



The Wild Grapevine

Vol. 19 No. 1 January 2023

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 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

Allen County Hanauer Reserve – Easterday Road rental facility



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

WE WANT SNOW! Cross country ski rental will be available at Metea if we get 4” of snow. We also have a sled hill!

Fox Island County Park is closed due to storm damage and will remain so until further notice.

Snow Crystals

By Bob Dispenza, Park and Education Manager

Winter is here, where tiny miracles surround us. Yes, they sometimes require shoveling, and make driving hazardous. But they also bring skiing and sledding and skating. Collectively, they can be a nuisance sometimes. But individually? Miraculous!

Even modern science has trouble explaining the hows and whys of snow crystals. Tiny differences in temperature, wind, humidity and atmospheric dust can have a great effect on what form the crystals will take.

While the process may begin with water droplets in clouds condensing onto dust particles, what makes the crystals we see as snow is water vapor freezing directly into ice. While liquid water can be supercooled to

-40 degrees (Fahrenheit or Celsius, take your pick) under the right conditions, the presence of fine dust causes freezing closer to -6 Celsius. Water goes directly from vapor to ice without going through the liquid phase. Any remaining liquid water evaporates to provide more material for snow crystals.

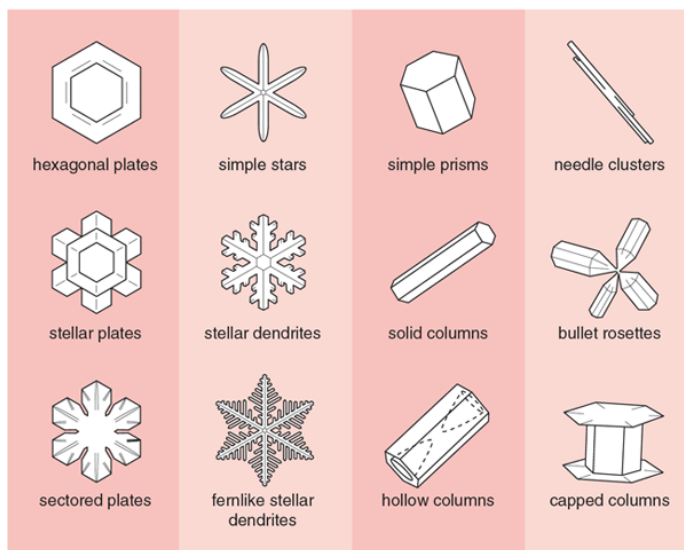
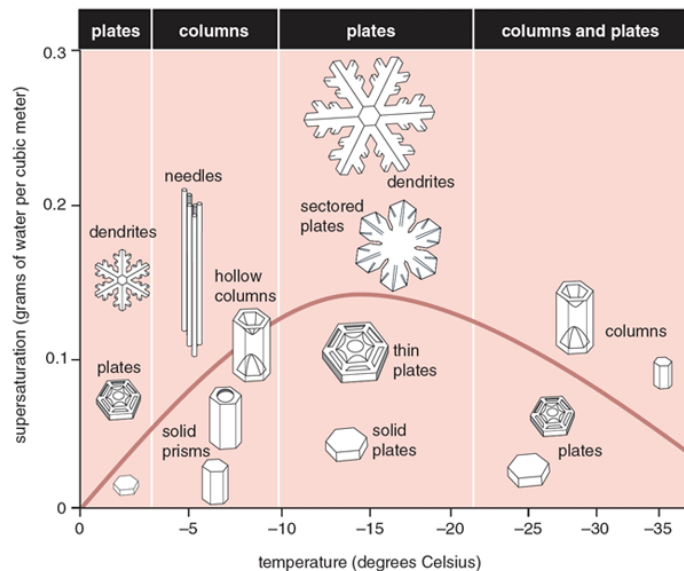
As the growing crystal moves around the cloud, conditions of temperature and humidity change. The result is a variety of structures, ranging from ice needles to hexagonal columns to the flat flakes we recognize. Water crystals are hexagonal, so the resulting snow is six-sided.

Scientists continue to explore how water arranges itself into crystals, and how temperature, humidity and air currents affect the arrangements. Several types of instability and crystal dynamics like faceting and branching are major factors in determining what our snow will look like.

Since “it is all but impossible for two snowflakes to follow exactly the same path through the clouds, ... the likelihood of finding two identical snowflakes is basically nil.”

For something so common, there is still a lot of mystery about snow. Maybe you can find some unusual crystals by taking a closer look during our next snowfall.

Source: <https://www.americanscientist.org/article/the-formation-of-snow-crystals>



Upcoming Programs for Winter

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.

Nature Story Time		Grabill Library
January 4, Wednesday	10:30 AM	
Birds! Special guest Bob Dispenza, from Metea County Park, will be here to offer hands-on learning as we share stories and activities all about our big, beautiful world. This special nature story time at the Grabill Branch happens on the first Wednesday of the month. We also meet at Metea County Park on the second Wednesday of the month for a more in-depth look at the natural world; so be sure to register for "Family Storytime at Metea County Park" as well!	Cost: FREE Pre-register by: 12/29	To register or for more information: https://acpl.libnet.info/event/7264007 or Email: bdispenza@allencountyparks.org Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

Full Wolf Moon Hike		Metea County Park Nature Center
January 5, Thursday	7:30 PM	
We don't hear wolves around here anymore, but we now have coyotes. We'll stalk through the night woods learning about our local predators and how they get through winter.	Cost: \$2.00 Pre-register by: 1/1 Min. 5 Max. 45	To register or for more information: Email: bdispenza@allencountyparks.org Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

Nature Story Time		Metea County Park Nature Center
January 11, Wednesday	10:30 AM	
Birds! Join Michaela from the Grabill Branch Library and Bob Dispenza from Metea County Park as we learn about the great outdoors! Each session will focus on a nature theme with stories, activities and hands-on learning. We'll meet in the Nature Center then do a little outdoor exploring if weather permits.	Cost: FREE Pre-register by: 1/8	To register or for more information: https://acpl.libnet.info/event/7264028 or Email: bdispenza@allencountyparks.org Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

Cross-Country Ski Workshop		Metea County Park Nature Center
January 14, Saturday	10 AM	
Learn: how equipment works, waxing vs. no-wax, purchasing, ski prep and maintenance, how to dress and receive basic instruction and practice on technique (weather permitting). Leave phone number and shoe size when registering in order to reserve equipment.	Cost: \$8.00 includes one hour rental (weather permitting) or voucher for future ski rental. \$3.00 if bringing your own equipment. Pre-register by: 1/11 Min: 5, Max: 15	To register or for more information: Email: metea@allencountyparks.org Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

Nature Story Time		Grabill Library
February 1, Wednesday	10:30 AM	
Winter Homes Special guest Bob Dispenza, from Metea County Park, will be here to offer hands-on learning as we share stories and activities all about our big, beautiful world. This special nature story time at the Grabill Branch happens on the first Wednesday of the month. We also meet at Metea County Park on the second Wednesday of the month for a more in-depth look at the natural world; so be sure to register for "Family Storytime at Metea County Park" as well!	Cost: FREE Pre-register by: 1/29	To register or for more information: https://acpl.libnet.info/event/7264014 or Email: bdispenza@allencountyparks.org Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

Groundhog Day		Metea County Park Nature Center
February 2, Thursday	4 PM	
As the weather continues cold, we all wonder when spring warmth will be arriving. One of our native animals has a reputation for being able to tell when – the groundhog. We are going to encourage him with a little celebration held in his honor. Learn about hibernation, the history of woodchuck weathermen, sing some Groundhog Day songs, and go looking for our own Metea Park Marvin. Will he see his shadow? Or will he just hibernate through his special day?	Cost: \$2.00 Pre-register by: 1/30 Min. 5 Max. 20	To register or for more information: Email: bdispenza@allencountyparks.org Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

Cross-Country Ski Workshop		Metea County Park Nature Center
February 4, Saturday	10 AM	
Learn: how equipment works, waxing vs. no-wax, purchasing, ski prep and maintenance, how to dress and receive basic instruction and practice on technique (weather permitting). Leave phone number and shoe size when registering in order to reserve equipment.	Cost: \$8.00 includes one hour rental (weather permitting) or voucher for future ski rental. \$3.00 if bringing your own equipment. Pre-register by: 2/1 Min: 5, Max: 15	To register or for more information: Email: metea@allencountyparks.org Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

Full Hunger Moon Hike		Metea County Park Nature Center
February 5, Sunday	7:30 PM	
Even though it's the shortest month, February seems to last a long time. For native wildlife trying to survive, it could last a lifetime. We'll look at the strategies the survivors use to get to spring.	Cost: \$2.00 Pre-register by: 2/2 Min. 5 Max. 45	To register or for more information: Email: bdispenza@allencountyparks.org Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

Nature Story Time		Metea County Park Nature Center
February 8, Wednesday	10:30 AM	
Winter Homes Join Michaela from the Grabill Branch Library and Bob Dispenza from Metea County Park as we learn about the great outdoors! Each session will focus on a nature theme with stories, activities and hands-on learning. We'll meet in the Nature Center then do a little outdoor exploring if weather permits.	Cost: FREE Pre-register by: 2/5	To register or for more information: https://acpl.libnet.info/event/7264032 or Email: bdispenza@allencountyparks.org Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

Explore the Universe - Beginning Astronomy		Metea County Park Nature Center
February 9, 16, 23, Thursdays	7:30 PM	
If you want to learn about astronomy and space first hand (rather than from a TV show or podcast), this is for you. We will use telescopes and various optics, have close encounters with outer space objects, explore our solar system, and venture outside our galaxy. Includes handouts and star charts, along with instruction for using your own scopes. We will go outside to observe when weather permits, so prepare for cold weather.	Cost: \$20 for the series Pre-register by: 2/5 Min. 5 Max. 30	To register or for more information: Email: bdispenza@allencountyparks.org Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

Nature Story Time		Grabill Library
March 1, Wednesday	10:30 AM	
Tracks Special guest Bob Dispenza, from Metea County Park, will be here to offer hands-on learning as we share stories and activities all about our big, beautiful world. This special nature story time at the Grabill Branch happens on the first Wednesday of the month. We also meet at Metea County Park on the second Wednesday of the month for a more in-depth look at the natural world; so be sure to register for "Family Storytime at Metea County Park" as well!	Cost: FREE Pre-register by: 2/26	To register or for more information: https://acpl.libnet.info/event/5606627 or Email: bdispenza@allencountyparks.org Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

Full Sap Moon Hike		Metea County Park Nature Center
March 7, Tuesday	8:00 PM	
With warmer weather, the ground begins to thaw and the sap rises in the maple trees. Sugaring season is here! Weather permitting, we will visit a maple syrup operation and see what else – besides sap - is coming up in the woods.	Cost: \$2.00 Pre-register by: 3/3 Min. 5 Max. 45	To register or for more information: Email: bdispenza@allencountyparks.org Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

Nature Story Time		Metea County Park Nature Center
March 8, Wednesday	10:30 AM	
Tracks Join Michaela from the Grabill Branch Library and Bob Dispenza from Metea County Park as we learn about the great outdoors! Each session will focus on a nature theme with stories, activities and hands-on learning. We'll meet in the Nature Center then do a little outdoor exploring if weather permits.	Cost: FREE Pre-register by: 3/5	To register or for more information: https://acpl.libnet.info/event/5648018 or Email: bdispenza@allencountyparks.org Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

Spring Equinox Hike		Metea County Park Nature Center
March 19, Sunday	8 PM	
While the weather may lag behind, spring officially arrives March 20. We will look into the mysticism and science behind this astronomical event, bust some myths, and go for a walk in the woods to look and listen for signs of spring.	Cost: \$2.00 Pre-register by: 3/15 Min. 5 Max. 45	To register or for more information: Email: bdispenza@allencountyparks.org Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza