



CONGRATULATIONS, JEFF!

The Environmental Education Association of Indiana (EEAI) this fall presented the 2020 Joe Wright Award to Jeff Ormiston, environmental educator for Allen County Parks.

The award is given annually in recognition of specific achievements in the field of environmental education. Past recipients include teachers, naturalists, education project coordinators, and natural resource agency personnel.

The nomination was made by Natalie Haley, Fox Island's park and education manager, and the award decided by the board of directors of EEAI.

Per Natalie's nomination:

I would like to nominate Jeff Ormiston, Environmental Educator for Allen County Parks in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Jeff was a steel worker for Valbruna steel in Fort Wayne for years. That may have been his job, but his hobbies and passion reside outdoors. I met Jeff Ormiston in the Indiana Master Naturalist class in 2008 or 2009. I was the EE for Allen County Parks at that time and I wanted to see what they were teaching the people who wanted to volunteer as naturalists for our park and other organizations, so I took the class. Jeff Ormiston became a volunteer for the parks while gaining hours to complete the IMN course. Jeff soon became the President of the Fox Island Alliance, Fox Island County Park's friends board. As a volunteer he began working on revamping Fox Island's butterfly and bee habitats. He spent so much time at Fox Island that we hired him as a part-time naturalist. He often worked over 40 hours and only claimed 20, while also using his paycheck to purchase items, such as numerous microscopes, in order to conduct in-depth studies of the park animals with park visitors. He was working over 40 hours some weeks and we loved his work so much that we hired him as the full-time Environmental Educator following my promotion as Park and Ed. Mgr. Jeff has spear-headed a monarch observation program that has grown to where he has built a butterfly house and may often be found with hundreds of caterpillars, chrysalis, etc... taking over Fox Island's library (the chrysalis cannot stay outside or the mice get in and eat them). His interests do not stop at monarchs. He has developed two blogs for the parks, showcasing various animals and plants found in the park. He often chooses a group of animals, such as dragonflies, beaver, river otter, salamanders, snakes, and frogs; or a specific plant - skunk cabbage, for example. He then goes into full immersion-mode and figures out ways to photograph and videotape them, oftentimes including microscopic pictures he has taken through various means (and at his own expense). He shares these photos/videos



Jeff Ormiston has been honored for his education work at Fox Island.

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New computer equipment for Fox Island Alliance

By Carol Gaham



Photo by fauxels from Pexels

In 2020, members of the Alliance board performed a review of the computer equipment it owns. Two laptops and two projectors were reviewed for general operation and connectivity to each other. We found one of the computers was so outdated it was running Windows XP, and the other one was running Windows 8.1 and MSOffice 2010. One of the projectors was found to be marginal due to brightness and connectivity. The newer projector, while usable, does not have current technology.

A proposal was submitted to the board for approval to recycle the XP computer, upgrade the newer Toshiba computer with current OS and MSOffice software for board use, and purchase a new laptop and projector for educational use. The board

approved the request at the November meeting.

The Alliance now has updated equipment to support its educational programs, including Indiana Master Naturalist, and a workable laptop to support Alliance administration (“Fox Tale,” minutes, etc.). We will have everything in place and training done in time for the 2021 Indiana Master Naturalist class. This will benefit presenters and students both onsite and remote. The Alliance Board of Directors is committed to educational excellence sponsored by both the Alliance and Fox Island County Park.

Congratulations, Jeff! Continued from Page 1

on Facebook, in his blog, in power-points, at various on and off-site programs for young and old! He also showcases each animal/plant group that he is studying on bulletin boards or with live exhibits he has developed so that he can talk to any park visitors about those chosen animals or plants.

He has also continued to volunteer for the Education and Conservation Committees (and probably other committees) for the Fox Island Alliance. He also runs the Indiana Master Naturalist class at Fox Island with volunteer educator, Pam George.

With the Covid virus, he has not slowed down much. Although our nature center has closed temporarily, he has been here every day. He has added a new blog showing people how the park is changing during each season. He has even whittled or carved out various old men, stars, and animals from basswood and then hangs them along the park trails. He then challenges people to visit Fox Island’s trails to find the hidden treasures. Hints are given and he spends hours carving new treasures to encourage people to keep hiking our trails.

I am positive that there are numerous other projects (such as his children’s outdoor play space) that Jeff has worked on and begun that we do not have time to list here. I am also happy to report that Jeff continues to work tirelessly to produce creative programming no matter the situation.



Some carvings made by Jeff Ormiston.

Loss of Darrell Will will greatly be felt

Darrell Will, Fox Island Alliance board vice president and chairman of the Indiana Master Naturalist Alumni, died Jan. 2.

Darrell was instrumental in forming the Allen County alumni group after his graduation from the IMN program in 2016.

Darrell, 72, was a watchmaker for and later president of Will Jewelers until his retirement in April 2015.

I would see Darrell at several nature-themed activities and always found him to be a friendly face. He inspired those of us in the IMN Class of 2016 to put in the extra hours and go for our advanced certificates.

-Lisa Esquivel Long



Lisa Esquivel Long

Darrell Will, left, visits a local nature preserve.

I met Darrell thru IMN. We were in the same class and had many common interests. He encouraged me to join the alliance and become an active board member. He and his wife, Susan, attended various FIA events together such as the annual volunteer appreciation dinner. He will be deeply missed in our community of nature lovers.

-Terri Habig

Alliance board notes

The alliance board met Jan. 11 via Zoom.

The board is planning to create a memorial for Darrell Will. We'll keep you updated on what form that takes.

A four-phase process for the renovation of the Tree area in the Nature Center has been revised due to input and preferences by the park staff. The revision was approved by the board's education committee. Plans have not yet been finalized.

The alliance has a Tree Bio-Box that teachers can check out to use with students. It was time to replace items, including the carrying case. Once some printer ink is purchased, the needed color pages will be placed in all three copies of the teacher's manual. The check-out process is also being revised.

The board is making plans for the annual meeting, which is usually held in the spring. It had to be held later via Zoom last year because of COVID-19.

The schedule for the 2021 IMN group through the end of April will be held via Zoom. After April members will have outside hikes. Because of the virtual nature of the program, the cost has been reduced from \$120 to \$80.

Be sure to check out

Natalie Haley, Fox Island's park and education manager, on the podcast *Midwestoration* at www.midwestoration.com/episodes/fox-island-county-park-with-natalie-haley



Trekking Tracks @ Fox Island Park



Great Blue Heron

Light snow is falling
The world seems asleep.
But deep in the woods
Many creatures still creep!



White-tailed Deer



These creatures are out there.
And how do I know?
I simply need follow
Their tracks in the snow!



Red Fox

Wherever they're going;
Whatever they're doing,
These creatures leave signs
Of what they're pursuing.



Rabbit



Food, water, shelter –
So basic their needs.



Grey Squirrel

They scamper through woodlots,
And meadows with weeds.



Coyote



Become a detective
And track down their route
To find what survival
Is really about!!



by Pam George

Anniversary birds over the last 60 years

By Ed Powers

A little over a year ago, Cynthia and I celebrated our 60th, or diamond anniversary. Since we are both birders, rather than spring for an actual diamond, I searched for a bird with “diamond” in its name. So, for an anniversary gift, I got a framed print of a Diamond Firetail. This led me to wonder what birds could stand in for other traditional anniversary gifts. Unfortunately, not many are found in Indiana, and some anniversaries have none at all, and a couple of my choices are a bit strained.

1 st	Paper	Paperback Flycatcher in northern Australia
2 nd	Cotton	Cotton Pygmy-Goose in India to Australia
3 rd	Leather	none
4 th	Fruit, flowers	many Fruit-Doves and Flower-Peckers in Indonesia
5 th	Wood	Wood Duck
6 th	Iron	none
7 th	Wool, copper	Wooly-necked Stork in Southeast Asia and Africa; several hummingbirds in South America have “copper” in their names
8 th	Bronze	Bronzed Cowbird from south Texas and southeast Arizona to South America
9 th	Pottery	None, but Clay-colored Sparrow in North America
10 th	Tin	None, but the Tinamous of Central and South America
11 th	Steel	Steely-vented Hummingbird of Venezuela and Colombia
12 th	Silk	Phainopepla of California is in the family Silky-Flycatchers
13 th	Lace	Laced Woodpecker of southeast Asia to Indonesia
14 th	Ivory	Ivory Gull of the high Arctic
15 th	Crystal	none
20 th	Porcelain	none
25 th	Silver	Silverbird of Kenya and Tanzania
30 th	Pearl	Pearl Kite of South America
35 th	Coral, jade	Coral-billed Scimitar-Babbler of southeast Asia; nothing for jade
40 th	Ruby	Ruby-throated Hummingbird, a summer resident here
45 th	Sapphire	Several hummingbirds in South America
50 th	Gold	American Goldfinch, a year-round resident
55 th	Emerald	More hummingbirds
60 th	Diamond	Diamond Firetail of eastern Australia



Fox Island Alliance

Ed Powers
12206 W. Yoder Road
Roanoke, IN 46783

Officers:

Kate Sanders, President
Darrell Will, Vice President
Carol Gaham, Vice President
Liz Hincks, Secretary
Nathan Arata, Treasurer

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Nathan Arata, Clara Conroy, Grace Danel, Carol Gaham, Terri Habig, Liz Hincks, Lisa Esquivel Long, Tim Ormiston, Ed Powers, Kate Sanders, and Darrell Will

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Kate Ferguson, Pam George, Phil Herrick, Dr. Solomon Isiorho, John McCory, Iona Mensch and Jeff Ormiston

Fox Tale Editor:

Lisa Esquivel Long

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 "Renewal"

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

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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

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