

2012 Lightning Bug Run Scheduled for May 12



It was a dark and stormy night. The steady, all day rain had slowed to a gentle mist. Hundreds of invisible night creatures tested their vocal chords, creating a cacophony of sound as they prepared for their nighttime serenade. Fog emerged silently from the ground, gently spreading across the trail and wrapping itself around

each plant in the marsh and each tree in the woods. The muted glow of hundreds of luminaries disappeared into the distance.

Luminaries? Yes, luminaries. Hundreds of them marking a 3.1-mile course inside Buckeye Woods Park. The warm light from the glow sticks tucked inside their milk jug homes beckoned to the runners and walkers who were gathering in anticipation of the start of the first annual Lightning Bug Run last May 13. The air was filled with sounds of laughter, nervous chatter, and greetings between friends and neighbors.

The idea for a night race was spawned by Bob Daniels who had ran and biked at Buckeye Woods Park many times. He felt a nighttime event would provide a unique way to experience nature. Hundreds of others felt the same as the word spread about the race. The cap limit of 400 was reached three weeks prior to the race start date. "Marvelous," "awesome," "wonderful," "mysterious," and "scary" was how attendees described their experiences.

There was never a question whether to present the race/walk again in 2012. The registration limit has been raised to 500. Lightning Bug Run information can be found at lightningbugrun.wordpress.com/ or by visiting the Medina County Park District website, medinacountyparks.com. The 2012 race/walk is scheduled for May 12 with a 9:20 p.m. start time.

The Lightning Bug Run is co-sponsored by the non-profit Run for the Trails, Inc., the Medina County Park District and Friends of the Parks. Profits from the event are specifically earmarked for extensions of existing trails in Medina County and in Seville. Run for the Trails, Inc. also hosts the Run for the Trails 5K, an annual Labor Day race/walk held in Seville.

If running around in the woods in the dark sounds like fun, I suggest registering early as nearly 50 people have already pre-registered. There will be no race day registration, so jump online now and sign up.

Hope to see you May12,

Bob Daniels and Dennis Gordon
 Co-race directors
lightningbugrun@gmail.com

Putt-ing through the Ages



Open weekends only (Fri., Sat. & Sun.)
 January 6 to February 26 from 12 to 8 p.m.

Held at Buffalo Creek Retreat
 8708 Hubbard Valley Road, Seville, OH 44273
 Fun for all ages. Free.

Sponsored by: Lodi Lumber and Friends of the Parks

Medina County Park District is hosting its first big exhibit this winter called *Putt-ing Through the Ages*. The exhibit is a 12-hole miniature golf course inside Buffalo Creek Retreat that takes you through the amazing journey of the geologic ages of Ohio.

Make Your Shelter Reservations for Summer and Fall Now



Are you planning a graduation party, reunion or family outing? If so, be sure to reserve your shelter today.

Visit www.medinacountyparks.com to view photos as well as shelter information. Please call the park office at 330-722-9364 to make reservations.

New Life from Dead Trees

By: Dan Bertsch, Chief Naturalist

Many people believe that a dead tree has outlived its usefulness and do not consider the value that dead or dying trees provide to a forest community. More than 80 species of birds in North America nest only in dead or dying trees. These birds are called "cavity nesters," and many of them feed on insects that damage living trees and shrubs. Removing the bird nest sites would mean an overpopulation of insect pests.

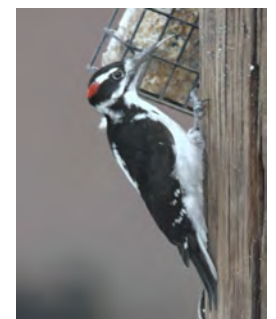
Woodpeckers have special adaptations that enable them to chisel holes in dead trees for nesting sites. After abandoning these cavities, many other species of birds, including black-capped chickadees, tufted titmice, tree swallows, and bluebirds, build their nests in these holes. The large pileated woodpecker holes can be used by screech-owls, wood ducks, and mammal species such as flying squirrels and red squirrels.

Forest mammals such as the fox squirrel, gray squirrel, raccoon, and opossum utilize hollowed areas in trees for their dens. Probably the first thing you learned about squirrels in elementary school was that they plant trees by burying the nuts of oaks, walnuts and hickories. Some species of bats, including the endangered Indiana bat, form nurseries under the bark of dead trees.

As important as dead trees are while they are standing, the living saga continues after the trees fall to the ground. Hollow logs can serve as shelter or den sites for skunks and other animals. Under almost every log in the woods you can find tunnels of white-footed mice and shrews that find these areas excellent places to hide from predators.

Examine a rotting log, and you will discover more biodiversity there than in all the rest of the forest above ground level. Mosses, ferns, wildflowers and young trees begin colonizing on the decaying wood. A wide range of animal species, including ants, spiders, termites, millipedes, earthworms, bees, sow bugs, springtails, beetle larva, slugs, snails and salamanders, inhabit this domain. This smorgasbord of fauna is food for a host of wildlife from black bears to tree frogs.

Finally, when the decomposing wood becomes part of the forest soil, all of the materials taken in during the life of a tree are released for a new generation of plant life. With this cycle of nutrients, a new forest is continually reborn.



Woodpecker



Want to do something different for Valentine's Day?

Saturday, February 11 - Sweetheart Hike - Wolf Creek Environmental Center - 7:30 p.m. Bundle up and bring your sweetheart to enjoy a romantic stroll along the snow-covered trails at Wolf Creek. Ages 16 and over. No registration required. Free.