



## Nature's Christmas

by Tori Mumaw

On the second Saturday of December, Metea County Park hosts its annual public event, Nature's Christmas. Children and adults alike are given the opportunity to enjoy the holiday season with fun crafts, homemade treats, a horse drawn wagon ride and a picture with Santa.

Every year the FIA Education Committee represents the Alliance at this event by having a table set up for a holiday craft. This year we



had a variety of stamps, stickers, and markers to make unique Christmas cards!

Some crafts involved paints and allowed for one to get creative, others made ornaments, another provided children with the opportunity to decorate a picture frame for their picture with Santa! This event is sure to bring out some smiling faces as everyone enjoys the holiday season by incorporating nature at the park.

If you missed it this year be sure to come check it out next December! Nature's Christmas is a wonderful way to support Allen County Parks.



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## Seasons Greetings!



Winter is here again, and with this season comes a unique opportunity for us to reflect upon the past year and to feel excitement for what 2024 brings. I am glad to say that we will host our 50th anniversary celebration at Fox Island this year. We have some special events plan for our day together. Save the Date! 50th anniversary celebration & annual meeting on Saturday, April 13th 2024.

For over a year now, park managers have allowed us to do work during the extended closure of Fox Island County Park. From behind the scenes, the alliance has carried out several projects. I would like to share with you some of the year's activities.

We continue to update exhibits inside of the nature center. A new hands-on exhibit has been installed near a wall mural being painted with inspiration from depictions in a James B. Nardi book. Most recently we approved funds for signage that supports an outdoor eagle's nest installation.

The conservation committee volunteers work under the direction of park management. Each season we've assisted in habitat restoration and invasive species remediation efforts. Storm damage funds have also been used for professional services to assist land management efforts.

New buttons have been added to our website that link to Fox Island County Park and Indiana Master Naturalist sites. I am proud to highlight that the alliance continues to provide support to our award winning chapter of the Indiana Master Naturalist program of Allen County. Many organizations benefit from IMN graduates and alumni groups. Our members lend support as program leaders, speakers, guest experts, and program support. Save the Date! The IMN Gathering will take place in Allen County September 27-29.

The alliance will unveil a refreshed logo in 2024. The redesign will reflect our organization as we turn 50 and communicate our iconic branding more effectively.

Once the park re-opens, we will host events and activities that support fellowship and stewardship opportunities. Some events will be social, such as a solstice hike. Other events will be volunteer based, like summer beach clean-up events.

For 49 years, the talent, dedication, passion, and resourcefulness of our members has kept us going. We are powered by remarkable people. Generous contributions of time and money have been made, year after year. It is a golden time for us. April brings us be together in celebration of our accomplishments. It will be a time for us to get reacquainted at Fox Island. I do hope you will join us in celebrating our journey.

Sincerely,

*Terri Habig*

Board President

# Bird photos from Fox Island

from Cynthia and Ed Powers



*Can you  
name them all?*

*(Answers on page 4)*

# **Indiana Master Naturalist program in Allen County**

by Tori Mumaw

The Indiana Master Naturalist Program is an educational/volunteer program developed by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources to provide citizens with hands-on opportunities to learn about our state's natural features and resources.

There are a few spots still open for the 2024 Indiana Master Naturalist program. For more information or registration see our website at [foxislandalliance.org](http://foxislandalliance.org), please direct any questions to Tori Mumaw at [mumawvictoria@gmail.com](mailto:mumawvictoria@gmail.com).

## **Invasive plant removal**

by Dan Preest, Conservation committee chair

Efforts to remove invasive plants will continue during the winter months. Park staff have engaged Vision Scapes to focus on the area between the lake road and Yohne Road. The crew will work west from the intersection of the main and lake roads to the oak savanna.

Fox Island Alliance has hired Laura Stine Gardens to continue invasive removal around the lake area. They will address honeysuckle resprout along with autumn olive and multiflora rose. Work will be performed as weather permits the use of the appropriate herbicide.

## **Volunteer hours due**

by Terri Habig

Volunteer hours are due for the 2023 season.

Send your tallied hours to [volunteer@foxislandalliance.org](mailto:volunteer@foxislandalliance.org) by March 31st to be included in the annual report April 13th.

## **Bird names from page 3**

In order from left to right, from the top down:

1. Downy woodpecker & Hairy woodpecker
2. White-throated sparrow
3. Eastern Towhee
4. Downy and Pileated woodpeckers
5. Red-breasted nuthatch
6. Rusty blackbird
7. Eastern bluebird
8. Fox sparrow
9. Pine Siskin
10. Cooper's hawk
11. White-crowned sparrow

## IMN alumni meeting

by Clara Conroy

The last Indiana Master Naturalist alumni meeting was held on Nov. 16 at Metea County Park. The meeting agenda included these items: The previous meeting was held at Sweeny Homestead and a tour guide described how it played into the history of Fort Wayne; Fox Island Park update with opening hopefully in late spring 2024 after trail conditioning is completed; and the IMN State 2024 Gathering will be held September 27-29 in Allen County.

Following the business portion of the meeting, Bob Dispenza with Allen County parks presented a living history on the Navy during the Civil War. Once Bob put on his commander's hat, he became Lieutenant Commander George Brown from Rushville, IN, serving the Union in 1863. LCDR Brown told the audience how the Navy not



*Models of navy ships from the Civil War era.*

only had ships on the seas, but also had many gunboats on the inland waterways. The purpose of the fleet was multifold, including – as blockades to stop supplies from reaching the south, to hunt down commerce traders (pirates), to take possession of rivers to protect bridges, as military transport, and to fire on the Confederate army.



*An assortment of ship items.*



*Sailors had access to multiple types of weapons.*

LCDR Brown had a large assortment of objects on hand that would be found on his ships. Some of the common tools displayed included binoculars, sextant, a calling horn and lines (rope). He also had a variety of artillery and weapons such as different sizes and kinds of cannon shot, a boarding ax, various firearms, bayonets and a boarding spike. The ironclad coal-powered ships had a lot of firepower as they could carry more shot and gunpowder than

troops on foot could haul. New recruits had to train on receiving ships for up to six years to become a competent sailor. A sailor's duties included shoveling coal, oarsman and gunner, depending on experience. Only one person on board was allowed to carry matches due to the large amount of highly explosive cargo.

After the presentation, LCDR Brown took off his hat and once again became Bob Dispenza to answer questions from the audience.



*New recruit Tim Ormiston practices sword fighting with LCDR Brown using singlesticks.*



# Fox Island Alliance

**Ed Powers**  
**12206 W. Yoder Road**  
**Roanoke, IN 46783**

Officers:

- Terri Habig, President
- Jeff Ormiston, Vice President
- Pam George, Vice President
- Dan Preest, Secretary
- Tim Ormiston, Treasurer

**Board of Directors:**

- Clara Conroy, Pam George, Terri Habig, Lisa Esquivel Long, Tori Mumaw, Jeff Ormiston, Tim Ormiston, Ed Powers, Dan Preest, Dora Rogers, Kate Sanders, Carrie Vrabel, Mandy Waters

**Directors Emeritus:**

- Kate Ferguson, Phil Herrick, Dr. Solomon Isiorho, Iona Mensch

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"**

[www.foxislandalliance.org](http://www.foxislandalliance.org)

**Fox Island Alliance Membership 2024**  **New**  **Renewal**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Full Dues**

- Individual \$15
- Veteran/Military/spouse \$5 each
- Family \$20
- Senior (55+) \$5 each
- Full-time student (any age) \$5
- Sustaining \$30
- Patron \$50

**Additional gift** \$\_\_\_ General \$\_\_\_ Exhibits

**Total Dues and Gifts** \$\_\_\_\_\_

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

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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