

Newsletter of the
Crawford Park District
Winter 2022-23



Trail Improvements at LVP

Our goal at the CPD is to provide users of their parks with an enjoyable experience. Some hikers like a more rustic trail, over some uneven terrain, through a narrow passage that leads to a grandiose view of the Sandusky River. On the other end of the spectrum, some hikers prefer neatly groomed wide trails of mowed grass, compacted stone, a boardwalk, or even paved trails. There is also the aspect of accessibility. Strollers, wheelchairs, and those with limited mobility still want to venture into nature, soaking up everything a hike in the woods or prairies provides.

Considering the end user is only one factor that goes into trail development and maintenance. Other factors include slope, hydrology, the presence of rare or sensitive plant and animal communities, accessibility of staff attending to maintenance needs, and cost effectiveness. Will the trail erode shortly after development (slope)? Is this trail section prone to holding water at any time during the year (hydrology)? Do we want hikers to witness blooming rare plants, only to be tempted to pick them? Again, these are just some questions we ask when it comes to the trails in your parks.



In recent years, a boardwalk section of trail in Lowe-Volk Park has needed attention. After going over possible improvements, it was determined that we try a different style of boardwalk, referred to as a “puncheon boardwalk”. A puncheon boardwalk is similar to other boardwalks in the parks: treated lumber attached together that allows hikers to navigate wet areas of trails. Most boardwalks placed within your parks utilize only 2x10 treated lumber. While being treated would appear to have the desired longevity, the planks are less than 2 inches from the ground. This does not allow air to pass underneath, thus keeping the lumber perpetually in a saturated state. Instead of 2x10 cross pieces, the

puncheon boardwalk utilizes 6x6 sections that keep the planks elevated, allowing air to flow underneath. Lastly, the sections of the puncheon are attached together and anchored with rebar, making for a more stable walking surface.

Over the course of a week's worth of days (schedules didn't align for continuous work), Miss Lisa and Mr. Mike were able to install 579 feet of puncheon boardwalk. The section of trail that received this facelift connects the wetland at Lowe-Volk Park to just before the bridge that crosses Allen Run. This section of trail had become somewhat of a quagmire in recent years during the wetter seasons, and the many boardwalks that were intended to keep hikers' shoes less muddy were dilapidated. Next time you visit Lowe-Volk Park, take a stroll down the new puncheon boardwalk and appreciate those dry shoes!

Many thanks to Mike and Lisa for their work on our trail improvements. We are continually evaluating trails and their needs. With varying levels of improved trails and rugged trails, be prepared with the proper footwear as you venture out on your parks' trails. Happy Hiking!



CPD Welcomes a New Naturalist

This past summer, Naturalist Abby Ditomassi was offered a position with the Ohio Division of Wildlife as their District 2 Communications Specialist. We greatly appreciate Miss Abby's contributions to CPD programming over the last four years and wish her well in her new position.

We embarked on filling the Naturalist position to maintain our outreach and programming. We chose a great candidate in Kaily Vitullo. Stop by the Nature Center to say "hi", or visit her at one her programs this winter.



Hello! My name is Kaily Vitullo, and I am excited to be one of your Crawford Park District Naturalists! I have always loved nature and sharing it with others. In high school, I joined the Jr. Naturalist Club at the Ohio Bird Sanctuary, and it really solidified that this is what I wanted to be when I grew up! I received my Associate Degree in Natural and Historical Interpretation from Hocking College, then my Bachelor's in Wildlife Conservation from the University of Rio Grande. I've gotten to do all kinds of cool jobs, from wildlife rehabilitation to camping in Alaska all summer counting salmon! I love hunting with my dogs and husband, hanging out with my chickens, and watching movies. My three favorite animals are box turtles, opossums, and toads. I look forward to contributing to the community and all the amazing things that Crawford Park District has to offer!

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

December

Candy Cane Hike

Thurs., Dec. 1 – Sat., Dec. 31 Lowe-Volk Park

Take a stroll through Lowe-Volk Park looking for candy canes as you go. Each one will have a line of a poem for you to read. Once you finish your hike, stop at the front desk of the Nature Center to collect your prize! (The poem will be out all the time; you can only collect your prize when the Nature Center is open.)



Homeschool in Nature: Great Lakes

Thursday, Dec. 1 10am & 2pm Lowe-Volk Park

We are part of the Lake Erie watershed, and this month we will discover the incredible size and worth of ALL the Great Lakes. Call the Park District at 419-683-9000 to register your 5–12-year-old.



Did you know... Cornsnakes are not native to Ohio?

Face to Face: Snakes

Saturday, December 3 2pm Lowe-Volk Park

Join Naturalist Chelsea to meet the snakes of the Nature Center face to face! There will be opportunities to touch and/or hold an Eastern Foxsnake, an Eastern Milksnake, and a Cornsnake.

Little Explorers: Evergreens

Monday, December 5 5pm Lowe-Volk Park

Little Explorers is an interactive program for young children, ages 0-5. Activities focus on stimulating infants' senses and developing toddlers' and preschoolers' fine motor skills. This month we'll explore evergreens and their cones!



Bird Walk

Saturday, December 10 9am Sears Woods

Each winter brings with it a new set of challenges. Food supplies vary from year to year, and, of course, the weather patterns play a key role in determining the makeup of winter bird communities. Meet Warren Uxley at Sears Woods, and find out what is happening to bird populations this year.

Breakfast for the Birds (and you!)

Saturday, December 10 10am Lowe-Volk Park

Stop by the Nature Center for some donuts and coffee or juice to learn about the birds visiting Lowe-Volk Park's feeders. Participants will also make a pinecone bird feeder to take home! Fun for all ages!



DYK cont.... Cornsnakes are native to the southeastern US and often confused with milksnakes.



PROGRAMS



December/January

Holiday Decorations

Sunday, December 11 1pm Lowe-Volk Park



Let's get festive! Come make a pinecone holiday decoration for your home. We will provide the pinecones, pine boughs, ribbon, glue guns, wreath forms, and miscellaneous items

from nature. If you have other items you wish to add to your decoration, or a certain ribbon you prefer, bring those with you! Call the Park District at 419-683-9000 to reserve your spot.

Movie in the Park

Friday, December 16 6pm Lowe-Volk Park

Put on your pajamas, grab a blanket, and head over to the Nature Center for a family favorite holiday movie! There will be popcorn, hot chocolate, and themed activities to go with the movie. Call the Park District at 419-683-9000 to sign up.

Feeding Day

Wednesday, December 28 2pm 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.

Audubon Christmas Bird Count

Monday, Jan. 2 7am Meet @ Bucyrus Bob Evans

The classic example of citizen science, the Audubon Christmas bird count collects data on bird populations throughout North America. Those who wish to participate should meet Warren Uxley at the Bob Evans in Bucyrus at 7am.

Snowman Hike

Wed., Jan. 4 - Tues., Jan. 31 Lowe-Volk Park



Take a stroll through Lowe-Volk Park looking for snowmen as you go. Each one will have a line of a poem for you to read. Once you finish your hike, stop at the front desk of the Nature Center to collect your prize! (The poem will be out all the time; you can only collect your prize when the Nature Center is open.)

Homeschool in Nature: Soil Layers

Thursday, Jan. 5 10am & 2pm Lowe-Volk Park

We're "digging a little deeper" this month by taking a look at the different layers of soil. Call the Park District at 419-683-9000 to register your 5-12-year-old.



Little Explorers: Scales

Monday, January 9 5pm Lowe-Volk Park

Little Explorers is an interactive program for young children, ages 0-5. Activities focus on stimulating infants' senses and developing toddlers' and preschoolers' fine motor skills. This month we'll explore animals with scales, including our turtles, lizards, and snakes!

Feeding Day

Saturday, January 14 10am Lowe-Volk Park



Our animal ambassadors get a variety of foods. Some prefer worms or mice, while others gobble up leafy greens and vegetables. Stop by and help prepare some of the animals' meals to feed to them.



PROGRAMS



January/February

Owl Prowl

Tuesday, January 17 6pm Sears Woods

Our nocturnal fliers have some fun, and sometimes eerie, vocalizations. Join Josh for this leisurely hike to explore the adaptations that make owls effective



night hunters. While the goal is to hear owls, remember, just like in *Owl Moon*, "sometimes there's an owl and sometimes there isn't." A fun hike for all ages. Flashlight recommended.

The Falcons

Wednesday, January 18 7pm Lowe-Volk Park

Six species of falcons can be found in North America. Sleek and graceful, fast and powerful, the falcons are nature's most finely honed airborne predators. Meet Warren Uxley for a PowerPoint presentation about falcons.

Winter Tree ID

Saturday, January 21 10am Sears Woods

Many nature enthusiasts may find it daunting to identify trees in the winter. A closer look at a winter tree or shrub can yield many unseen characters that enable positive ID. Join Josh for this leisurely stroll through Sears Woods as we head off trail in search of as many tree species as we can encounter. From buds and bark to leaf scars and branch arrangement, you'll learn the keys to correctly identifying winter trees. Picture and note taking are welcome!



Face to Face: Axolotls

Saturday, January 21 2pm Lowe-Volk Park

Join Naturalist Chelsea to meet the newest additions to our Nature Center menagerie: axolotls! Axolotls are aquatic salamanders native to Mexico, and their frilly external gills give them an unusual appearance. They have become quite popular with kids since they are featured in Minecraft! There will be opportunities to hold and/or touch the axolotls.



Heart Hike

Wed., Feb. 1 - Tues., Feb. 28 Lowe-Volk Park

Take a stroll through Lowe-Volk Park looking for hearts as you go. Each one will have an interesting fact for you to read. Once you finish your hike, stop at the front desk of the Nature Center to collect your prize! (The hearts will be out all the time; you can only collect your prize when the Nature Center is open.)

Homeschool in Nature: Snow Tarp

Thursday, Feb. 2 10am & 2pm Lowe-Volk Park



This month we will be investigators to discover what happened on our snow tarp. Call the Park District at 419-683-9000 to register your 5-12-year-old.

Rock Tumbling

Sat., Feb. 4 & 18 10am-12pm Lowe-Volk Park

You will learn about rock tumbling equipment and the process of tumbling rocks. We will start a rock tumbler with rough stone and go through all 4 polishing stages to create beautiful, polished rocks. Volunteer Bryan

PROGRAMS

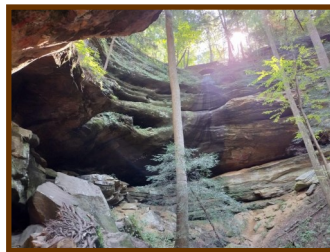
February

Summer will lead this rockin' program! The first session will start the rough tumbling process; session 2 will finish with the polish tumble. A one-hour multimedia lesson will be part of this hands-on activity. Please plan on attending both sessions. Call the Park District at 419- 683-9000 to register. Walk-ins are still welcome.



"Tones of Home": Meet the Photographer Saturday, February 4 1pm Lowe-Volk Park

Meet this year's feature photographer, Candy Yocum, for the "Tones of Home" photography exhibit grand opening. Candy has travelled around Ohio, taking pictures of some of the best, and sometimes most overlooked, nature scenes of our state. Come and join CPD staff for the commencement of Candy Yocum's, "Tones of Home". See page 7 for Candy Yocum's Bio.



"Tones of Home": Photography Exhibit Saturday, February 4 – Saturday, March 4

Come to Lowe-Volk Nature Center to view this winter's photography exhibit. The exhibit will be available to view during normal Nature Center hours. 8am-4pm, Monday-Friday and 12pm-4pm, Saturday.

Little Explorers: Snow

Monday, February 6 5pm Lowe-Volk Park



Little Explorers is an interactive program for young children, ages 0-5. Activities focus on stimulating infants' senses and developing toddlers' and preschoolers' fine motor skills. This

month we'll explore snow, so dress for the weather! If there is no snow in the forecast, check Facebook to see if this event has been rescheduled for a snowier date!

The Best Nest

Sunday, February 12 1pm Lowe-Volk Park

Did you know the Guinness World Record for the largest bird nest belongs to the Bald Eagle? A nest in Florida weighs over 2 tons and is 20 feet deep! Join Naturalist Kaily to learn more about these birds and build a lifelike (average sized) replica of North America's largest bird nest!

Tie the Knot

Saturday, February 18 1pm Lowe-Volk Park

With Valentine's Day just passing, we're not talking about nuptials. Knot tying is a valuable skill that has many applications in life, and not just for when you venture outside. Join Josh to learn some basic knot tying skills and when to use each knot. As with any new skill, practice makes perfect. Participants will take home a handout of the knots covered and their uses and a length of rope to keep those knot tying skills honed to perfection.



PROGRAMS

February

Face to Face: Tarantulas

Saturday, February 18 2pm Lowe-Volk Park

Join Naturalist Chelsea to meet the tarantulas of the Nature Center face to face! There will be opportunities to hold a Chilean Rosehair Tarantula and a Curly Hair Tarantula.



Feeding Day

Sunday, February 19 1pm Lowe-Volk Park



Join Lisa to help feed some of the animals that reside in the Nature Center. Help prepare food for the box turtles, or dangle a worm for the snapping turtles to grab. Don't forget the snakes would love a mouse too!

Snow Insects

Sunday, February 26 2pm Lowe-Volk Park

Some insects are most active on warm winter days on top of the snow. Join Chelsea to discover which insects are active in winter and why they are most comfortable in the cold. This program will include an indoor presentation, concluding with a hike down to the Sandusky River to search for insects. If we are lucky, we may find the elusive Snow Scorpionfly! The date/time of this program is subject to change based on weather conditions, so please check our website or Facebook page for updates.



Nature Hike

Sunday, Feb. 26 3pm Heckert Nature Preserve

By late February winter is starting to loosen its grip. Winter bird flocks are breaking up, and the first courtship calls can be heard. Warm days can bring out overwintering butterflies. Meet Warren Uxley at Heckert Nature Preserve to see what this year's season of transition will bring.

"Tones of Home": Photography Exhibit



Candy Yocum is a Crawford County native. Proud mom of Xiola and Wayla, she resides in Galion along with her dog Razmin. Growing up, she was introduced to the outdoor life at a young age. At 18, she went on a three-month-long backpacking trip across the U.S., which further instilled her love of the beauty of nature.

Candy enjoys being around friends and family, learning new things, live music, and hopping in her car to take mini adventures around Ohio and taking pictures along the way. "Tones of Home", named after one of her favorite songs, showcases Ohio throughout the year: from the gray landscapes of winter to the dazzling greens of summer, from Hocking Hills to Lake Erie. She can frequently be seen hiking on CPD trails. Her favorite hike is Heckert Nature Preserve in the spring, with its dazzling display of trilliums.





Forest



Friends



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 program will be held in the Nature Center.

Gemini: "The Twins"



When you hear Gemini, some people think of zodiac signs, twins, or even the racing wooden roller coaster at Cedar Point! Depending on the culture, it represents twin goats, twin peacocks, brothers Castor and Pollux, or brothers Romulus and Remus. When it's mentioned with Astronomy Club, one of the 88 modern constellations comes to mind and its 2 bright "twin" stars. These stars are named Castor and Pollux after the Greek mythological brothers who were united in the stars by Zeus after Castor was killed and Pollux begged for him to be saved. Just like real twins, these "twin" stars have some differences too.

Castor has an apparent magnitude of 1.93, burns white, has two companion stars, and is about 51 light-years away. Pollux is a red giant star, has an apparent magnitude of 1.14, burns golden, has a massive planet orbiting it, and is about 33 light-years away. Gemini is best viewed from December through April with the Geminids meteor shower peaking on December 13-14. To locate Gemini in the night sky, look between Taurus and Cancer, northeast of Orion.



Image via Rogelio Bernal Andreo/
RBA Premium Astrophotography

Meeting Dates

None in December
January 28 6:00 pm
February 25 6:30 pm



Targets for Winter

- **Saturn** - "Lord of the Rings" is a beautiful sight, 1 billion miles away, and we are hoping to see some of its moons too.
- **Jupiter** - the largest planet in our solar system, a giant gas planet, and has several visible moons.
- **Andromeda Galaxy** - a real nice image and the furthest object you can see with the naked eye.
- **Orion Nebula** - a large gas cloud, 1,300 light-years away, and the birthplace of stars.
- **M15** - thought to be one of the oldest globular clusters.
- **M57** - a ring nebula, only 7000 years old, and has an estimated temperature of 216,000 degrees Fahrenheit.
- **Pleiades (M45)** - the famous star cluster that is the closest to earth, only 444 light-years away, and estimated to be 100 million years old.

Full Moons

December 7
(Cold Moon)

January 6
(Wolf Moon)

February 7
(Snow Moon)

Meteor Showers

Geminids—December 7-17
(Peak December 13-14)

Ursids—December 17-25
(Peak December 21-22)

Quadrantids—Dec. 12- Jan. 12
(Peak January 3-4)



The Northern Lights, or Aurora Borealis, is named after the Roman Goddess of Dawn, Aurora, and the Greek God of the north wind, Boreas.

This photo was taken at Ghost River Camp in Ontario, Canada this summer by Karl Kosik.

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

August 25, 2022 through November 17, 2022



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Betty Foulk – In Memory of
Judy A. Blicke Howard Rhode
James & Jim Miller, Denise Rager –
In Memory of Pat Miller

The Dr. Laurie Anne Rhodebeck Memorial Scholarship

The Dr. Laurie Anne Rhodebeck Memorial Scholarship was established by the Friends of the Crawford Park District in memory of Dr. Laurie Anne Rhodebeck. Applicants can be entering any level of their educational attainment, attending any college, university, technical or vocational school, and entering any field of study. Preference is given to those studying environmental sciences or other studies that correlate with the mission of the Crawford Park District and to those who can display community service activities. An essay on the environment is required. This scholarship is renewable for the entire time a student is in school as long as they reapply each year. Interested applicants must visit the Community Foundation for Crawford County's website at www.cfcrawford.org/scholarships. Deadline to apply is March 1, 2023 by 5pm.

Rare Velvet Ant Inhabits Lowe-Volk Park!



The tropical looking Eastern Velvet Ant is actually a wasp with a powerful sting. (Velvet ants are so named because females are wingless, resembling their close relatives, ants.) Also known as the “Cow Killer”, the pain from their sting is purportedly intense enough to kill a cow. While this is an exaggeration, they do possess the fourth most powerful sting, which is delivered by the longest stinger relative to body size of all insects! Velvet ant stings are rare, however, due to their solitary lifestyle. This species is uncommon in Ohio and is typically found only in the southern part of the state close to the Ohio River. Northerly records of the Eastern Velvet Ant on iNaturalist, a database of citizen observations, in the United States are scarce. A handful have been reported but only within the last two years. Perhaps climate change is having an impact on their northern range expansion. CPD Land Manager, Kyle Bailey, was lucky enough to spot this one crossing the sidewalk outside of the Nature Center during his August butterfly hike!



This map, taken from iNaturalist, shows the Eastern Velvet Ant's distribution in Ohio. Our record is the only one north of Dayton.



2023 Nature Camp Dates

Nature Camp registration will open at 8am on Thursday, March 2, 2023. **New for this year, the first day of registration is online only.** No in-person or over-the-phone registrations will be accepted until 8am on Friday, March 3, 2023. Please plan accordingly as there is no guarantee that camps will not fill up on the first day. While we are changing to online registration, you will still need to fill out our standard registration forms and send them in. You can print forms from our website or stop by the Nature Center to pick them up. Forms will be available on February 1st.

<u>Ages</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Times</u>	<u>Cost</u>
5-6 Year Olds	June 12 – June 16	9AM - Noon	\$75
7-9 Year Olds	June 19 – June 23	9AM - 3PM	\$150
7-9 Year Olds	June 26 – June 30	9AM - 3PM	\$150
7-9 Year Olds	July 10 – July 14	9AM - 3PM	\$150
7-9 Year Olds	July 17 – July 21	9AM - 3PM	\$150
10-12 Year Olds	July 24 – July 28	9AM - 3PM	\$150
10-12 Year Olds	July 31 – Aug 4	9AM - 3PM	\$150
5-6 Year Olds	Aug 7 – Aug 11	9AM - Noon	\$75

Friends of the Crawford Park District
 2401 State Route 598
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Trails Newsletter

Crawford Park District Abbreviated Calendar

Park/Program Location Key:
LVP (Lowe-Volk Park); **SW** (Sears Woods); **HNP** (Heckert Nature Preserve);
BE (Bucyrus Bob Evans)



Date	Program/Event	Time	Park				
				Wed. Jan. 18	The Falcons	7pm	LVP
Dec. 1-31	Candy Cane Hike	All day	LVP	Sat. Jan. 21	Winter Tree ID	10am	SW
Thurs. Dec.1	Homeschool: Great Lakes	10am & 2pm	LVP	Sat. Jan. 21	Face to Face: Axolotls	2pm	LVP
Sat. Dec. 3	Face to Face: Snakes	2pm	LVP	Sat. Jan. 28	Viewing the Night Sky	6pm	LVP
Mon. Dec. 5	Lil' Explorers: Evergreens	5pm	LVP	Feb. 1-Feb. 28	Heart Hike	All day	LVP
Sat. Dec. 10	Bird Walk	9am	SW	Thurs. Feb. 2	Homeschool: Snow Tarp	10am & 2pm	LVP
Sat. Dec. 10	Breakfast for the Birds	10am	LVP	Sat. Feb. 4 & 18	Rock Tumbling	10am-12pm	LVP
Sun. Dec. 11	Holiday Decorations	1pm	LVP	Sat. Feb. 4	"Tones of Home" Exhibit Opens	1pm	LVP
Fri. Dec. 16	Movie in the Park	6pm	LVP	Feb. 4-Mar. 4	"Tones of Home": Photo Exhibit	NC Hours	LVP
Wed. Dec. 21	Book Club	6pm	LVP	Mon. Feb. 6	Lil' Explorers: Snow	5pm	LVP
Wed. Dec. 28	Feeding Day	2pm	LVP	Sun. Feb. 12	The Best Nest	1pm	LVP
Mon. Jan. 2	Audubon Christmas Bird Count	7am	BE	Wed. Feb. 15	Book Club	6pm	LVP
Jan. 4-Jan. 31	Snowman Hike	All day	LVP	Sat. Feb. 18	Tie the Knot	1pm	LVP
Thurs. Jan. 5	Homeschool: Soil Layers	10am & 2pm	LVP	Sat. Feb. 18	Face to Face: Tarantulas	2pm	LVP
Mon. Jan. 9	Lil' Explorers: Scales	5pm	LVP	Sun. Feb. 19	Feeding Day	1pm	LVP
Sat. Jan. 14	Feeding Day	10am	LVP	Sat. Feb. 25	Viewing the Night Sky	6:30pm	LVP
Tues. Jan. 17	Owl Prowl	6pm	SW	Sun. Feb. 26	Snow Insects	2pm	LVP
Wed. Jan. 18	Book Club	6pm	LVP	Sun. Feb 26	Nature Hike	3pm	HNP