

IMNature

The newsletter for IMN hosts and certified graduates

2023 Spring Edition



In this issue:

Naturally Inclined

Chuck Harvuot

Pollinator Day

Gina Anderson

The Gathering

Photo Contest Winners

Big Oaks Tour

Tim Ormiston

Clifty Falls

Elma Chapman

Versailles State Park

Elma Chapman

Misc. Gathering Photos

Micheall Reed

DNR Nature Preserves

Naturally inclined.....

..... a note from the State Council President.

In early March I peered out my kitchen window and found I had a murder in my yard — of crows. I saw eight to 10 of them on the snow-covered ground quickly eating seed. While I occasionally hear crows calling from the trees, I don't ever remember seeing them around my feeder, but there they were.

I've learned it takes at least three crows to form a murder, but using that word to describe a group of crows seems rather unusual, at least to me. So, since it was an overcast, windy and cold day—and I didn't really have anything else I needed to do—I went to my laptop to see if I could find out how that term came about. From my research, it's a poetic term that started in England in the 15th

century, resulting from folklore tales and superstition. Since crows are scavengers, will eat almost anything, and were often seen around battlefields and cemeteries, people began to associate them with tragedy and death. Being all black probably didn't help, either. William Shakespeare, Edgar Allen Poe, Alfred Hitchcock, and even Walt Disney all used crows to suggest a feeling of impending gloom.

While I was reading about crows, legends, and myths, I got diverted in a slightly different tangent in my research to an article that mentioned terms for other groups of birds: a host of sparrows, a charm of finches, a kettle of hawks and a cast of falcons. Then it was on to a site that told me names for groups of other creatures. There were obvious ones like a colony of ants, a herd of deer, and a school of fish. There were also ones I didn't know, but made a sort of sense: a stench of skunks, a prickle of porcupines, and a cloud of grasshoppers. Finally there were terms I didn't know existed, a cete of badgers, a knab of toads, and a nide of pheasant.

As I was going through the lists a thought came to mind, one that some might think diabolical, but one I thought might be fun. I've put together a short master naturalist's "matching exercise" on the next page. Simply match the animal, bird, etc. listed in one column, to the descriptive term in the other. One note, while going through the multitude of lists on the internet, I noticed that not all lists used the same terms for animals and some used more than one, so, please keep in mind, this is meant to be fun and not a definitive list of correct terms.

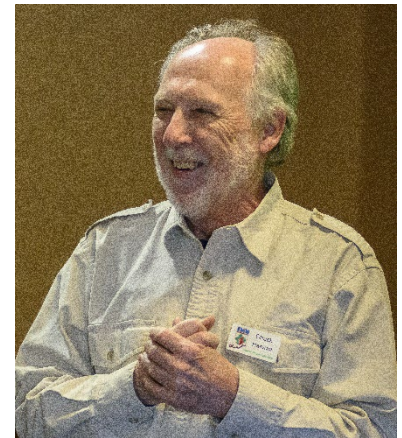


- _____ 1. Bats
- _____ 2. Bees
- _____ 3. Clams
- _____ 4. Coyotes
- _____ 5. Doves
- _____ 6. Eagles
- _____ 7. Ferrets
- _____ 8. Foxes
- _____ 9. Geese
- _____ 10. Mallards
- _____ 11. Owls
- _____ 12. Rabbits
- _____ 13. Raccoons
- _____ 14. Salamanders
- _____ 15. Snakes
- _____ 16. Squirrels
- _____ 17. Turtles
- _____ 18. Vultures
- _____ 19. Wasps
- _____ 20. Woodpeckers

- A. Bale
- B. Band
- C. Bed
- D. Business
- E. Cauldron
- F. Convocation
- G. Descent
- H. Dray
- I. Dule
- J. Gaggle
- K. Gaze
- L. Knot
- M. Maelstrom
- N. Parliament
- O. Pledge
- P. Skulk
- Q. Sord
- R. Swarm
- S. Venue
- T. Warren



This unusual albino crow is from the Pocono Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Center. Its feathers are brittle and break easily so it can't be released into the wild.



Chuck

Answers are on the last page.

Pollinator Day is Buzzing with Activity

By Gina Anderson



On April 29, Purdue Extension Floyd County and Sunnyside Master Gardeners will host Pollinator Day. This free, family-friendly event will be from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the lawn of the Purdue Research Park of Southeast Indiana (3000 Technology Ave., New Albany, 47150), weather permitting. Classes being taught include Pollinator Way Stations, Pollinators and Climate Change, and Restoring Our Home Landscapes to Provide Habitat for Pollinators and Other Wildlife. Other activities include booths on native bees, butterflies, pollinators and our food supply, hummingbirds, native plants, planting for pollinators, beeswax lip balm, a pollinator selfie booth, and much more. We also will be unveiling a new booth on pollinators' relationships to popsicles, and a special activity for the whole family.



Please follow Purdue Extension Floyd County on Facebook and Instagram for more details about this event. If you have questions, please contact Gina Anderson, ANR Extension Educator-Floyd County, at 812-948-5470 or gmanders@purdue.edu.

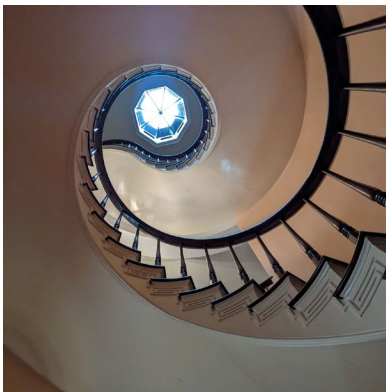
Editor's note:
 This issue is later than originally planned because we wanted to include pictures and stories from the gathering for those of you that weren't able to attend, or to bring back memories of those who did.

The IMN Gathering 2023-Clifty Falls State Park



Gathering Photo Contest Winners

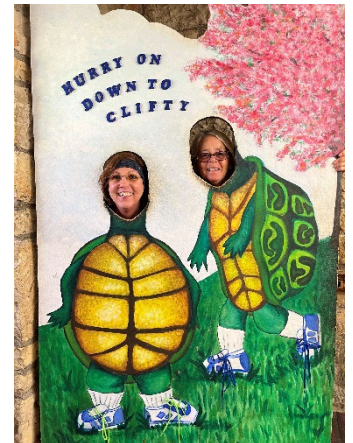
1st



2nd



- First place – Lanier Mansion Interior – Kelly Shepherd
- Second place – Waterfall near Clifty Falls State Park entrance – Tracy Gilliland
- Third place – Covered Bridge at Versailles State Park – Carole Mitchell
- Fourth place – Frogs – DeAnna Varela
- Fifth place – Turtle People – Justine Howard



Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge Tour

Friday, March 31

by Tim Ormiston PE

One of the pre-IMN Gathering options was to tour the Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge. It is located about 8 miles north of Clifty Falls State Park and is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Our group of 40 people was led by Joe Robb and his staff around the 50,000-acre property.

The Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge was formerly the Jefferson Proving Ground. It was used by the United States Army to test new weaponry in the early 1940s. After 50 years of testing, it was closed, allowing for repurposing the land as a refuge beginning in 2000. The refuge operates under a 99-year real estate permit from the Army.



Following a short introduction, refuge staff led the carpool caravan on a 15-mile journey north to the Old Timbers Lodge. A rainstorm was dropping its fury as we entered the refuge office, but it stopped by the time we started the caravan to the lodge and the weather remained dry for the rest of the tour. The lodge was built in 1932 by Alexander Thompson for his personal use. Magnificent limestone blocks were used for floors and walls and large solid wood timbers for framing. Unique hand-forged metal hinges were used for every window and door opening. The lodge property is restricted to special events managed by USFWS staff.

The next stop on the tour was a managed crawfish frog breeding site. Crawfish frogs are 2.5 to 4.5 inches long with a stubby body and a distinctive hump in their back. They have irregular dark spots with light boundaries. These frogs get their name from the use of crawfish burrows for shelter and feeding. The breeding site is controlled by a physical barrier around the pond. Five-gallon buckets are buried into the soil at regular intervals next to the barrier. The buckets are placed inside and outside of it. When any critter, large or small, runs into the barrier, they turn to the side and eventually end up in a bucket. The crawfish frogs can then be measured, and important data recorded. Unwanted animals that fall into this area are deterred from the breeding site. Other animals observed included pickerel frog, adult red spotted newt (eastern newt), southern leopard frog, and Jefferson salamander.



The final stop of the tour was a pond that had hosted frog and salamander egg masses. USFWS staff demonstrated how they measure a crawfish frog and then insert a tracking chip for future data collection.

Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge is a restricted use property, but various activities are available to the public. Please see fws.gov/refuge/big-oaks/about-us for more information.



Clifty Falls State Park- IMN Gathering March 30-April 1

By Elma Chapman



Another pre-IMN Gathering option was a tour of the historic Lanier Mansion and Jefferson County Historical Museum in Madison. Attendees learned about the rich history of the Madison area.

Friday night officially started the IMN Gathering with two programs: Live raptors from Hardy Lake and a Jefferson County history program.

Saturday morning's weather started out nicely, but the cold front that

swept through with high winds did have an impact on later activities. In the morning, participants rotated through three sessions. One was a visit to Clifty Falls Nature Center. It was originally built by the Civilian Conservation Corps as a stable and had a wealth of displays and a fun children's corner. There was also a program about ticks and the diseases they spread. Thank you to Russ Vorhees for stepping in with this program when the herpetology presenter had to cancel the day before the event. Finally, there was a discussion of the



new volunteer hour reporting process, which will be coming up for IMNs soon (right now it's in the testing phase) and some information on the upcoming April 8, 2024 total solar eclipse. Campgrounds and hotels in the path of totality are already filled with reservations. It will definitely be an "all hands on deck" event, and IMNs may be asked to volunteer for this event.

Next, we had a picnic lunch in the Clifty Shelter. It has a nice fireplace and there was a blazing fire in it, so after each rotation of afternoon events people were jostling for position near it. There were two hikes scheduled, but with the high winds they had to be curtailed. A walk deep into the woods is not



advisable when there are high wind warnings all around. We still did a wildflower walk and a waterfall walk in more open areas. I was very surprised at the wildflowers that were already blooming. We saw bellflowers, violets, bloodroot, cutleaf toothwort, Virginia bluebells, trout lilies, spring beauty, and hepatica, all waving their blooms in the cold wind.

Another session in the afternoon was about invasive plants and insects. After the talk, participants were led out to the edge of the woods to identify the invasives. We planned to do a little removal work, but with the cold and wind, that too had to be modified.



If you've never been to Clifty Falls, put it on your to-do list. Located just west of Madison on the Ohio River, it has 1,519 acres and four major waterfalls. According to the park brochure, "Clifty Falls was created during the Ice Age when the southward flowing waters of Clifty Creek met the newly formed Ohio River in a spectacular plunge, a waterfall that may once have been 200 feet high. The falls has since cut its way into bedrock to a point more than two miles north of its original position. Today, at a height of 60 feet, it continues the retreat upstream at a rate of one-quarter inch per year." Clifty Creek still rushes in the springtime, so to appreciate the falls at their fullest you need to visit between December and June. The park also has a lovely inn overlooking the Ohio River. It has been recently renovated and is quite lovely. The ten trails in the park range from one-half mile to 4.5 miles in length. One is categorized as easy, one is moderate, and the others are all marked moderately rugged, rugged, or very rugged. Hikers looking for a challenge will certainly find one here.



Versailles State Park- Post IMN Gathering trip

By Elma Chapman

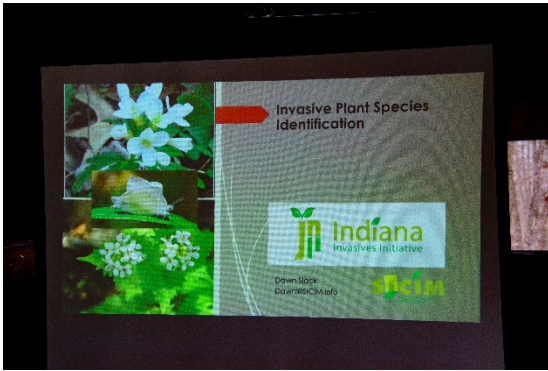
The post-gathering option was a Sunday morning trip to Versailles State Park, Indiana's second largest state park. The winds died down and the sun came out, so it was a little more pleasant outside. There were two sessions, a tour of the nature center and an historic hike. The nature center will have a grand re-opening this year. Much renovation has been done and new exhibits have been prepared with a lot of help from the Friends of Versailles State Park. There was a live turtle display, aquarium wall, kids' area, history room, bird view room and butterfly garden. On the hike we learned about Indiana's first federal park project, which later became this state park. It was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps from 1935 – 1937 as a federal recreation area under of the National Park Service. Trees were planted, roads and paths were built, and native stone masonry and wood construction were used for the park's features. In 1943, the NPS deeded the park to the state of Indiana, and it became a state park. The creek was dammed to create a lake for recreation that opened in 1958. In 1987 swimming was prohibited in the lake because a new pool complex was built with a waterslide. While we were there the pool was closed, but a kettle of vultures was using the waterslide as a roost until the morning warmed up. The lake is still open to boating and fishing, and canoe and kayak rentals are available.

The downside of the park construction is that many homesteads were taken and destroyed, so a lot of history was lost. If you know what to look for, you can still find traces of these homesteads in the park, or you can take a hike with a knowledgeable naturalist can point this out.

Lunch was provided by the park's Friends group: grilled hamburgers or hot dogs, macaroni salad, baked beans, chips, cookies and brownies, and a beverage. The roaring fire in the lodge where lunch was served was welcome. After lunch Jody Heaston thanked everyone for coming, then led a few interested people to the Bradt Natural Area for a short tour.

Enjoy these pictures from the IMN Gathering

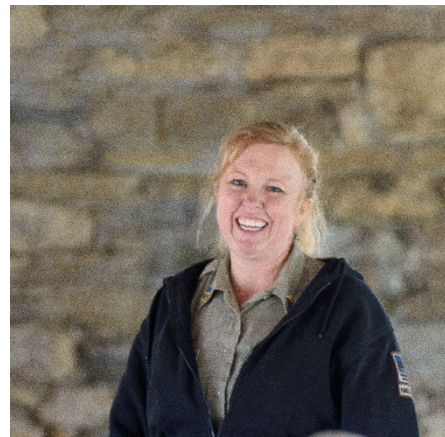
By Micheall Reed



Learning about invasives



Tacos for lunch



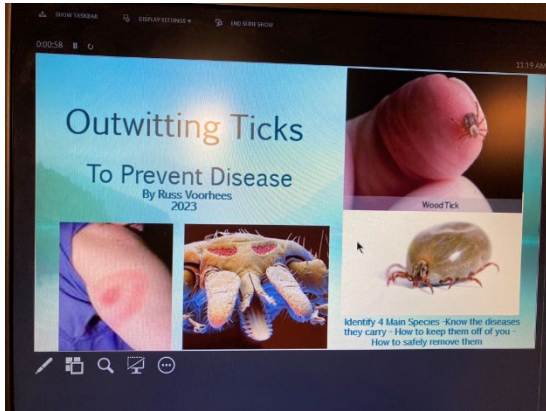
Enjoying the presentations



Waterfall hike



More raptors!



Ticks, and preventatives

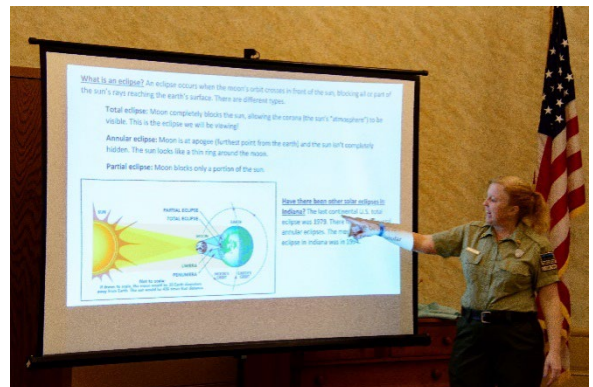


Snails!



History of Madison

The eclipse is coming!
April 8, 2024





Salamanders



In the field at Big Oaks



The annual gathering happens whenever the venue and hosts can best accommodate it. The 2024 gathering won't be until September of next year, and plans are being made to host in Fort Wayne. The 2025 Gathering is already being planned at Brown County State Park for the spring.

From *My DNR, Indiana's Outdoors News*, April 2023

Join DNR Division of Nature Preserves for two free guided hikes

[Moraine Nature Preserve, May 6, 9:30 a.m.](#)

Moraine Nature Preserve contains a combination of rolling ridges, steep hills, pothole wetlands, and a shallow pond. The property protects a mosaic of natural communities including pond, shrub swamp, mesic upland forest, and dry-mesic upland forest.

[Olin Lake Nature Preserve, May 20, 9:30 a.m.](#)

At just over 100 acres, Olin Lake is the largest lake in Indiana with an undeveloped shoreline. Swamp forest along the shoreline includes tamarack, silver maple, red maple, and green ash. Skunk cabbage abounds in low, mucky spots. On the upland portion of the southeast shore is the remnant of a once-large woods. There are large specimens of sugar maple, beech, hackberry, and red oak trees.

Answers to "groups" quiz: 1-E, 2-R, 3-C, 4-B, 5-I, 6-F, 7-D, 8-P, 9-J, 10-Q, 11-N, 12-T, 13-K, 14-M, 15-L, 16-H, 17-A, 18-S, 19-O, 20-G

Want to promote your alumni group, highlight a volunteer, or talk about your favorite experience with nature? Have an article and/or pictures you would like to submit? Or does your organization need volunteers? Let us know by contacting chapman_ej@yahoo.com.

Deadline for submissions for the **summer edition** will be **June 15**.

Submitted articles may be awarded volunteer hours!

The Indiana Master Naturalist program is sponsored by the Resource Conservation & Development Councils, Indiana Soil & Water Conservation Districts, Purdue Cooperative Extension Service, and Indiana Department of Natural Resources. indianamasternaturalist.org



Extension



The mission of the Indiana Master Naturalist program is to bring together natural resource specialists with adult learners to foster an understanding of Indiana's plants, water, soils, and wildlife, and promote natural resource volunteer service within the State of Indiana.