



Butterfly Garden

By Sue Peters, FIA Board Member

Do you even know where the Butterfly Garden is located at Fox Island? Sure you do! You probably park right in front of it. The garden was established in 2003 by Allen County Parks with the support of NiSource (a division of NIPSCO). At the time it was to be a welcoming area for park visitors to amble through before reaching the Nature Center.

Over the years it had become vastly overgrown and was largely avoided by visitors choosing to walk around the outer perimeter. You know the saying, "You never get a second chance to make a first impression." Well, that's what Jeff Ormiston, Fox Island Alliance President, and I thought. With our wheelbarrows stocked with shovels, hoes, gloves and a myriad of gardening knowhow, a transformation is occurring.



The garden has been taken over by Pokeweed, False Sunflower and various weeds with very few butterfly friendly plants remaining. The plan is to turn it into a **Monarch Waystation**. With the decline of the monarch butterfly, it would be a designated protection site that provides needed milkweed, nectar sources and shelter as they migrate through North America. Jeff and I have transplanted various varieties of Milkweed, Butterfly Bush, Coreopsis, Purple Coneflower and Black Eyed Susans just to name a few. The arbor has been painted bumblebee yellow and caterpillar green to welcome nature lovers to enter the paradise.

Take a moment to enjoy the Butterfly Garden and watch for more changes to come. Anyone with an interest to help in this endeavor is welcome. Contact Jeff at jeffo1947@yahoo.com or Sue at SuMarAcres@aol.com

It's a privilege to live in Indiana!

Tribute To A Tireless Volunteer... Kate Ferguson

By Pam George

The Fox Island Alliance Board is minus one essential member as the new season starts. Kate Ferguson, a long-time member of the board since 1984, has moved to Midland, Virginia to live with her daughter Kara's family, including three precious grandchildren.

Ever the involved volunteer, Kate jumped right in and started serving as Secretary for the Alliance by 1985, and has held almost every office since that time (except Treasurer!). She set the record for the Office of Presidency, serving in that position from 2003 through 2011. Her most memorable project was being a part of the committee that raised funds and helped design the new Fox Island Nature Center Building in the 1990's.

Kate's special interest has always been environmental education. As an elementary teacher for Fort Wayne Community Schools for many years, she loved to bring her young students to Fox Island to experience the great outdoors in person. Pat Bolman was the naturalist at that time and shared many animal adventure stories with the kids as only Pat could.

Fox Island Park wasn't the only science-centered organization that benefited from Kate's passion. She was involved with Science Central when it was only a concept, heading up a teacher education group trained to help with groups visiting Science Central and to enhance a visitor's experience at the local science museum.

As a Master Gardener, Kate served as the Garden Coordinator for many years. She also coordinated the Indiana Master Naturalist Program for Allen County, training over 300 volunteers to assist city and county parks and other local not-for-profit organizations with their environmental programs.

The list goes on and on. Kate truly lived the quote by Gandhi: "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." Kate loved working with people and left her mark in the field of environmental education.

As one FIA board member, Sue Peters, stated, "We should all aspire to be even half the volunteer that Kate was for the Fort Wayne area. Instead of slowing down after retiring, she embraced life and what she could do to give back to the community. We will all miss her smiling face."



A Chip Off the Old Block

The Fox Island Alliance has recently purchased a used disc chipper for use at Fox Island. Capable of turning up to 9” branches into usable mulch, this chipper is already being used in clearing shrubs and trees behind the Nature Center. Previously the Park had to borrow or rent a chipper when brush or branches became a problem. This chipper should go a long way in helping the park in the continuing battle with invasive species

Jeff Ormiston

Seeing's Believing

Have you ever wondered what that odd growth was on the bushes around Bowman Lake? Ever wondered what that insect was flying around the false sunflowers in the Fox Island butterfly garden and looking like hummingbird? Have you wanted to know what is going on, naturally, in the Little River Valley? You are invited to check out two blogs that can answer these questions. No politics, no controversy, no charge, just a chance to see the unseen.

jeffo1947.blogspot.com “Animal Crackers”

jeffo2013.blogspot.com “Pond Hawk” (picture is a female)

Jeff Ormiston



Request From the Alliance President

In order to better inform the Fox Island Alliance members the Board of Directors of the Alliance is trying to establish an accurate **email list of those members who would like to be contacted concerning events related to the Alliance and Fox Island Park.** This list will not be sold to outside parties and is only to be used to communicate news related to Fox Island and Allen County Parks. If you received my email dated 9/17/2013 and wish not to be included in this list please let me or Ed Powers know your wishes and we will remove you from this communication list. If you did not receive my email and wish to be put on the list please contact Ed Powers or myself by email so your name can be added. There were eight members whose email was not deliverable for unknown reasons, so hopefully we can find the cause so all members wishing to keep informed will be accommodated.

Ed Powers, Membership Chairman zzedpowers@aol.com

Jeff Ormiston, President jeffo1947@yahoo.com



Kit Kapers: Fox Tale for Kids

By Pam George

Tiger in the Forest of the Night

There's a tiger loose in the woods at Fox Island Park! At least that's what Ron Zartman, Park and Education Manager, reported after he made his nightly rounds of the park last week.

He recalled seeing black stripes, sharp-pointed claws, and bright eyes that seemed to glow in the dark as the beast whisked past him at nearly 35 miles per hour!



Later, however, he does remember hearing a haunting “hoo hoo hooooo hoo hoo” as he drifted off into a restless sleep. By the light of day, Ron started thinking more clearly and decided what he had encountered was probably a Great Horned Owl, also known as a “Winged Tiger” due to the black stripes, or bars, that cross its feathered chest. This majestic bird is also called a Hoot Owl, or even a Cat Owl because of the tufted feathers, called ear tufts, on the top of its head resembling cat ears.



Even though the ear tufts look like ears, scientists think their purpose is to make the owl's head look bigger and more ferocious. Its “hearing” ears are located on the front of its face below its eyes... one high and one low.

Great Horned Owls have been around North America, and probably Fox Island Park, since the end of the last ice age. A single owl can haunt an area for over 15 years, as it has few predators to

worry about well, maybe the Peregrine Falcon!



Ron was right about seeing fierce claws; they're really called “talons”. These sharp tools are used to entrap all kinds of small mammals, birds, amphibians (frogs) and even fish. The Great Horned Owl is the only creature known to actually enjoy feeding on skunks! A person can tell which creature an owl has chosen for its dinner the night before by searching for owl pellets under a roosting site. These pellets are spit out by the owl and contain the parts of its prey that can't be quickly digested (the bones, teeth and body covering), so the owl isn't weighted down with excess baggage when it tries to fly.



Ron wouldn't have known the owl was flying nearby until it was right over his head because this flyer has “fringed” flight feathers that let it silently swoop down on an unsuspecting prey. Ron was lucky he didn't look like a rabbit or, worse yet, a skunk!

Why was Ron hearing the owl's familiar “hoo hoo hooooo hoo hoo” at this time of the year? In the late fall and early winter, both males and females are hooting for a mate. Their low, muffled calls can be heard for miles.

Let's just hope Ron was correct about seeing a Great Horned Owl the other night. Otherwise, be careful if you happen to be out “Trick-or-Treating” around the area on Halloween. Listen carefully; make sure a “hoot” isn't a growl!

Volunteers are needed in the Bird Observation Building: see Ron!

Natalie's Needs.....Can you help?

Contact her at nhaley@allencountyparks.org

1. Bulletin Board Artists: Contact Natalie and set up a meeting to get our program boards up and educational for fall.
 2. Front gate garden beds: Need a master gardener to take out the "junk" phlox and cut off dead heads, clean up big blue stem grasses, etc... for front gate. Let me know when you can help and we can even have a couple of scoops of mulch ready and waiting.
 3. **Honeysuckle Daze: November 4-8 at Fox Island we will be removing honeysuckle shrubs from the area between the nature center and the bird building north to the woods. We also need maple, willow and cottonwood seedlings cut and removed from the wetland behind the nature center. We want to keep the wetland a wetland for teaching about macro-invertebrates and pond life.**
 4. We need two old metal milk crates for our pond life study equipment. If anyone is still in possession of these possibly antique treasures, we are interested!
 5. We are also trying to develop a weather curriculum. If you can help with those, please contact us as soon as possible.
 6. The Education Department would also like to develop a list of programs tied with state standards for teachers. We have a list of the programs we most commonly offer...we just need to show what standards we could help teachers meet.
- Finally, we hope to develop brochures for pre-school, home school, Boy and Girl Scouts and birthday party offerings.



FALL ACTIVITIES AT FOX ISLAND

To register for programs or for more information contact one of the following:

For Ron Zartman call 449-3186 or rzartman@allencountyparks.org

For Natalie Haley call 449-3246 or nhaley@allencountyparks.org

Most activities and programs have a \$2.00 charge and require pre-registration.

Birding with Stockbridge Audubon Society: Oct. 5, 8 a.m. till about noon. No advance notice needed, just show up and pay your park admission. Bring your binoculars and dress for the weather. Meet in the parking lot by the bird observation building.

THE BIG SIT: SUNDAY AFTERNOON OCT. 13 Join our birding team, the FIBS or “Fox Island Bird Sitters.” We just sit on the back deck of the nature center and let the birds come to us! We promise never to FIB about our sightings. We hope to inspire new fledgling birders to join the bird listing craze. Snacks and good conversation are furnished. **Register with Natalie, or just drop in from 1:30 to 4:30. Birdseed or suet donations are encouraged.**



Fox Kit Club: “Spider Biology” Oct. 8, Tuesday 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. This program has been developed for pre-school children and their families or teachers. Meet a naturalist at the Fox Island Nature Center to face a common fear: SPIDERS! Fees include a snack and a theme-related craft. Cost \$3 per child; \$2 per parent; paid pre-school teachers of attending students are free. Pre-register by 10/3 at 449-3246 to hold your spot! Next Fox Kit Clubs will be Nov. 12, Tuesday on “Mammals” and Dec. 10, Tuesday, on Winter Birds. Preregister 5 days ahead; same fees .



Preschool Discovery Hours: Oct. 15, Tuesday, 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. Preregister 5 days ahead; same fees as above. Call Ron to register; here are the topics:

“Colorful Fall Leaves”

Your child will craft an autumn leaf bookmark, go outside to hunt for colorful leaves to press and take home, and then have a snack.

“Animal Home Hike” November 12, Tuesday 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.. Meet indoors to talk about where critters live in fall. Then we will hike out to search for animal homes, and finally warm up with hot cocoa and a snack.

“Birds for Beginners” December 17, Tuesday 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. Help feed the birds and see who comes to the feeders.



Sunny Schick Digital Nature Photography: Oct. 20, Sunday 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Instructors Chuck Fletter and Bob Goines will share tips, techniques and equipment for shooting outdoor and close-up photos. Ron will lead participants afield to find seasonal subjects. Tamron Lenses for Nikon and Cannon SLRs can be borrowed for demo use. **Preregister by calling Sunny Schick at 424-1615; cost is \$25.00. Minimum 5, Max 40.**

Scrapbooking “Crop Till You Drop” at Fox Island:

Oct. 18, and Dec. 6, Fridays from 6 p.m. till midnight. Cost \$10 per class.

Vacation pictures are beckoning! Creative Memories Consultant Sherina Hewson will be on hand. Pizza can be ordered for an additional \$5. Everyone usually brings an optional snack to share (not required.) Additionally, crafters that need table space may spend their time sewing or crafting for the same fee. Paid pre-registration is required five days in advance. Just send a check made out to Allen County Parks, Attn: Natalie Haley, 7324 Yohne Rd., Fort Wayne IN 46809, with a note letting me know for which night you would like to reserve your spot. You will have until 24 hours prior to cancel, and we'll give you credit for a future session.



TAI CHI with Sandy Gebhard continues on Wednesdays, 6 p.m to 7 p.m. You can join in with an \$8 drop-in fee. Call Ron to register.

Gear up for Project Feederwatch: Nov. 9, Saturday 9:30-11:30 a.m. Meet with Cynthia and Ed Powers of Stockbridge Audubon Society in the Bird Observation Building and learn how to participate in the 27th year of Project Feederwatch. Preregister by 11/4; cost is \$2 park admission and a birdseed or suet donation. More info at feederwatch@cornell.edu.



Owl Prowls with Ron Zartman: Dec. 21, 5:30 to 7:30 and January 11. Learn about our resident owls and go outdoors to try to call some in. Preregister 5 days ahead, cost \$2.

Nov. 23, Saturday: Pre Thanksgiving 5K trail run, register 8:30-9:45, start time 10 a.m. For more information and fees call Ron. Sponsored by Fort Wayne Track Club.

Nov. 23 6-7:30 p.m.: Night Hike with Ron; cost \$2, preregister by 11/18.

CROSS COUNTRY SKI CLINICS Dec. 21 and Jan. 11, Saturdays. Cost \$8 includes ski rental, call Ron for more information and to pre-register.



Indiana Master Naturalist Continuing Education Series:

Oct. 1, Tuesday 2-4 p.m. “Spider Biology” led by Jody Heaston; hopefully you got the e-mail announcing it before this newsletter comes out.

Nov. 19, Tuesday 2-4 p.m.

“Deer and other Mammals” Led by Natalie Haley. Cost : FREE; snacks provided by Fox Island Alliance ; you are welcome to bring some too. Preregister by 11/14 so we can put together the required supplies. Call 260-449-3180.



Fox Island Alliance
Ed Powers
12206 W. Yoder Road
Roanoke, IN 46783

Officers:

Jeff Ormiston, President
 Liz Hincks, Vice President
 Pam George, Treasurer
 Bill Seidel, Secretary

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Vera Dulin, Phil Herrick, Kate Ferguson, and John McCory

Fox Tale Editor:

Cynthia Powers

The **Fox Island Alliance** is a volunteer not-for-profit organization. Its purposes are to help preserve the natural features of Fox Island County Park, to assist its orderly development as a nature preserve, to raise funds to facilitate its development, to promote Fox Island's use as an educational center, and to coordinate volunteer efforts.

MEMBERSHIPS EXPIRE ON MARCH 31. CHECK YOUR ADDRESS LABEL TO BE SURE.

Use the application to the right and check the "Renewal" area!!

Fox Island Alliance Membership Application __New__ Renewal

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

__ Check if you would like to receive your Fox Tale by email

— Check if you do not want your name published

Please Circle One:

Students \$5 - Senior \$5 - 2 Seniors \$10 - Indiv. \$15 - Family \$20

Sustaining \$30 - Patron \$50

Additional gift \$__ Education \$__ Exhibits \$__ Scholarship

\$__ Preservation

Total Dues and Gifts \$ __

If this membership is a gift, enter donor's name:

Check if you are interested in volunteering. You will be contacted.

Will your employer match your gift to FIA?

Check with your Human Resources/Personnel Department.

FIA is a 501 (c) (3) organization; extra gifts are tax deductible.

Make your check payable to FIA, Inc. and mail with this form to:

Ed Powers, Membership 12206 W. Yoder Rd., Roanoke, IN 46783