



It's a Very Good Sign

By Jeff Ormiston, Past President, Fox Island Alliance



On Friday June 12th the building formerly known as the “bird observation building” at Fox Island was formally re-named the “Vera Dulin Wildlife Observation Building” with the installation of a beautiful sign on the building that was designed by Vera’s daughter Carol Roberts.

Carol and her husband Randy looked on as the sign was installed on the building that once served as the original Nature Center, where Vera ran the volunteer program in the early days of Fox Island County Park. Vera was a long time board member of the Fox Island Alliance, and Carol was very instrumental in the formation of the Fox Island Alliance as the support group for the park. Carol also provided other pictures displayed inside the building. A grand opening will be planned later this summer so watch for notification of this date.

Ed. Note: The Vera Building is a great place to volunteer!



The Torch Is Passed

The annual meeting of the Fox Island Alliance board of directors was held June 8th and officers of the board were elected during the meeting. Officers for the coming year are, Brett Fisher – president, Liz Hincks – vice-president, Jeff Ormiston – vice-president, Carol Gaham – secretary.

Brett Fisher has been a FIA board member since November of 2013. He is a graduate of Wright State University and has been a staff member of Allen County Parks and Rec, Ft. Wayne Parks and Rec and Acres Land Trust. Brett brings much experience and many talents which will be valuable to the Alliance as he serves as our president.



It's a privilege to live in Indiana!

2015 winners of the Fox Island Alliance's Science Fair awards:

Hi, my name is Calvin Madsen. I am a 6th grader. I have a younger brother and two older sisters. We all live with my mom and dad, and cat Pearl. I enjoy playing basketball and running cross country. I like playing other sports for fun.

I chose this science fair project because I wanted to try to figure out a way to help people out during droughts, particularly the southwest.

For my project I wanted to see if grass could be watered using the waste water from houses, such as laundry and shower water. I planted grass seeds in 6 different containers. Two of the containers I watered with regular tap water, two with water from our washing machine (not a load with bleach) and two with water from a shower where the water contained shampoo, conditioner and liquid body wash. I found that all of the grass grew using the different types of water. The grass watered with tap water did grow the fastest, tallest and thickest, but not by far.



Dahlia and Eric Cobos St. Jude, grade 7



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Our science fair project this year, titled "The Evil Twin," examined ocean acidification and its effects on the shells of marine life.

We made seawater and added different amounts of vinegar (acetic acid) to change the pH and see how this affects empty mussel shells. What we found was that the shells in pH 7.5 had an overall reduction in weight of 1.94% and took an average of 2.88 kg. to break. Those in pH 7.8 had an overall reduction in weight of 0.688% and took an average of 5.75 kg. to break. Those in pH 8.1 had an overall reduction in weight of 0.436% and took an average of 6.05 kg. to break. The

weight loss indicated to us that the shells were dissolving in the solution, and as a result, becoming weaker. This could make survival for them much harder if they couldn't find a way to adjust or adapt to the ocean's changing pH value.

The oceans are not just amazingly beautiful, they are also tremendously important. According to scientists, the oceans stop millions of tons of CO₂ from going into our atmosphere every year, but if the oceans fill up with too much CO₂, it is possible that it won't be able to take in any more.

If the oceans are harmed, and can no longer function properly because of all the extra CO₂ that we're producing, it may not be just ocean life that will have to adapt to survive, but people as well. Therefore, reducing everyone's carbon footprint is important.



A Flash of Light in the Night

On a warm, summer evening, the darkness of night is suddenly interrupted by the twinkling of lights that seem to create patterns in the sky. A Fourth of July display? Not quite!

What you're seeing is the mating ritual of special beetles called lightning bugs, or fireflies. The larvae of these beetles are carnivores. They eat other insects, worms, snails, and slugs, which they inject with a numbing chemical to disable them. These summer visitors overwintered as larvae buried deep in the soil and emerged



last spring to feed. In early summer, they pupated for about 2½ weeks inside a mud chamber in the soil before emerging as adults. By mid-summer, the adult fireflies are now ready to signal each other with their lights and mate. The female's eggs will be laid under the soil a few days later. The eggs will hatch in about 4 weeks. The larvae, once hatched, will spend all their time eating until fall. Then, they will burrow underground and overwinter until spring, starting the cycle all over again.

These evening light shows you are seeing are performed by male fireflies. They flash patterns of light to females. The females signal in response from perches in or near the ground. When the male sees the female's flash, he continues to signal and moves closer. Eventually, through a series of flashes, they find each other and mate. Scientists believe they also use these eerie light displays to defend their territory, and warn off predators.

Each of the 2,000 species of firefly sends different mating signals that can be recognized by the number, duration, and time lapses between flashes. This light given off from the underside of their abdomens is called **bioluminescence**. It occurs when oxygen and an organic compound called **luciferin** react together in the presence of the enzyme, **luciferase**. The reaction creates light. Because it produces no heat, scientists refer to firefly light as "cold light." Although other insects can produce light, fireflies are the only insects that can flash their light on and off in distinct signals. Even the eggs and larvae of some firefly species glow, thus the origin of the name "glow worm".

Light pollution is a major factor in the disappearance of firefly species all over the world. Scientists have discovered that the pattern of firefly flashes can be interrupted by the lights of a passing car, or lights from a home, store, or streetlight, making it difficult for fireflies to signal each other during mating—meaning fewer firefly larvae are born next season.



Fireflies are important for more reasons than entertaining you on a warm summer night. Chemicals from fireflies can be used to study many diseases, from cancer to muscular dystrophy.

Create some lasting summer memories by catching these mysterious creatures and studying them up close. Start with a glass jar with a screw-on lid. Punch holes in the lid to allow fresh air inside. Be sure to release any caught fireflies before the evening's end, as the beetles cannot survive long in captivity!

Are you wondering what is coming up at Fox Island, and maybe at Metea County Park as well? Check www.allencountyparks.org, and click on “Wild Grapevine” newsletter.

Lots of programs for all ages. **Most require pre-registration** and a small fee. And don't forget the summer day camps!

These are the ones submitted by press time:



Fox Island Bats July 30, Thursday, 8-10 p.m.

Go Batty as you learn about Fox Island's bats, and then look and listen for them down by Bowman Lake.

Pre-register by 7/27; free with park admission

Raising and Tagging Monarch Butterflies: August 16, Sunday 1:30-3 p.m.

Learn about raising and tagging everyone's favorite butterfly, just before they migrate south. Take home a butterfly incubator.

Pre-register by 8/10; free with park admission

Dragons and Damsels: August 30, Sunday 1:30-3 p.m.

Learn about the dragonflies and damselflies of Fox Island and try your hand at capturing a specimen for examination. Pre-register by 8/25, free with park admission.

To pre-register call 449-3180 or Jeff Ormiston's cell phone 260-414-2538.



E.G.

July 25, 2009



Fox Island Alliance
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Roanoke, IN 46783

Officers:

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 Carol Gaham, Secretary

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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.

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