is particularly well suited for making tortillas, chips, and *atole* (a hot, corn-based beverage).





# DISC GOLF CELEBRATES 35 YEARS AT OX BOW

BY RONDA DECAIRE, DIRECTOR

Over the past year, staff and volunteers at Ox Bow County Park have been busy seeking donors and coordinating work days to make improvements to the Ox Bow Flying Disc Sanctuary. This fundraising endeavor is being led by volunteer and disc golf aficionado Jason Samuel, who helped raise more than \$15,000 to support the renovation of the 24-hole course that was opened in 1989. In addition, the Community Foundation of Elkhart County recently granted \$10,200 towards the project.

The Ox Bow Disc Golf Sanctuary has truly been a volunteer led initiative from the start when Dan Shenk and Jim Ingold approached the Elkhart County Park Board in the

late 80s to create a course for the Michiana community. Hundreds of people use the course each month year-round, and it is home to many fundraising tournaments for the community.

The Flying Disc Sanctuary is receiving a facelift with new baskets, larger concrete pads, modern signage, as well as other repairs and alterations. Donors will have their names placed near the hole they sponsored. A "Biggest Disc Golf Weekend" on August 16-18 will celebrate the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Sanctuary, and the accomplishments of the community and staff who worked to improve this well-loved disc golf course.



## PAST & PRESENT VOLUNTEERS

Dan Shenk (left) and Jim Ingold (right) are joined by Jason Samuel (center)



**E**LKHART COUNTY is blessed with an abundance of rivers, lakes, and streams, and reminders of how these waterways have shaped our region are everywhere. Even the names of our county and its largest city are named after one – the “Elkhart” River.

## THE ELKHART RIVER

From the high ground, the river may seem deceptively small, but for those who take the time to trace its winding corridors, canals, and tributaries, the raw power of this life-giving waterway is clear. What the river makes up for in depth is nearly 700 square miles of water draining into the St. Joseph River Watershed. The Elkhart River enters the county from the southeast and flows northwest until it reaches the confluence with the St. Joseph River in downtown Elkhart.

The Elkhart River has always been an important resource for the region, with historical and cultural connections that run deep. The Miami and Potawatomi peoples hunted, traveled, and lived along its bountiful banks. As pioneers arrived and settlements grew, farmsteads and fledgling industries worked to harness the power of the river for milling and transportation. Remnants of these bygone eras are still visible in the landscape at sites like Benton and Baintertown in River Preserve County Park. Fragments of the Wyland family mills – some of the first in the county – can be seen along the canals of River Preserve. Zipping south on US-33, commuters may also pass the historic site of the Benton Ford “Gateway of Pioneers”, without ever realizing it. A historic landmark just south of Goshen at the Benton Landing marks the crossing site on the “Old Ft. Wayne Road.”

The Elkhart County Parks is fortunate to be stewards of several properties along the Elkhart River, including River Preserve County Park and Ox Bow County Park.

## THE RIVER TODAY

The stretch of the river between the Cities of Goshen and Elkhart is a paddler’s dream. The swift current, tree-lined corridors, and abundant wildlife bring a the feeling of solitude and adventure in an urban setting. Paddlers can put in upstream at a Goshen City Park, float down to Ox Bow County Park, then on downstream to the Elkhart Environmental Center, and finally, into one of several Elkhart City Parks. This stretch of river from Goshen to Elkhart provides a multitude of trip options.

The only thing standing in the way, or in this case, floating in the way, was what was dubbed “the mother of all log jams” by local paddlers.

## THE JAM

The natural course of the river in this area with its tight or “Ox Bow” curves, the increase in the quantity or flow of water and the devastation wrought to a local tree species by the invasive emerald ash borer have been theorized to be contributors to the increasing size and frequency of log jams on the river.



The log jam just downstream of Ox Bow Park boundaries had been building up for decades, but by the spring of 2021, calls and questions on the log jam started trickling in.

The Indiana DNR defines a log jam as “restricting the flow or conveyance of natural streams and ditches which can cause increased flooding, destruction of property and wildlife habitat, and erosion and sedimentation.” While we didn’t experience wide scale flooding from this log jam, it did pose a huge safety hazard for folks recreating on the river, and altered habitat with erosion. Temporarily, the parks department installed warning signage and provided an alternate portage route, as well as closing the Ox Bow Park launch to downstream paddlers. In early 2023, park admin staff called a meeting with our fellow education, recreation, and other stakeholders on the Elkhart River asking for advice and a plan to tackle this collective problem. The Elkhart County commissioners responded swiftly with their willingness to help, which was followed by the county council’s support. Park staff worked together with neighbors and an experienced contractor to implement and execute a plan to remove the log jam and debris and reopened the river for safe passage this past fall.

## THE VISION

The value of the Elkhart River is clear. In a post-pandemic world, outdoor exploration has become increasingly valued, and with the expansion of paddling, fishing, and other forms of water recreation, the drive to explore our natural places will only continue to grow. The Elkhart County Parks’ mission is “*Inspiring Connections with Culture and Nature.*” We strive to fulfill this by preserving and maintaining park land, developing and delivering hundreds of programs and events for thousands of residents, and by activating our green and blueways. See you on the river!



# LOG JAM



# NEW STAFF SPOTLIGHT

WE HAVE SOME NEW FACES HERE AT THE PARKS! RECENTLY, WE CAUGHT UP WITH TWO OF OUR NEWEST STAFF TO GET TO KNOW THEM A LITTLE BETTER.

## • SARAH GOTHE • Interpretive Naturalist



### How long have you worked in the field of Nature / Parks?

People have been paying me to be outdoors for 9 years.

### If you could be a tree, which would you be?

An Osage Orange so I could eat chainsaws.

### What's one thing you look forward to at the Elkhart County Parks?

I'm ready to observe one place for a really long time and notice subtle changes of the land, flora, and fauna. Being able to share that with others gives me hope.

### Do you have a memorable park interaction?

Along the Appalachian Trail, I noticed a large tree that was hollowed out at the base. For some reason, I was inclined to inspect the decay closer. On my hands and knees, I peered up inside the hollow. While the tree still looked very much alive on the exterior, the interior of the trunk was a cavity tall enough for a person to stand up in. So that's just what I did. Contorting my body through the hole at the base, I was able to stand upright inside the tree. Standing there in the dark musk, the cavity was a sound amplifier for my heartbeat recovering from the struggle to enter into the secret portal of becoming a tree.

## • DAVID STORY • Ox Bow Park Manager



### How long have you worked in the field of Nature / Parks?

I've happily worked in this field since October of 1995.

### If you could be a tree, which would you be?

A Red Oak. They are long-lived, steady, and sturdy.

### What's one thing you look forward to at the Elkhart County Parks?

There's a lot to look forward to... working with the amazing staff and being immersed in the beauty of the property and nature's design.

### Do you have a memorable park interaction?

My favorite projects have been taking a forgotten and broken space and making it better and more accessible for the public's enjoyment. A specific example would be replacing a walking bridge in a park, creating access and space for engagement with the beauty of our natural spaces.

# VOLUNTEER — DAYS —

Take part in a special event or work day for a fun and rewarding way to get outside and give back to the Elkhart County Parks.

## 2024 LINEUP

APR 20  
EARTH DAY  
GARDEN CLEANUP  
DeFries [ 10 AM–12 PM ]

MAY 4  
COBUS GARDEN  
CLEANUP  
Cobus [ 10 AM–12 PM ]

MAY 25  
BENTON CANAL  
CLEANUP  
Benton Spillway [ 10 AM–12 PM ]

JUN 30  
BENTON CANAL  
CLEANUP  
Benton Spillway [ 2 PM–5 PM ]

AUG 10  
CORSON CLEANUP  
Corson [ 10 AM–12 PM ]

OCT 12  
DEFRIES GARDEN  
CLEANUP  
DeFries [ 10 AM–12 PM ]

NOV 16  
BOOT LAKE  
BITTERSWEET REMOVAL  
Boot Lake [ 10 AM–12 PM ]

LEARN MORE

ELKHARTCOUNTYPARKS.ORG/VOLUNTEER





...Find your  
Nature Nook



Let nature's beauty brighten your next group gathering! We've got the space – all that's left is to bring some good food and good company to enjoy it with.

Reserve



Book Your Cozy Spot

ELKHARTCOUNTYPARKS.ORG/RESERVE

## OX BOW

TYPE  
CAPACITY  
OUTLETS  
DEPOSIT  
RATE

*OX BOW HAUS	ENCLOSED	50	✓	\$100	\$165
FISHERMAN'S CAMP	COVERED	75	✓		\$120
COFFEE TREE	COVERED	50			\$75
HONEY LOCUST	COVERED	75			\$95
BLACK MAPLE	COVERED	50			\$75
COTTONWOOD	COVERED	75	✓		\$125
STABLE	COVERED	110			\$125
RED PINES CAMPFIRE	OPEN AIR	50			\$25
HICKORY HILL CHAPEL	OPEN AIR	50			\$75

## COBUS CREEK

COBUS SHELTER	PARTIALLY ENCLOSED	100	✓	\$100	\$200
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## MUSEUM

AUDITORIUM	ENCLOSED	300	✓	\$250	\$350
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## BONNEYVILLE MILL

TYPE  
CAPACITY  
OUTLETS  
DEPOSIT  
RATE

BALDWIN ONE-ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE	ENCLOSED	35	✓	\$100	\$150
*BRIAR PATCH	PARTIALLY ENCLOSED	150	✓	\$100	\$120
FEEDLOT	COVERED	150	✓		\$150
MEADOW	COVERED	50			\$60
LOOKOUT	COVERED	50			\$60
KUM MOL RIE	COVERED	100			\$85

## RIVER PRESERVE

BAINTERTOWN	COVERED	50			\$50
BENTON	COVERED	25			\$30
DEFRIES GARDENS [ WEDDING CEREMONIES ]	OPEN AIR	50		\$250	\$225

FOR PARK INFORMATION & HOURS, SEE PAGE 3

\* UNAVAILABLE DEC.1–MARCH 14





**ELKHART COUNTY PARKS**  
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