

Newsletter of the
Crawford Park District
Spring 2022



Levy Renewal

In 2012, Crawford County voters said, “Yes! We want to support the Crawford Park District!” At the time, the CPD was in peril: local government funds had been cut in half, leaving the CPD with an uncertain future. Enter you, our Park supporters. In March of that year, voters passed a 10-year 0.4 mill levy to support the day-to-day operations and capital improvements of the Park District. The time has come to place the levy back on the ballot.

Since the passage of the levy, the CPD has taken the vote of confidence and moved onward and upward, providing excellent programming (most of which are free of charge) and facilities for park patrons to enjoy a nature experience. Aside from allowing the CPD to keep the doors of the Lowe-Volk Nature Center open, the levy and support enabled the CPD to expand our programming and upgrade our facilities. Purchasing archery equipment and two canoe racks have helped amplify our diverse programming. Lowe-Volk Park and Unger Park each had a maintenance/storage building constructed to serve as holding facilities for our burgeoning maintenance and programming equipment. We also added two full-time positions to increase our educational outreach and to manage our park maintenance. The Sandusky Headwaters



Preserve opened in October of last year. This new 38-acre park boasts a 66-step staircase, a 120-foot boardwalk, and scenic sandstone outcroppings, along with many trails that meander through the preserve. Sandusky Headwaters is also the site of an H2Ohio Project, which includes two constructed wetlands, a wet meadow, and vernal pools that all help to slow down rain runoff and reduce nutrient loading into the Sandusky River and Lake Erie. None of these actions would have taken place without support from you.

Enter March of 2020...per state mandates, the Nature Center was closed to the public, and all in-person programming was cancelled. However, your parks remained opened. From the beaten down trails to the full



parking lots, it was more than evident that you value and appreciate your parks! Staff also worked diligently to provide online content and information for nature enthusiasts. When restrictions were lifted, we were able to provide safe programming to those hungry for environmental education. Your support, especially during the last two years, is evidence of the need our community has for opportunities to enjoy and appreciate our natural world.

The Crawford Park District continues to move forward. Our education staff are present in most of the county's public/private schools and grade levels. The Forest Friends program engages preschoolers in all things nature. Programming attendance and Nature Center visitation numbers steadily increase. A multi-use trail is planned to connect Unger Park with Aumiller Park and Friendship Bridge. Property acquisition projects will provide more opportunities for hiking, nature observation, and hunting. Renewal of the 10-year 0.4 mill levy will ensure that the Crawford Park District continues to be a fixture within the county, providing exceptional programming and outdoor recreation options for your community.



Levy Renewal Facts

The Park Commissioners have initiated the process to put the CPD's levy renewal on the ballot for the May 3, 2022 Primary Election. Here is what voters need to know:

Ballot Language: "A renewal of an additional tax for the benefit of the Crawford Park District, Crawford County, Ohio, for the purpose of providing funds for the current and future operating needs of the Crawford Park District including, but not limited to daily operations, property acquisition and capital improvements at a rate not exceeding 0.4 mill for each one dollar of current valuation, which amounts to four cents for each one hundred dollars of valuation, for ten years, commencing 2022, first due in calendar year 2023."

Millage: The levy renewal will be for ten years at a rate of four-tenths of one mill. What does that mean for property owners in Crawford County? If your home/property has a \$100,000 valuation, it will continue to cost you \$12.60 per year. It is important to note that **THIS IS NOT A NEW TAX!** (Do not be deceived by "additional" in the ballot language. Without going in-depth into the tax laws, "additional" refers to the ten-mill limitation set by Ohio law, also referred to as "outside millage".)

The Need: The Park District relies on the 0.4 mill tax levy for our day-to-day operations. From our programming to the maintenance of our facilities, the monies generated have benefited the quality of life for our county residents and have brought in many visitors from across the state and country.

Effects of Levy Failure: Without a doubt, the Crawford Park District will experience a reduction in staffing should the levy renewal fail. Programming will cease. The Nature Center will reduce hours or even close. Your parks will degrade as maintenance is decreased. You, the voter, will decide the fate of the Crawford Park District.

For More Information: Call the Park Office at 419-683-9000 to learn more about the CPD's levy renewal campaign. Get out and vote!



PROGRAMS

All programs are free of charge, unless otherwise noted. For more information or questions about programs, call 419-683-9000, or visit www.crawfordparkdistrict.org

March

Homeschool in Nature:

Renewable and Non-renewable Resources

Thur, Mar 3 9am, 11am, & 2pm Lowe-Volk Park
Every day we consume or use many different resources...but will those resources last forever? This month let's look at the resources we use, where they come from, and complete an activity to demonstrate if they are renewable or non-renewable. Call the Park District at 419-683-9000 to register your 5-12-year-old.

Face to Face: Turtles

Saturday, March 5 10am Lowe-Volk Park

Come meet the Nature Center's turtles up close! Join Chelsea to interact with and learn about our resident turtles, including Common Snapping Turtles, Woodland Box Turtles, Midland Painted Turtles, and a Yellow-bellied Slider. Fun for all ages!

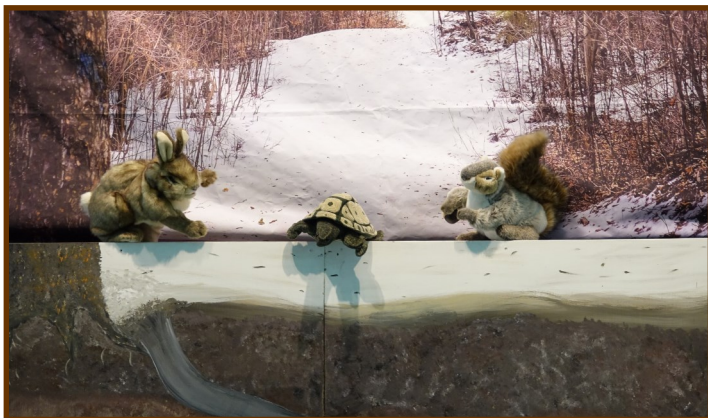


Puppet Pals: A Walk in the Woods

Thursday, March 10 6pm Lowe-Volk Park

Friday, March 11 11am Lowe-Volk Park

Our Puppet Pals are exploring a forest! Join them in finding clues to discover the many animals that call a forest "home". With a Great-horned Owl, a Raccoon, and many more, our Puppet Pals are sure to please. Puppet show will include a kid's activity. For kids ages 3-7 and their parents.



Artifact Expo

Saturday, March 12 10am-2pm Lowe-Volk Park



If you are into pre-historic artifacts, this event is for you! Come and see what other local collectors have found in the fields of Crawford

County, as well as other areas. Come view their displays and have your questions about unidentified items answered. There will also be raffle items, and all kids will get their own piece of flint to take home. Drag out that old cigar box and show off your artifacts!

Bird Walk

Saturday, March 19 8am Lowe-Volk Park

Spring is nearly officially here and with it means migration is picking up! Join Land Manager Kyle Bailey for an interactive and informative monthly bird walk. We will meet in the Nature Center before heading out onto the trail. Optics are recommended. Binoculars are limited and will be available on a first come first serve basis.



Vernal Pool Exploration

Sat, March 19 11am Heckert Nature Preserve

Vernal Pools are a diverse habitat to explore and provide an important nursery for many animals. Join Josh for an investigation of the vernal pools at Heckert looking for bugs, frogs, and SALAMANDERS, of course! All ages welcome. Wear rubber boots.



PROGRAMS



March/April

Stewardship

Saturday, March 19 1pm Lowe-Volk Park

Join CPD staff for our monthly Stewardship Program where the focus will be on woody species. There will be a brief introduction about stewardship and our target species before heading out into the field. Closed-toe shoes, long sleeves, and pants are required. Dress for the weather. Some gloves and loppers will be available.

Feeding Day

Sunday, March 27 1pm Lowe-Volk Park

The animals that reside in the Nature Center get a variety of food. Some prefer worms or mice while others gobble up leafy greens and vegetables. Come help Lisa feed some of our animal ambassadors.



Nature Hike

Sun, March 27 3pm Heckert Nature Preserve

The first days of spring are a time of rapid change. Birds begin their breeding cycle while amphibians, plants, and even insects emerge after months of dormancy. Meet Warren Uxley for an informative hike on an early spring day.

Little Explorers: Vernal Pool Exploration

Thursday, March 31 5pm Carpenter's Bottom

Little Explorers is an interactive program for children ages 0-5 years. Activities will focus on stimulating the senses for infants while also engaging fine motor skills for toddlers. Join Naturalist Abby and Baby Vinny to explore a vernal pool by dip-netting for amphibians and macroinvertebrates. It will be a short hike to get to the vernal pool, so a baby carrier



rather than a stroller is suggested. Dress for the weather, bring a change of clothes, and wear old shoes or boots that you wouldn't mind getting muddy or wet. Nets will be provided.

Homeschool in Nature: Salamanders

Thurs, April 7 9am, 11am, 2pm Lowe-Volk Park

There are over 600 species of salamanders found worldwide and 25 of those call Ohio home. This month, we will take a closer look at the behaviors, habitat, and types of salamanders that live in Ohio. Call the Park District at 419-683-9000 to register your 5-12-year-old.



Artifact Hunt

Saturday, April 9 Meet at 10am Lowe-Volk Park

Join other artifact collectors to walk nearby farm fields looking for remnants of pre-historic cultures who inhabited Crawford County. Be the first human to touch an artifact since it was used thousands of years ago! Don't miss this popular annual event. Bring the whole family, dress for the weather, and don't forget your boots if the ground is wet. Also, walking sticks may be helpful.





PROGRAMS



April

Face to Face: Salamanders

Saturday, April 9 1pm Lowe-Volk Park

Come meet the Nature Center's salamanders up close! Join Chelsea to interact with and learn about our resident salamanders, including Spotted, Tiger, Small-mouthed, Unisexual Salamanders. There will even be a special guest appearance by the biggest salamander around: Crypto, our Eastern Hellbender! Fun for all ages!



Recycled Project Display

Sat, April 23 – Sat, May 7 Lowe-Volk Park

Miss Lisa Smith's 4th grade class at Colonel Crawford has been providing excellent examples of using everyday items and turning them into usable projects for many years. Come to the Nature Center and see the students' creative ways to turn trash into treasure with their recycled projects.



Hi-Tech Egg Hunt

Sunday, April 10 1-3pm Lowe-Volk Park

Bring your smartphone, GPS unit, or borrow a GPS unit from us to use for a hi-tech egg hunt. Follow the coordinates throughout the Park to discover a hidden egg. There will be a nature-based question on each egg that needs to be answered. Kids finding all the eggs and answering the questions will receive a small prize when completed. Come join the fun! Call the Park District at 419-683-9000 to register.

Spring Wildflowers

Sunday, April 24 3pm Sears Woods

Early spring brings with it an explosive growth within our woodlands. Spring blooming wildflowers must complete their life cycle before the trees leaf out and cut off the light necessary for photosynthesis. Meet Warren Uxley at the Sears Woods parking lot.

Yarn Birds

Thursday, April 14 5:30pm Lowe-Volk Park

Birds come in all shapes and sizes and especially different colors during this program. Join Joy Etter-Link to learn about these amazing avian animals. You will get to make a colorful yarn bird to take home. This program is best for older kids and adults. Please call the Park District at 419-683-9000 to register.



Little Explorers: Birds

Thursday, April 28 5pm Lowe-Volk Park

Little Explorers is an interactive program for children ages 0-5 years. Activities will focus on stimulating the senses for infants while also engaging fine motor skills for toddlers. Join Naturalist Abby and Baby Vinny for a program exploring birds. Dress for the weather as we will be outside for at least part of the program.



PROGRAMS

April/May

Bird Walk

Saturday, April 30 8am Sears Woods

Spring is here and migration is in full swing! Join Land Manager Kyle Bailey for an interactive and informative monthly bird walk.



Early returning neotropical migrants such as Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and warblers such as Palm, Pine, and Black-and-white are beginning to arrive. We will meet in the parking lot at Sears Woods before heading out onto the trail. Optics are recommended. Some binoculars will be available.

Stewardship

Saturday, April 30 11am Sears Woods

Join Land Manager Kyle Bailey for our monthly Stewardship Program where the focus will be managing an easily identifiable and extremely invasive non-native known as Garlic Mustard. There will be a brief introduction about stewardship and our target species before heading out into the field. Closed-toe shoes, long sleeves, and pants are required. Dress for the weather. Some gloves and loppers will be available.

Wildflower Walk

Saturday, April 30 2pm Sears Woods

Have you ever heard that “April showers bring May flowers”? Although this is true, there’s a whole group of flowers that bloom earlier in the spring known as spring ephemeral wildflowers! These plants are visible for a short period of time, sprouting, blooming, and dying back in a matter of a couple weeks, which is why they are called



“ephemeral”. They are crucial nectar sources for early pollinators before disappearing, giving way to longer lasting summer forbs. Join Land Manager Kyle Bailey for an immersive walk through the forests searching for late season spring ephemerals.

Foraging in the Forest

Sunday, May 1 2pm Lowe-Volk Park

Did you know that the flowers, stems, and leaves of Spring Beauty are all edible? Its petite tubers are so



tasty that they are known as “fairy potatoes”! Join Naturalist Chelsea to learn about and sample the wild edibles of Ohio’s spring forests. Advice and resources for foraging on your own will also be provided.

Living Landscapes: How to Attract Birds, Butterflies, & Pollinators to Your Yard

Wednesday, May 4 6pm Lowe-Volk Park

Are you a bird watcher who would like to attract more species of birds to your yard? Perhaps you’re

interested in enticing beautiful butterflies to your landscape? Or, maybe you’d just like to make your property more eco-friendly?



Whether you live in town or in the country, what you choose to plant in your yard makes a huge difference to birds, butterflies, and other wildlife. Join Chelsea to learn why including native plants in your landscape can create an ecological oasis for our dwindling bird and insect populations. Program participants will be given a native plant to take home!



PROGRAMS



May

Caterpillar Craze

Thursday, May 12 5:30pm Lowe-Volk Park



Did you know that caterpillars are the larval stage of butterflies and moths, or that they shed their exoskeleton several times to grow? Join

Joy Etter-Link for a fun and interactive program and make a wiggling caterpillar craft to take home. This program is for children in 5th grade and younger accompanied by their adult.

Bird Banding

Saturday, May 14 7am-1pm Lowe-Volk Park

In conjunction with the Pancake Breakfast, we'll be banding birds on the front porch of the Nature Center. Join Bob Placier and CPD staff for a morning of science! We'll be monitoring mist nets to see which birds inhabit or pass through Lowe-Volk Park. Banding is used to track trends in bird populations, among other research applications. All ages welcome and grab some pancakes in support of your Park District!



Pancakes in the Park

Saturday, May 14 8am-1pm Lowe-Volk Park

Come and support your Parks while satisfying your appetite. For a \$5.00 donation, you can get pancakes topped with REAL maple syrup, a side of delicious ham, and a great morning enjoying and supporting your Park District!

Did you know...the CPD has had 400 birds banded at Lowe-Volk Park? Will you be present to see #401 banded? Which species will it be?!

Nature Hike

Sunday, May 15 3pm Daughmer Savannah

Many of the threatened plant species found at Daughmer are at their best in late spring. There is also an assemblage of colorful breeding birds, butterflies, and dragonflies. Meet Warren Uxley to explore this unique habitat.

Magee Marsh/Lake Erie Bird Watching

Saturday, May 21 7am Magee Marsh

May is peak time for spring migration in Ohio, and Lake Erie provides much suitable habitat and myriads of opportunities to view birds! Join CPD staff for a co-led field trip with the Richland County Park District staff to the world-famous warbler capital of the world Magee Marsh! We will carpool from Lowe-



Volk and head to Magee Marsh searching for warblers, vireos, thrushes, and flycatchers. Then we will work our way along the Lake Erie coastline, stopping at other popular locations such as the recently opened Howard Marsh, Maumee Bay Boardwalk, Ottawa Wildlife Refuge, and other sites searching for waterfowl, gulls, shorebirds, and other local rarities! We will eat lunch at the famous Blackberry Corner Tavern known for their assortment of fresh pie. This is a family friendly program. Dress for the weather. Optics are recommended. Please call the Park at 419-683-9000 to register.

For your information...

Of the 19 taxa (a classified group of organisms) that have state-listed species in Ohio, fishes constitute 1/5 of our endangered and threatened species. While this is very concerning, the Ohio Division of Wildlife and other agencies/organizations actively work toward improving Ohio's aquatic habitats and reintroducing rare and endangered species.



PROGRAMS



May

Stream Fishes of the Sandusky

Saturday, May 21 11am Sandusky Headwaters

Sportfish like Bass and Walleye get lots of attention due to their larger size and economic importance.



However, there are many more species of stream fishes – from suckers to darters – in our waterways that play crucial roles in our aquatic habitats. Join staff from the Ohio Division of Wildlife to explore these small, but important, links in riverine food chains. Division staff will demonstrate stream fish sampling, including electrofishing. Park staff will also be on hand to demonstrate stream quality monitoring techniques. A perfect program for the entire family! Old shoes are recommended.

Ohio Summer Adventure Day Trips

Saturday, May 21 1pm Lowe-Volk Park

Come and learn about exciting places you can go in our Central Ohio Area for hiking, camping, nature activities, geology, and archeology. Central Ohio has a lot of exciting parks, museums, nature and wildlife centers, festivals, and attractions that would make great family adventures this coming summer. This is a one-hour lesson, and a handout listing a wide variety of Central Ohio Adventures will be provided! Call the Park District at 419-683-9000 to register. Walk-ins are welcome.

Feeding Day

Sunday, May 22 1pm Lowe-Volk Park



The animals that reside in the Nature Center get a variety of food. Some prefer worms or mice while others gobble up leafy greens and vegetables. Stop by to help Lisa feed some of our animal ambassadors.

Little Explorers: Farm Day

Thursday, May 26 5pm Lowe-Volk Park

Little Explorers is an interactive program for children ages 0-5 years. Activities will focus on stimulating the senses for infants while also engaging fine motor skills for toddlers. Join Naturalist Abby and Baby Vinny for a program exploring farm life that will engage your infant's senses, with a chance to meet farm animals! Dress for the weather as we will be outside for at least part of the program.



Midnight Mothing

Friday, May 27 9pm-12am Lowe-Volk Park

Ohio is home to thousands of species of beautiful moths, including the giant fuzzy Cecropia Moth. We will use bright lights and UV lights to attract our nocturnal moths to a mothing sheet. Stop in any time after dark to get an up-close look at these moths and other intriguing insects that fly in. There will even be opportunities to hold some of the bigger moths! This program is weather-dependent and will be cancelled if it is rainy or too windy. Fun for all ages!



Bird Walk

Saturday, May 28 8am Sandusky Headwaters

Spring is almost over, which means migration is nearing an end! Join Land Manager Kyle Bailey for an interactive and informative monthly bird walk. The majority of birds have passed through on their way to their breeding grounds. Large numbers of late season warblers, vireos, and flycatchers remain. We will meet in the parking lot before heading out onto the trail. Optics are recommended. Some binoculars will be available.



PROGRAMS

May/June

Stewardship

Saturday, May 28 11am Sandusky Headwaters

Join Land Manager Kyle Bailey for our monthly Stewardship Program where the focus will be on



managing the easily identifiable and extremely invasive non-native known as Garlic Mustard. There will be a brief introduction about stewardship and our target species before heading out into the field. Closed-toe shoes,

long sleeves, and pants are required. Dress for the weather. Some gloves and loppers will be available.

Owl Prowl

Saturday, May 28 9pm Lowe-Volk Park

Eight species of owls call Ohio home with only four species being full-time residents. Join CPD staff to learn about these amazing avian predators of the night. We will meet in the Nature Center to learn about our local owls, then head outside for a night hike searching for roosting birds in our woods. Some binoculars will be available.

Flycatchers

Sunday, May 29 3pm Lowe-Volk Park

Among nature's supreme athletes, flycatchers enliven our fields and woodlands with their magnificent flight skills. Meet Warren Uxley for a PowerPoint program followed by an outdoor excursion to observe flycatchers.

Living History Days

Fri, June 3- Sun, June 5

Join the CPD and Colonel Crawford's Company to step back into the 18th Century. More event details will be shared in the coming weeks. Save the date!



Nature Story Time

Tuesday, June 7 10am Lowe-Volk Park

Nature Story Time is back! Join Miss Chelsea for an interactive read aloud every Tuesday morning throughout the summer. We will be outside and will have a fun story-related activity or animal visitor. Kids will receive a nature story time ticket to track their attendance and can choose a prize after five visits!

Amphibian Migration: "Big Night"

Spring is an exciting time of year for amphibians. As the snow starts to melt and the amphibians start to stir from their underground burrows, they make their way to the vernal pools sprinkled in woodlands throughout the county. Vernal pools are shallow temporary ponds that fill from the melting snow and accumulating rainfall in late winter and early spring that will eventually dry up from the heat of summer. Vernal pools provide the perfect place for amphibians, like frogs and salamanders, to lay their eggs and hatch their young without the threat of predatory fishes, which cannot live in temporary ponds. When the temperature and precipitation conditions are just right, hundreds – possibly thousands – of amphibians will make this migration on what are known as "Big Nights." These journeys can be up to a quarter of a mile, which is no small feat for tiny amphibians as they often encounter roads and vehicles along the way. If you would like to assist in monitoring the amphibians we will encounter on one of these "Big Nights", call the Nature Center at 419-683-9000 to be added to a "call list" to be notified when we will be going out. (This event will take place some time in March.)



A “Sappy” Tale

By Joshua Dyer

I was walking through Unger Park in April of 2007, reacquainting myself with the CPD’s first property. Binoculars and wildflower guide in hand, it was a wonderfully sunny afternoon. Hiking along the river bottom near the Friendship Bridge, I caught movement darting through the treetops. A flash of white on the wing tipped me that it was not a bird I was familiar with. “Oh, it landed on the trunk...what kind of woodpecker is this?” I thought to myself. Binocs at the ready, I craned my head upward, slowly stalking down the trail, hoping to get a verifiable identification. Movement. Binoculars up. Focusing on the bird as it clung to the bark, I noted a red patch on the back of the head and a white streak on the wing. And the tell-tale signature for ID: splashes of dull yellow on the breast – my first Yellow-bellied Sapsucker!

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers are one of 7 woodpecker species that call Ohio home, albeit the least common. Sapsuckers occur from eastern Alaska, across the boreal forests of Canada, into the upper Great Lakes region, and eastward to New England. Data from *The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Ohio* (2016) indicates they breed only in the most northeast of Ohio’s counties (Ashtabula, Lake, and Geauga). The first atlas from the mid-1980s showed a very different picture, with minimal observations of breeding sapsuckers. The maturation of forests within that region are cited as the leading factor for the increase, which also led to the Division of Wildlife’s decision to downgrade their status from “endangered” to “species of concern”. Even though sapsuckers do not breed in Crawford County, they are occasional winter visitors. They can be found in mature hardwood forests, such as those at Heckert Nature Preserve and Sears Woods, and will occasionally visit backyard suet feeders.



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker male. Females lack the red throat patch; it is white instead. Photo by Warren Uxley.



Sapwells that have healed on this Bitternut Hickory. Sapsuckers must have preferred this tree as there are healed sapwells up and down the trunk.

As their name implies, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers drill into trees for sap, creating “sapwells”. Preferred trees are aspen, birch, maples, and other deciduous trees. Sapwells are very distinctive from other woodpecker drillings as they drill a series of holes horizontally around a tree. After drilling the sapwells, the sapsuckers will then return to the tree a couple days later to feed on the sap. They will feast on the insects that are attracted to the sap as well, which lends itself to another link this species maintains in our ecosystems. While sapsuckers and other insectivorous birds consume the smaller arthropods, butterflies and hummingbirds are attracted to the sweet sap and will nectar from the sapsuckers’ efforts.

Sapsuckers might not be a keystone species like beavers or a super rare species to tally, but the individual I was tracking at Unger Park was the first Yellow-bellied Sapsucker I’d ever seen. Looking upward and starting to feel the pangs of “warbler-neck”, I continued stalking through the woods, trying to get better and closer looks. And then it happened – I failed to notice the small tile blow out that quickly consumed my foot and leg up to mid-thigh, soaking my whole right leg! A few words muttered, I pulled my leg out of the hole and looked up to find the sapsucker had skedaddled into the canopy. All I could do was laugh at the misfortune of a soaked foot and leg, all because this bird-nerd had to get a better look at a life-bird, the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.

Crawford Park Astronomy Club

The Astronomy Club will meet on the 4th and 5th Saturday of every month 30 minutes after sunset. Please dress for the weather. On rainy or cloudy nights, the meeting will be held in the Nature Center.

Hydra

Sea Serpent, Water Snake, and Water Monster are names the constellation Hydra is known as. It's easy to see why when you connect



the 17 main stars to form a snake. In Greek Mythology, it represents the Lernaean Hydra that Heracles slayed for one of his twelve labors. In another version, it symbolizes the water snake that the crow brought to Apollo as the reason for not fetching water for the god. It might not seem like very many stars make up Hydra, but it is the largest constellation covering 1303 square degrees. It is also the longest constellation covering 100 degrees! Hydra's Heart, Alphard, is the brightest star in the constellation. It glows orange and is 180 light years away. Other objects to note in Hydra are Southern Pinwheel Galaxy, Porpoise Galaxy, and Ghost of Jupiter Nebula. Hydra is best viewed from the southern hemisphere. We are able to watch Hydra rise in the night sky from January-May. Keep an eye out for Hydra's Heart; it is a welcome sign of spring for us in the northern hemisphere.



Porpoise Galaxy
by Pablo Carlos Budassi

Porpoise Galaxy/Penguin Galaxy found in Hydra

These are actually two galaxies interacting together. NGC 2936 is a spiral galaxy that looks like a penguin guarding its egg. The "egg" is NGC 2937, a smaller elliptical galaxy.

Meeting Dates



March 26	8:00 pm
April 23	8:30 pm
April 30	9:00 pm
May 28	9:00 pm



Targets for Spring

- ★ **Pleiades (M45)** – the brightest star cluster in the sky. It looks like a small dipper, but it is not the Little Dipper.
- ★ **Little Dipper** – an asterism in Ursa Minor. It is very faint, but still visible when you know where to look.
- ★ **Big Dipper** – an asterism in Ursa Major. It is also home to a nice double star.
- ★ **Orion Nebula (M42)** – a region of active star formation 1,500 light-years away. A very nice site to view through a telescope.
- ★ **Rosette Nebula (NGC 2237)** – an impressive cluster of stars and nebula 5,000 light-years away.
- ★ **Beehive Cluster (M44)** – it is amazing how many stars are in this object which can be viewed in the constellation Cancer.
- ★ **Globular Cluster (M5)** – one of the oldest globular clusters in the Milky Way.



Orion Nebula, 1,000 light-years away
Captured by the Stellina Telescope

Upcoming Full Moons

March 18
April 16
May 16

Upcoming Meteor Showers

Lyrids - April 22-23
Eta Aquarids - May 6-7

Upcoming Total Lunar Eclipse

May 16



Planting Natives

Shrink Your Lawn to Support Birds and Other Wildlife

By Chelsea Gottfried

Typically, when we think about conservation, we focus on protecting the few “wild” areas that we have left. In Crawford County, these amazing areas include Sears Woods State Nature Preserve, Daughmer Savannah State

Nature Preserve, and Heckert Nature Preserve. What you may not realize is that you can support and protect nature in your own yard. Whether you live in town, or in a residential or rural area, what you choose to plant in your yard (regardless of its size) can have an incredible impact on wildlife.

In the United States, it has become a cultural norm to maintain immaculate lawns around our homes. In fact, around 90% of most home properties consist of lawn, resulting in a whopping 40 million acres of turfgrass in our country. Cumulatively, this is larger than the state of Ohio! Though we have been conditioned to view lawns as “nice to look at”, the reality is that they create ecological dead zones. You may recall the voracious appetites of armyworm caterpillars feeding on turfgrass last summer, but there are few other species that benefit from a landscape of lawn. Even worse, 40% of chemicals used in lawn care contain known carcinogens that are banned in other countries. Studies show that children and pets have the

greatest risk of developing cancer from them. While farmers take most of the blame for fertilizer runoff polluting our streams, rivers, and lakes, homeowners (in a Maryland study) applied equivalent amounts of fertilizer to their lawns. These home applications are often in extreme excess of what the grass can absorb and are more likely to end up as runoff. If all of this weren't enough, Americans spend 3 billion hours each year on lawn maintenance.

Save time, money, wildlife, and the environment. Shrink your lawn by planting native trees, shrubs, and flowers in its place. Native plants are those indigenous to our area, not introduced from other places. They provide the foundation of most food webs, as many of our declining insect populations are adapted to eating only natives. Now, you may be thinking fewer insects equals fewer annoying bites and stings, but since insects contain more protein than beef, they are food for most of our animals. They are also food for each other, for carnivorous plants, and even for some fungi. Insectivorous birds alone devour 400-500 million tons of insects a year!

Caterpillars are the most vital insect of all. They transfer more energy from plants to other animals than any other herbivore. Birds are especially dependent on these squishy, nutrient-rich, sausages to replenish their fat reserves during spring migrations and to feed their insatiable growing chicks. Just one bird can consume 300 caterpillars in a day, and it takes more than 6,000 caterpillars to raise a nest of bluebird chicks to fledging age! Unfortunately, the loss of native trees and plants and resulting decrease of available insects



Plant our beautiful natives, Southern Blue Flag Iris (upper left) or Michigan Lily (above), in place of Orange Daylilies, which offer no benefits to wildlife.

has been blamed for our dwindling bird populations. The ornamental pear trees widely used in landscaping, for example, host little to no caterpillars or other insects. They also provide no other food to wildlife or other pollinators and are highly invasive (being native to Asia). In contrast, a native oak tree can host nearly 500 different species of caterpillars and numerous other insects in addition to providing acorns to dozens of animals. By filling our flower beds and yards with the exotic plants typically offered at most garden centers, we limit the food available to birds and other wildlife.



Caterpillars such as this Brown-hooded Owllet are a huge food source for birds and other wildlife.

In the last 50 years, the United States and Canada have lost 39% of their bird population, 90% of which are terrestrial birds that feed insects to their young. The population of birds not dependent on insects has actually increased by 26 million, while insect-dependent species have decreased by nearly 3 billion. This correlates with global insect losses at a rate of 9% each decade. Over 95% of Ohio's land is privately owned, and collectively, we can give insects, birds, and other wildlife a boost by choosing to add native plants to our own yards. Along with tasty leaves, natives offer pollen, nectar, seeds, fruits, and nuts as well as shelter. Once established, they also require no watering or fertilizer, thriving in the soils and climate they are adapted to live in.

Local garden centers are increasingly offering natives or nativars (cultivars of natives) for sale, but it is worth seeking out a seller who specializes in growing only native plants. Check out Natives in Harmony (Marengo), Riverside Native Trees (Delaware), Scioto Gardens (Delaware), or Prairie Moon Nursery (online). To learn more about which native trees, shrubs, and perennials are the most beneficial, join me for a "Living Landscapes" program (see page 6). This spring, please consider shrinking your lawn and adding natives to your landscape. Together, we can make a difference!



Add native plants to a perennial garden! This is one I started in my yard two years ago. Included are Sawtooth Sunflower, Prairie Ironweed, Joe-pye Weed, Sneezeweed, Virginia Mountain Mint, Obedient Plant, and volunteer Evening Primrose.

Thank you to the following who have donated to the Friends of the Crawford Park District:

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Junior Naturalist Club

The Crawford Park District's Junior Naturalist Club is for 12-18-year-olds who are interested in nature. Meeting topics change each month. The goal of the club is "To foster and encourage excitement for nature and nature-related careers within a community of young adults, giving them tools they need to excel in the pursuit of their interests." For more information about the Junior Naturalist Club, or if you know an interested 12-18-year-old contact Naturalist Abby Ditomassi by calling the park office at 419-683-9000; or you can send her an email: [aditomassi@crawfordpd.org](mailto:aditomassi@ crawfordpd.org).

Meeting Dates: Meetings are held monthly. Spring meeting dates and times are still being planned. Contact Naturalist Abby for dates and times.

Meetings are held at the Lowe-Volk Nature Center.

CPD Book Club

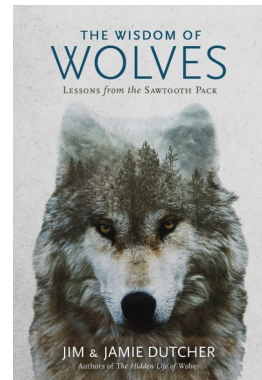
Do you love nature and also love to read? With the abundance of books available for nature lovers, sometimes it's hard to choose the next great book to read. Join the Crawford Park District's Book Club, and we will figure it out together! So come armed with your favorite book about nature or a nature-centered book you want to read, and be ready to make your case to the club!

Book Club Meeting Dates:

March 21, April 25, & May 23

Start time: 6pm

Meetings take place at the Lowe-Volk Nature Center.



Recycling @ the Nature Center

The Crawford Park District partners with the Crawford County Recycling Center to provide recycling options for county residents. The recycling trailer is parked at Lowe-Volk Park Monday-Thursday. It is typically picked up by noon on Thursday. There is also a green dumpster for cardboard. Household batteries and CFL/Fluorescent light bulbs can be dropped off in the Nature Center during regular business hours. If the trailer compartments are full, **DO NOT SET ITEMS ON THE GROUND!** Hold items until the following week, or you can take the items to the recycling center, located at 5128 Lincoln Highway; open M-F 8am-4pm.



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 2401 State Route 598
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Trails Newsletter



Crawford Park District Abbreviated Calendar

Park/Program Location Key:

LVP (Lowe-Volk Park); **UP** (Unger Park); **HNP** (Heckert Nature Preserve); **UP** (Unger Park);
SHP (Sandusky Headwaters Preserve); **SW** (Sears Woods); **DS** (Daughmer Savannah);
CB (Carpenter's Bottom)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Program/Event</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Park</u>				
Thurs. March 3	Homeschool in Nature	9am, 11am, 2pm	LVP	Sat. April 30	Stewardship	11am	SW
Sat. March 5	Face to Face: Turtles	10am	LVP	Sat. April 30	Wildflower Walk	2pm	SW
Thurs. March 10	Puppet Pals:	6pm	LVP	Sat. April. 30	Viewing the Night Sky	9pm	LVP
Fri. March 11	Puppet Pals:	11am	LVP	Sun. May 1	Foraging in the Forest	2pm	LVP
Sat. March 12	Artifact Expo	10am-2pm	LVP	Wed. May 4	Living Landscape	6pm	LVP
Sat. March 19	Bird Walk	8am	LVP	Thurs. May 12	Caterpillar Craze	5:30pm	LVP
Sat. March 19	Vernal Pool Exploration	11am	HNP	Sat. May 14	Bird Banding	7am-1pm	LVP
Sat. March 19	Stewardship	1pm	LVP	Sat. May 14	Pancakes in the Park	8am-1pm	LVP
Mon. March 21	Book Club	6pm	LVP	Sun. May 15	Nature Hike	3pm	DS
Sat. March 26	Viewing the Night Sky	8pm	LVP	Sat. May 21	Magee Marsh/Lake Erie Birding	7am	LVP
Sun. March 27	Feeding Day	1pm	LVP	Sat. May 21	Stream Fishes of the Sandusky	11am	SHP
Sun. March 27	Nature Hike	3pm	HNP	Sat. May 21	Ohio Summer Adventure Day Trips	1pm	LVP
Thurs. March 31	Lil' Explorers: Vernal Pool	5pm	CB	Sun. May 22	Feeding Day	1pm	LVP
Thurs. April 7	Homeschool in Nature	9am, 11am, 2pm	LVP	Mon. May 23	Book Club	6pm	LVP
Sat. April 9	Artifact Hunt	10am	LVP	Thurs. May 26	Lil' Explorers: Farm Day	5pm	LVP
Sat. April 9	Face to Face: Salamanders	1pm	LVP	Fri. May 27	Midnight Mothing	9pm-12am	LVP
Sun. April 10	Hi-Tech Egg Hunt	1pm-3pm	LVP	Sat. May 28	Bird Walk	8am	SHP
Thurs. April 14	Yarn Birds	5:30pm	LVP	Sat. May 28	Stewardship	11am	SHP
Sat. April 23	Viewing the Night Sky	8:30pm	LVP	Sat. May 28	Owl Prowl	9pm	LVP
Sun. April 24	Spring Wildflowers	3pm	SW	Sat. May 28	Viewing the Night Sky	9pm	LVP
Mon. April 25	Book Club	6pm	LVP	Sun. May 29	Flycatchers	3pm	LVP
Thurs. April 28	Lil' Explorers: Birds	5pm	LVP	June 3-5	Living History Days		LVP
Sat. April 30	Bird Walk	8am	SW	Tues. June 7	Nature Story Time	10am	LVP