



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@allencountyparks.org](mailto:metea@allencountyparks.org) for free e-mailed copies.

Allen County Parks website:  
[www.allencountyparks.org](http://www.allencountyparks.org)

Fox Island Alliance website:  
[www.foxislandalliance.org](http://www.foxislandalliance.org)

Friends of Metea website:  
[www.friendsofmetea.org](http://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

**Allen County Hanauer Reserve** – Easterday Road rental facility



[www.nistem.org](http://www.nistem.org)

**Allen County Parks is a partner in the NISTEM network**



[www.allencountytrailblazers.org](http://www.allencountytrailblazers.org)

**Allen County Parks is a partner in Allen County Trailblazers**

## The Destruction of Fox Island County Park, June 13, 2022

By Clara Conroy, Fox Island Alliance

The morning of Monday, June 13, was quite nice at Fox Island. The first day of kid's Nature Camp was off to a good start and campers were enjoying sunny skies and not-too-hot temperatures. As the day progressed and the temperature rose, park visitors enjoyed hiking in the shady woods and spending time at the beach. A typical lovely day at the park.

And then came the evening. And the storms.

The lightning show to the north started around sundown and soon hit Fort Wayne. Long-lived, straight-line wind storms led to a significant swath of wind damage. Record wind gusts of 98 mph were recorded at the nearby Fort Wayne International Airport and led to significant damage in the area. This was the strongest wind gust ever recorded at the airport.

The big old trees in the sandy dune soil never stood a chance against this derecho.

On the following morning of June 14, park staff had the daunting task of assessing the damage. Due to trees down on the park roads, no vehicles could get in or out of the front gate. The power to the park was out, which also meant no running water. Fox Island County Park was declared closed until further notice.



Maintenance workers went to work clearing the entry road and center parking lot. Trees were blown over around the nature center and into the pollinator garden in front, but luckily the new roof and building were spared. On the lake road there were over 64 trees down just to the parking lot. Uprooted trees pulled up portions of pavement, damaging the road itself.



In the following days, park staff went to check how much more damage was done. Heading west found trees down on the main trail, taking out trail markers with them, but most heartbreaking was discovering the loss of the Old Black Oak, an icon in the park.

Continuing on found that the devastation was worse than could ever be imagined. They found that there were 400 plus trees toppled from the lake road, down around Bowman Lake and back on the west end of the upper dune trail. It took them five hours to climb through it all. The frog pond is full of trees and every intersection and most of the trail is under trees on the upper dune. Sections of the dune trail are lost due to downed trees pulling up the ground and creating potholes. Much of the upper dune trail that was all under tree canopy is now in full sun. Some trees were blown completely over while others were snapped off halfway up

the trunk.

Bob Dispenza, Park and Education Manager at Metea, had this to say about the damage, “Devastation is too light a word for what happened to Fox Island County Park Monday night. Large areas are simply destroyed. Areas that used to be covered by tree canopy are now open to the sky. We will never see Fox Island like it was Monday morning again in our lifetime, maybe ever.

One of the main reasons that Fox Island was a state nature preserve was because of the outstanding black oak savannah on the old sand dunes. Many places, including our experimental prescribed burn area, lost 100% of their large black oak trees.

Upper Dune Trail west had about 30 meters of open trail. All the rest was covered by fallen trees. So heavily covered it took two hours to walk the half mile and I lost the trail completely several times. Some trails might simply have to be abandoned, they are so heavily impacted.”

At the time of this writing, it is estimated that there are at least 1000 trees down on the trails alone.

Fox Island is changed for my lifetime at least. We will not be open until we have made it safe. We are losing thousands in revenue this summer, but we must keep park visitors safe. If you want to donate, please send a check made out to Allen County Park. Mail it to Fox Island County Park, (ATTN: Park Manager, Natalie Haley), 7324 Yohne Rd., Fort Wayne, IN. 46809. This may help alleviate the loss in revenue. Donations made in this way are also tax deductible.



## Upcoming Programs for Summer

*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.*

<b>Lightning Beetle Fest – Celebrate Indiana’s State INsect</b>		<b>Metea County Park Nature Center</b>
<b>July 9, Saturday</b>	<b>9 PM</b>	
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!	Cost: \$2.00 Pre-register by: 6/30 Min. 5 Max. 25	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:bdispenza@allencountyparks.org">bdispenza@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

<b>Monarch Butterfly Workshop</b>		<b>Metea County Park Nature Center</b>
<b>July 10, Sunday</b>	<b>1:00 PM</b>	
Learn how to care for monarchs and the increase their numbers and prepare for the fall migration.	Free to Monarch volunteers Pre-register by:7/8 Min. 5 Max. 15	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:rdivelbiss@allencountyparks.org">rdivelbiss@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-3778 Ron Divelbiss

<b>Nature Story Time</b>		<b>Metea County Park Nature Center</b>
<b>July 13, Wednesday</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>	
<p><b>Worms Love Dirt</b></p> <p>Special guest Dawn Stoops from Grabill Library will be here to share stories and activities all about our big, beautiful world. This special nature storytime at Metea County Park happens on the second Wednesday of the month.</p> <p><i>Register for all programs <a href="#">online</a> at the ACPL Events Page, on the ACPL mobile app, or by calling the branch. In an effort to be courteous to our presenters, audience members, and waitlisted registrants:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Register all attendees</li> <li>• Please arrive prior to the program's start time; registering for a program will not hold your seat after the program's designated start time</li> <li>• If you are unable to attend, please cancel your registration online or by calling the branch</li> </ul>	Register at the Allen County Public Library site	Register here: <a href="https://acpl.libnet.info/events">https://acpl.libnet.info/events</a> For more information: Email: <a href="mailto:bdispenza@allencountyparks.org">bdispenza@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

<b>Full Buck/Thunder Moon</b>		<b>Metea County Park Nature Center</b>
<b>July 13, Wednesday</b>	<b>9:30 PM</b>	
Buck antlers are growing in velvet, and sudden thunderstorms are possible in the hot, unstable air. That’s how our July Full Moon got its names. Maybe the thunder clouds will stay out of the way and we will have bright moonlight for our hike. Mosquito repellent recommended.	Cost: \$2.00 each Pre-register by: 7/9 Min. 5 Max. 45	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:bdispenza@allencountyparks.org">bdispenza@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

<b>Birds for Preschool Students (age 4,5, and 6)</b>		<b>Metea County Park Nature Center</b>
<b>July 14, Thursday</b>	<b>1:00-2:00 PM</b>	
Learn about birds, then take a walk to see how many different birds we can spot.	Cost: \$2.00 Pre-register by: 7/6 Min. 5 Max. 15	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:rdivelbiss@allencountyparks.org">rdivelbiss@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-3778 Ron Divelbiss

<b>Insects for Preschool Students (ages 3,4,5, and 6)</b>		<b>Metea County Park Nature Center</b>
<b>July 21, Thursday</b>	<b>1:00-2:00 PM</b>	
Learn about insects, do a science activity, look for insects in the Prairie.	Cost: \$2.00 Pre-register by 7/15 Min. 5 Max. 15	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:rdivelbiss@allencountyparks.org">rdivelbiss@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-3778 Ron Divelbiss



<b>Insects (for 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade homeschool students)</b>		<b>Metea County Park Nature Center</b>
<b>July 28, Thursday</b>	<b>1:00-2:30 PM</b>	
Learn about insects, do a science activity, look for insects in the Prairie.	Cost: \$3.00 Pre-register by: 7/23 Min. 5 Max. 15	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:rdivelbiss@allencountyparks.org">rdivelbiss@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-3778 Ron Divelbiss

<b>Construct a Nature Journal (Good for Homeschool 4<sup>th</sup> grade and up)</b>		<b>Metea County Park Nature Center</b>
<b>August 4, Thursday</b>	<b>1:00 PM</b>	
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. We will talk about three very important nature lovers - Rachel Carson and Teddy Roosevelt, Jane Goodall – who studied animal behavior. Two types of journals: Creative Writing or Fiction, and Factual Writing or Nonfiction. Make observations: Sight – look, see Touch or feel Smell Hear or listen (Do not taste things)	Cost: \$2.00 Pre-register by: 7/28 Min. 5 Max. 15	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:rdivelbiss@allencountyparks.org">rdivelbiss@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-3778 Ron Divelbiss

<b>Nature Story Time</b>		<b>Metea County Park Nature Center</b>
<b>August 10, Wednesday</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>	
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<b>Full Green Corn Moon</b>		<b>Metea County Park Nature Center</b>
<b>August 11, Thursday</b>	<b>9 PM</b>	
Hike by the light of the Green Corn Moon. Get a “moon tan,” do a moondance, enjoy a little lunacy, learn about the moon and our nocturnal animals.	Cost: \$2.00 each Pre-register by: 8/7 Min. 5 Max. 45	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:bdispenza@allencountyparks.org">bdispenza@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

<b>Prairie Wild Flowers</b>		<b>Metea County Park Nature Center</b>
<b>August 21, Sunday</b>	<b>3:00 PM</b>	
Come and learn how to identify some of the August prairie wildflowers.	Free to Monarch volunteers, \$2.00 to all others over the age of 6. Pre-register by: 8/13. Min. 5 Max. 15	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:rdivelbiss@allencountyparks.org">rdivelbiss@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-3778 Ron Divelbiss

<b>Full Harvest Moon</b>		<b>Metea County Park Nature Center</b>
<b>September 10, Saturday</b>	<b>8:30 PM</b>	
Hike by the light of the Harvest Moon – traditionally the closest full moon to the autumn equinox. Learn about the moon and our nocturnal animals, especially the ones that are hunted in Indiana and how they are managed.	Cost: \$2.00 each Pre-register by: 9/6 Min. 5 Max. 45	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:bdispenza@allcountyparks.org">bdispenza@allcountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

<b>Nature Story Time</b>		<b>Metea County Park Nature Center</b>
<b>September 14, Wednesday</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>	
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<b>Forage Hike</b>		<b>Metea County Park</b>
<b>September 17, Saturday</b>	<b>2 PM</b>	<b>Nature Center</b>
This hike will explore what could potentially be eaten or used for medicine out in nature. We'll go over identification resources, under-used resources, habitats, preparation, and things to beware of.	Cost: \$2.00 per person Pre-register by: 9/11 Min. 5 Max. 30	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:metea@allcountyparks.org">metea@allcountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

<b>No Flowers, No Problem – Ferns and Their Relatives.</b>		<b>Metea County Park</b>
<b>September 17, Saturday</b>	<b>10 AM</b>	<b>Nature Center</b>
While spring wildflowers and summer prairie flowers may captivate our imagination, there are some native plants that don't flower. They remain mostly hidden and little-known to most nature lovers. We will immerse ourselves in the world of ferns, mosses and other plants that never flower, learning about their life histories and how to identify them.	Cost: \$2.00 per person Pre-register by: 9/11 Min. 5 Max. 30	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:metea@allcountyparks.org">metea@allcountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

<b>Autumnal Equinox Excursion</b>		<b>Metea County Park Nature Center</b>
<b>September 22, Thursday</b>	<b>8 PM</b>	
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. The equinox will actually at 9:30 PM, so we can celebrate!	Cost: \$2.00 each Pre-register by: 9/18 Min. 5 Max. 45	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:bdispenza@allcountyparks.org">bdispenza@allcountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza