



The Wild Grapevine

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The Wild Grapevine will provide you with nature-related articles and upcoming event information four times per year. All annual pass holders will receive this newsletter free as part of their benefits. Send your email address to metea at allencountyparks.org for free e-mailed copies.

Allen County Parks website: www.allencountyparks.org

Fox Island Alliance website: www.foxislandalliance.org

Friends of Metea website: www.friendsofmetea.org

Your Allen County Parks

Fox Island County Park, 7324 Yohne Road, southwest Fort Wayne (260) 449-3180

Metea County Park, 8401 Union Chapel Road, at State Route 1, Leo-Cedarville (260) 449-3777

Payton County Park, 13928 Dunton Rd. just east of Hometown between Gump and Hathaway Roads

Cook’s Landing County Park, corner of Shoaff and Coldwater Roads

Deer Run Wilderness Area – access by permission only



www.nistem.org

Allen County Parks is a partner in the NISTEM network



www.allencountytrailblazers.org

Allen County Parks is a partner in Allen County Trailblazers

Get Outside and Get Healthy!

By Al McSweeney, Allen County Parks volunteer

Have you ever had an opportunity to take a leisurely walk through a group of trees, a woods, or a forest? So long as you know where you are, and you feel safe, it can be a pleasant experience.

Since the 1980s the Japanese have been documenting physical and mental benefits of spending time in forests. They refer to the process as Shinrin-yoku: ‘taking in the forest atmosphere’, or ‘forest bathing’.

It is one thing to ‘feel good’ about going on a hike through a wooded area. But it is more impressive to evaluate the benefits by measuring chemical and physical changes in the human body. “Researchers, primarily in Japan and South Korea, have established a rich body of scientific literature about the health benefits of spending time under the canopy of a living forest.”

The material in this article is based on Chapter 6 in a book titled “Brain Wash” by David Perlmutter M.D., Austin Perlmutter M.D., with Kristin Loberg. Dr David Perlmutter is a board-certified neurologist and fellow of the American College of Nutrition.

Exposure to nature has been shown to increase human immune-cell populations. This has been demonstrated by measurements on blood and urine of nurses who spent three days and two nights in a forest. “These results indicate that the nurses got a boost to their immune systems and a lowered level of sympathetic nervous system activation.”

Scientists have studied effects on the brain of viewing either an urban scene or a natural landscape. This was done by imaging the brain activity with functional MRI (fMRI) to see which parts were more active. When viewing urban scenes, the amygdala lit up more, indicating more stress than experienced while viewing a natural landscape.

An experiment done in 2014 involved 51 preteens spending five days at an overnight nature camp without TV, mobile phones, or computers. At the same time, 54 other preteens spent their time in town with the usual

devices. Both groups were later shown similar pictures of people and asked to estimate the emotional states of people shown in the pictures. Preteens who spent the time without digital media were significantly better at recognizing emotional clues in others.

Natural settings apparently have anti-inflammatory effects that may help keep the prefrontal cortex healthy. A 2012 test measured differences in blood markers of stress and inflammation among college men in either woods or a city. Lab work done before the experiment showed no significant differences in the levels of stress markers and inflammation between the two groups. After two nights in either the woods or in the city the results were significantly different. Levels of inflammatory markers TNF alpha and interleukin 6 were reduced in the woods group compared to the city group. Levels of endothelin 1, a marker of inflammation in vascular diseases was also lower in the woods group, as were levels of the stress hormone cortisol. Cortisol is implicated in severing the connection between the prefrontal cortex and the amygdala.

A 2012 study tested 56 men and women in creative problem solving both before, and after, a four-day nature hike. Four days of immersion in nature, and the corresponding disconnect from multimedia and technology, increased performance [on problem-solving tasks that require creativity] by 50%.

Nature heals through an array of mechanisms that are chemical (by decreasing stress hormones and inflammation) and neurological (by improving attention and memory function).

In the complex human body, signals are sent and received between the brain and other organs. Some signals are transmitted by electrical signals through nerves. Others are sent by way of hormones in the blood. These effects are difficult to measure precisely and repeatably. It is impressive to see the many experiments and results obtained so far.

This chapter in Dr. Perlmutter's book indicates that many benefits can be had by spending time outside, in Allen County Parks and other natural settings.

Upcoming Programs for Summer/Fall

Program fees are usually \$2.00 per person unless otherwise stated, and are used to provide operating funds (which are not supported by tax revenue) for Allen County Parks. Most programs require pre-registration to allow resource and staff allocation planning. There may be requirements for a minimum number registered to offer the program. You will be notified at least 1 day before the program if it has been cancelled due to minimum registrations not being met.

Critter on Canvas

June 7, July 12, Aug. 16, Sept. 13, Sundays

Explore your wildly artistic side and paint a live critter from Indiana WILD on canvas! Cost includes all materials. For ages 3-110. This will be an outdoor, **weather-dependent**, "FUN, not FINE", painting activity where we will place families/groups at a picnic table six feet or more away from other families. We need you to sit together as a family if you are already COVID-19 exposed to each other in order to make room for other families. Please bring a seat covering in case picnic table seats are wet. Pre-registration ten days in advance is ABSOLUTELY required to allow for table space and materials provided. Pre-paid registration required to hold your spot!

2:00PM-3:30PM

Cost: \$30.00 per person
Pre-register by: (10 days before program)
Min. 7
Max. 10 tables ONLY

Fox Island County Park

Lake Shelter #2

To register or for more information:
Email:foxisland at allencountyparks.org
Call: 449-3246
Natalie Haley

Scrapbooking/Craft Nights at Fox Island

June 19, July 24, Aug. 28, Sept. 4, Fridays

This program was developed for adults who appreciate an evening to socialize with other adults while crafting or scrapbooking. We will not be providing pizza, or refreshments. We will place people at their own table six feet away from others in all directions due to COVID-19 procedures. Please bring your own snacks, supper and drinks (not to share). Classes will end at 11:00PM to allow for staff to sanitize the classroom space both before and following each class. New to

5:00PM-11:00PM

Cost: \$10.00
Pre-register by: (5 days before program)
Min. 5
Max. 14 MAX

Fox Island County Park

Nature Center

To register or for more information:
Email:foxisland at allencountyparks.org
Call: 449-3246
Natalie Haley

this program we will limit attendance to 14 people MAX. Pre-register/pre-pay five days in advance to hold your spot! Please specify class date(s) wanted on your check.

Allen County TrailBlazers Kickoff

June 28, Sunday

Join the Allen County TrailBlazers for their Annual Kickoff event held at Metea County Park. TrailBlazers is a collaborative program between Allen County parks, New Haven - Adams Twp. Parks and Recreation, Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation, Little River Wetlands Project, ACRES Land Trust & Fort Wayne Trails, Inc. Sign up, Hike 10 of the 14 trails listed, submit your trail form and get a medallion. Benefits include health, exploration, experiences in nature and more

Learn more at:

<http://www.allencountytrailblazers.org/>

Pre-registration is required, and only registered visitors will be allowed to participate.

Social Distancing encouraged, masks recommended.

6 to 8 PM

Cost: FREE

Metea County Park Nature Center

To register or for more information:

Email: [bdispenza at allencountyparks.org](mailto:bdispenza@allencountyparks.org)

Call: 449-8619

Bob Dispenza

ALLEN COUNTY
TRAILBLAZERS



Lightning Beetle and Full Moon Fest – Celebrate Indiana’s State Insect!

July 5, Sunday

Learn all about our favorite natural night light! We will have an evening of programs and hikes to “enlighten” you. Park and Education Manager Bob Dispenza will share about what lightning beetles live here, how to attract and identify them, and then go out in the park to see them in action. We might even try to catch a few to observe closely. Natural fireworks! Extra bonus- full moon and a partial lunar eclipse! Pre-registration is required, and only registered visitors will be allowed to participate.

Social Distancing encouraged, masks recommended.

9:00 PM

Cost: \$2.00

Pre-register by: 7/2

Min. 5

Max. 30

Metea County Park Nature Center

To register or for more information:

Email: [bdispenza at allencountyparks.org](mailto:bdispenza@allencountyparks.org)

Call: 449-8619

Bob Dispenza

Nature Mysteries with Nat

July 7, 21, Tuesdays

These programs are for the general audience. A mystery topic will be chosen by the Naturalist for your enjoyment. Meet the naturalist at Bowman Lake Shelter #2. A maximum number of 15 people per class will be accepted. Pre-register and pre-pay five days in advance. Min. 5 people to hold each class. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

1:00PM-3:00PM

Cost: \$3.00 park entry

Pre-register by: (5 days before program)

Min. 5

Max. 15

Fox Island County Park

Shelter #2 at Bowman Lake

For more information:

Email: [foxisland at allencountyparks.org](mailto:foxisland@allencountyparks.org)

Call: 449-3246

Natalie Haley

Monarch Butterfly Workshop for ages 5 to 85

July 9, Thursday

Learn how to care for the monarchs as they increase their numbers and prepare for the fall migration. Social Distancing encouraged, masks recommended.

10:00

Cost: No Charge if you plan on helping with the Monarch project.

Pre-register by: 7/3

Min. 5

Max. 15

Metea County Park Nature Center

To register or for more information:

Email: [rdivelbiss at allencountyparks.org](mailto:rdivelbiss@allencountyparks.org)

Call: 449-3778

Ron Divelbiss

**Project WILD Teacher/Informal Educator Workshop
July 11, Saturday**

Teachers, and community leaders who want to encourage wildlife literacy with students...this workshop is for you! Fees include a complete Project WILD educator curriculum guide, park entry and use of nature center classrooms. Rachel Woodworth, Education Outreach Specialist and State Coordinator for Project WILD of the IDNR, Div. of Fish and Wildlife, will walk us through the guide. If you have specific questions about the guide please contact Rachel at:

RWoodworth@dnr.in.gov

Office: (317) 233-7417

This guide is chalk full of activities and lesson plans that will help you meet your standards! Bring your own lunch, 8 glasses of water, and snacks! We will not be providing water/snacks for refills. This class is limited to 12 teachers ONLY as you will each be given your own table spaced well away from other participants. Register with Natalie Haley at 449-3246, nhaley at allencountyparks.org.

10:00AM-4:00PM

Cost: \$35.00

Pre-register by: 7/6

Min. 5

Max. 14

**Fox Island County Park
Nature Center**

To register or for more information:

Email:foxisland at allencountyparks.org

Call: 449-3246

Natalie Haley

**Amphibians for Preschool Students (ages 4, 5 and 6)
July 14, Tuesday**

We will study frogs, toads and salamanders. Then do a science activity, read a frog book, study a frog life cycle and teach them to catch flies with their tongues. Social Distancing encouraged, masks recommended.

1:00 -2:00

Cost: \$3.00

Pre-register by: 7/1

Min. 5

Max. 15

Metea County Park Nature Center

To register or for more information:

Email:rdivelbiss at

allencountyparks.org

Call: 449-3778

Ron Divelbiss

Amphibians (for 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th grade homeschool students)

July 16, Thursday

We will study frogs, toads and salamanders. Then do a science activity, study a frog life cycle and go outside look and listen for them.

Social Distancing encouraged, masks recommended.

1:00-2:30

Cost: \$3.00

Pre-register by: 7/9

Min. 5

Max. 15

Metea County Park Nature Center

To register or for more information:

Email:rdivelbiss at

allencountyparks.org

Call: 449-3778

Ron Divelbiss

Birds for Preschool Students (age 4, 5 and 6)

July 21, Tuesday

Learn about birds, then take a walk to see how many different birds we can spot.

Social Distancing encouraged, masks recommended.

1:00-2:00

Cost: \$2.00

Pre-register by: 7/14

Min. 5

Max. 15

Metea County Park Nature Center

To register or for more information:

Email:rdivelbiss at

allencountyparks.org

Call: 449-3778

Ron Divelbiss

Insects for Preschool Students (ages 3, 4, 5 and 6)

July 28, Tuesday

Learn about insects, do a science activity, look for insects in the Prairie.

Social Distancing encouraged, masks recommended.

1:00-2:00

Cost: \$2.00

Pre-register by 7/21

Min. 5

Max. 15

Metea County Park Nature Center

To register or for more information:

Email:rdivelbiss at

allencountyparks.org

Call: 449-3778

Ron Divelbiss

Insects (for 3rd, 4th and 5th grade homeschool students)

July 30, Thursday

Learn about insects, do a science activity, look for insects in the Prairie. Social Distancing encouraged, masks recommended.

1:00-2:30

Cost: \$3.00

Pre-register by: 7/23

Min. 5

Max. 15

Metea County Park Nature Center

To register or for more information:

Email: [rdivelbiss at allencountyparks.org](mailto:rdivelbiss@allencountyparks.org)

Call: 449-3778

Ron Divelbiss

Teacher's Workshop - Alternative Learning

August 6, Thursday

We will be exploring different ways people learn.
We will be thinking about things in different ways.
We will be discovering ways to get students to think.
We will be thinking about different ways to test.
Social Distancing encouraged, masks recommended.

3:00

\$5.00 cost of materials

Pre-register by: 8/1

Min. 5

Max. 15

Metea County Park Nature Center

To register or for more information:

Email: [rdivelbiss at allencountyparks.org](mailto:rdivelbiss@allencountyparks.org)

Call: 449-3778

Ron Divelbiss

Construct a Nature Journal (Good for Homeschool)

August 11, Tuesday

Why keep a journal or diary? Journaling helps young people learn to observe. Using the five senses and power of observation to construct a journal. Compare a personal journal (diary) and a journal to share. Talk about three very important nature lovers:

Rachel Carson and Teddy Roosevelt – environmentalists, Jane Goodall – studied animal behavior.

Two types of journals: Creative Writing or Fiction, Factual Writing or Nonfiction.

Make observations: Sight – look, see

Touch or feel

Smell

Hear or listen

(Do not taste things)

9:00AM

Cost: \$2.00

Pre-register by: 8/4

Min. 5

Max. 15

Metea County Park Nature Center

To register or for more information:

Email: [rdivelbiss at allencountyparks.org](mailto:rdivelbiss@allencountyparks.org)

Call: 449-3778

Ron Divelbiss

Prairie Wild Flowers

August 20, Thursday

Come and learn how to identify some of the August prairie wildflowers.
Social Distancing encouraged, masks recommended.

3:00

Free to Monarch volunteers, \$2.00 to all others over the age of 6.

Pre-register by: 8/13.

Min. 5

Max. 15

Metea County Park Nature Center

To register or for more information:

Email: [rdivelbiss at allencountyparks.org](mailto:rdivelbiss@allencountyparks.org)

Call: 449-3778

Ron Divelbiss

Scrapbooking Mini-Workshops

August 28 and 29, Friday evening and Saturday ALL DAY!

A scrapbooking evening followed by a full day at a reduced price! We have 14 SPOTS available, so registration will be taken in the order pre-payments are received. No registrations will be accepted after August 24th. This particular mini—workshop will still be following six feet of social distance (that's six full pages of scrapbooking paper) between participants. The first 12 tables available are 8 feet wide and the final two tables are 6 feet wide. Please follow CDC recommended guidelines while attending this class. You will need to bring your own snacks, drinks and meals. You may attend one or both sessions. Please specify on check. Adults only.

8/28: 5PM-11PM,

8/29: 10AM-8PM

Cost: \$10.00 per session

Fox Island County Park

For more information:

Email:[foxisland at allencountyparks.org](mailto:foxisland@allencountyparks.org)

Call: 449-3246

Natalie Haley

Full Moon Hike

September 2, Wednesday

Hike by the light of the Corn Moon. Get a “moon tan,” do a moondance, enjoy a little lunacy, learn about the moon and our nocturnal animals.

Social Distancing encouraged, masks recommended.

8:30 PM

Cost: \$2

Pre-register by: 8/29

Min. 5

Max. 35

Metea County Park Nature Center

To register or for more information:

Email:[bdispenza at allencountyparks.org](mailto:bdispenza@allencountyparks.org)

Call: 449-8619

Bob Dispenza

Patriot Day

September 11, Friday

On the anniversary of 911 we honor all First Responders – they may enter any Allen County Park FREE. We take this day to remember all of the sacrifices you have made and do make daily. Thank you!

9:00AM-7:00PM

Cost: \$0.00

Fox Island and Metea County Parks

For more information:

Email:[foxisland at allencountyparks.org](mailto:foxisland@allencountyparks.org)

Call: 449-3246

Natalie Haley

Autumn Equinox Saunter

September 22, Tuesday

Meet Naturalist Nat in front of Fox Island's nature center for a night hike or saunter about the Autumn Equinox.

6:30PM-8:00PM

Cost: \$2.00

Pre-register by: (5 days before program)

Min. 5

Max. 25

Fox Island County Park Nature Center

To register or for more information:

Email:[foxisland at allencountyparks.org](mailto:foxisland@allencountyparks.org)

Call: 449-3246

Natalie Haley

Autumn Equinox Evening

September 22, Tuesday

We will explore the fact and fiction, notions and numbers of the fall equinox. We'll hike out during the last summer/first fall day to see what's changing and who's getting ready for winter. Though the equinox was actually at 9:30 AM, we can still celebrate!

Social Distancing encouraged, masks recommended.

7:30 PM

Cost: \$2

Pre-register by: 9/19

Min. 5

Max. 35

Metea County Park Nature Center

To register or for more information:

Email:[bdispenza at allencountyparks.org](mailto:bdispenza@allencountyparks.org)

Call: 449-8619

Bob Dispenza

TREES

September 26, Saturday

Fall color provided by Mother Nature. Take a hike with Naturalist Nat and learn the science behind this phenomenon.

10:00AM-11:30AM

Cost: \$2.00

Pre-register by: (5 days before program)

Min. 5

Max. 25

Fox Island County Park Nature Center

To register or for more information:

Email:[foxisland at allencountyparks.org](mailto:foxisland@allencountyparks.org)

Call: 449-3246

Natalie Haley

Harvest Moon Hike**October 1, Thursday**

A fall harvest moon hike to delight the senses. Meet Naturalist Nat in front of Fox Island's nature center to learn about October's harvest moon.

6:00PM-7:30PM

Cost: \$2.00

Pre-register by: (5 days before program)

Min. 5

Max. 25

Fox Island County Park**Nature Center**

To register or for more information:

Email:foxisland at allencountyparks.org

Call: 449-3246

Natalie Haley

Full Moon Hike**October 1, Thursday**

Hike by the light of the Hunter's Moon. Learn about the moon and our nocturnal animals, especially the ones that are hunted in Indiana and how they are managed. We may get a rare opportunity to see the planet Mercury.

Social Distancing encouraged, masks recommended.

7:30 PM

Cost: \$2

Pre-register by: 9/28

Min. 5

Max. 35

Metea County Park Nature Center

To register or for more information:

Email:bdispenza at allencountyparks.org

Call: 449-8619

Bob Dispenza

Fall Hayride at Fox Island**October 10, Saturday**

Sign up early for this fall fun! Meet Naturalist Nat at Bowman Lake parking lot to take a hayride with Naturalist Nat. We will stop at key locations to learn more about Fox Island. If we have more than one wagon-full we will take another group 40 minutes later than the first. Cost includes park entry and hayride, but you must pre-register five days in advance.

2:00PM-4:00PM

Cost: \$5.00, Annual

Park Passes do not apply!!!

Pre-register by: (5 days before program)

Min. 5

Max. 40

Fox Island County Park

For more information:

Email:foxisland at allencountyparks.org

Call: 449-3246

Natalie Haley

Big Sit Bird Count at Fox Island**October 11, Sunday**

A bird count from the back deck of Fox Island's nature center. Bring your own chair, binoculars, bird guides and nature enthusiasm. Birding experts from Stockbridge Audubon Society will be on hand to answer your burning birding questions.

12:00PM-4:00PM

Cost: \$Free-Will

donations of suet or black oil

sunflower/safflower seed are accepted!

Fox Island County Park

For more information:

Email:foxisland at allencountyparks.org

Call: 449-3246

Natalie Haley

Allen County does not discriminate because of disability in the admission to, or treatment or employment in, its programs or activities. The Human Resources Director has been designated to coordinate compliance with nondiscrimination requirements contained in Section 35.107 of the Department of Justice regulations. Information concerning the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the rights provided therein, and Allen County's ADA policy is available from the ADA Coordinator. Suggestions on how the County can better meet the needs of persons with disabilities may be submitted to the ADA coordinator at: Human Resources Department, 200 East Berry Street, Suite 380, Fort Wayne, IN 46802, or by phone at (260) 449-7217.