

Support Friends of the Parks with your 2026 Membership

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Indicate your membership category:

☐ \$10 Individual ☐ \$15 Family ☐ \$25 Sponsor ☐ \$50 Super Sponsor ☐ \$100 Benefactor ☐ \$500 Major Benefactor

Make check payable to Friends of the Parks and mail to:

Friends of the Parks, 1175 Hilltop Road, Indiana, PA 15701

You may also submit your membership by scanning the QR code to the right or by going online to the Community Foundation of the Alleghenies at:







https://cfalleghenies.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create/fund?funit_id=1464




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YOUR MEMBERSHIP
SUPPORTS OUR
COUNTY PARKS AND
TRAILS AND YELLOW
CREEK STATE PARK.
THANK YOU!



Friends of the Parks 2026 Programs

This schedule available on-line at www.indianacountyparks.org by clicking on the Friends of the Parks link.		
Date / Time	Location	Program Title / Speaker / Description
1/31/2026 Saturday 10:30 AM	Indiana County Conservation District Discovery Center 435 Hamill Road Indiana, PA	Warm Up the Cold Winter Months with Winter Sowing - <i>Theresa McDevitt, Kay Snyder, and Blake Mauthe</i> - The days may be cold and dark, but you can still be starting next year's garden with winter sowing, an easy and inexpensive way to start native plants, flowers, and many vegetables outside in winter in mini-greenhouses made of recycled materials. Discover how, when, and why winter sowing can work for you and celebrate National Seed Swap Day by taking home some seeds, and bringing some to share if you like, so you can start planting right away! Please pre-register by emailing Theresa at tmcdevit1886@gmail.com .
2/7/2026 Saturday 10:00 AM	Blue Spruce Park Pavilion #1	Hot Chocolate Walk - <i>Ray Winstead & Barb Hauge</i> - Join us as we kickoff the 10th Annual Indiana County Decathlon series with your choice of a winter walk led by Barb Hauge or hand feeding the chickadees with Ray Winstead. Warm up with a complimentary cup of Hot Chocolate. An easy walk on paved area and/or moderate walk on trails. Please dress appropriately for the winter weather.
2/28/2026 Saturday Luncheon: 12:00 PM Program: 1:00 PM	St. Andrew's Village: Conference Room, First Floor 	Member Luncheon and Kuala Lumpur & Bali - <i>Malcolm Hermann</i> - Skyscrapers and beaches. This presentation covers a two-week trip to Malaysia and Indonesia, specifically Malaysia's Capital, Kuala Lumpur, and the storied island of Bali in Indonesia. Some of the topics included are language, art, cultural diversity, food, history, and religion. The travelers enjoyed having a local tour guide from Indiana, PA. This presentation will be in conjunction with the annual Members' Luncheon, sponsored by InFirst Bank, Indiana, PA. Additional information about the luncheon will be provided in the December FOP newsletter. Space will be limited and pre-registration will be required by calling 724-463-8636 before 2/19/2026.
3/14/2026 Saturday 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Indiana County Conservation District 435 Hamill Road Indiana, PA	Community Gardens of Indiana County - <i>Marie Olson & Misty Hunt</i> - Join Marie Olson from Indiana and Misty Hunt from Homer City for an inspiring look at the flourishing community gardens across Indiana County! Discover what's sprouting this season - from new garden projects to creative collaborations that bring neighbors together. Learn how you can dig in, whether by volunteering, joining events, or renting your own garden plot. Come get your hands in the soil and be part of a growing movement that's nourishing both community and connection!
3/21/2026 Saturday 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM	IUP Campus: Kopchick Hall Room 103 	Propagating Native Trees & Shrubs - <i>Dr. Mike Tyree & Tamara Hayes</i> - Propagating plant material is a great way to maintain native seed sources. These techniques are an easy way to acquire plant material for restoration projects, home use, or to make some money. This workshop will cover the steps of collecting, storing, and propagating native trees and shrubs from seeds and cuttings. Specifically, we will discuss when and how to collect seeds and cuttings, how to plant, and grow native plant material. <i>In conjunction with the Allegheny Arboretum at IUP**</i>
3/28/2026 Saturday 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM	Blue Spruce Park Lodge	History/Photo Tour of the Hudson River, NY - <i>Rebecca Sterley & Cindy Rogers</i> - Carved out by a glacial dam breaking about 20,000 years ago, the Hudson River is basically a long fjord, flowing 315 miles from the Adirondack Mountains to the Atlantic Ocean. We'll share bits of geology, the early peoples, whaling, and history. Highlights will be the Catskills, Hyde Park, Rhinebeck Village, West Point, Lyndhurst Mansion, Hudson River School of Art, Wooden Boat School, and Rondout Lighthouse. It is an intriguing and beautiful river.
4/1/2026 Wednesday 8:00 AM	On-Line	FOP & Penguin Court Native Plant Fundraiser - Our website is expected to be live today for ordering native plants: https://friends-of-the-parks-plant-sale.square.site . This site will be open for ordering through 5/10/2026. Plant pick-up will be Saturday, 5/16/2026 from 9 AM - 12 PM at the Blue Spruce Park Lodge. More info about the plant sale will be in the FOP Spring Newsletter.
4/2/2026 Thursday 6:00 PM	Blue Spruce Park Lodge 	Indiana County Habitats in 1776 - <i>Jeff Osborne</i> - At a fireside chat, Jeff Osborne, Service Forester for the Gallitzin State Forest District, will take us back to 1776. At that time, Indiana County consisted of a mature virgin forest interspersed with a mosaic of meadows and shrublands. The mixture of tree species differed from today's secondary growth forest and, of course, many of the trees were much larger. The forest floor was open in some areas and a thicket in others. Wear layers of clothing and if you have one, bring a camp chair in case of an overflow crowd. If it rains, we will be in the lodge. <i>In conjunction with the Indiana County 1776 Speaker Series*</i>
4/11/2026 Saturday 8:00 AM	Yellow Creek State Park Office	Migrating Water Birds with the Todd Bird Club - <i>Roger & Margaret Higbee</i> - Yellow Creek State Park is one of the top five birding destinations in Pennsylvania because of the variety of migrating water birds. Todd Bird Club will take us to some of the best vantage points in the park during the peak of migration season. We will meet at the park office and drive to several locations near the lake for short walks. Bring binoculars, a spotting scope, and a bird ID guide, if you have them, or use ours.
4/11/2026 Saturday 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM	Pine Ridge Park 998 Pine Ridge Road Blairsville, PA Pavilion #1	Spring Mushroom Walk with Tree ID - <i>Dana Driscoll (PA School of Herbalism), Diana Baca (Oak Haven Farms), and Members of the Western PA Mushroom Club</i> - Join us for a spring mushroom and tree walk at Pine Ridge Park with the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club. Our interactive walk will focus on finding and identifying mushrooms that grow in early Spring. We will also focus on tree identification, which is key for mushroom hunting. Participants should wear sturdy footwear.
4/30/2026 Thursday 5:30 PM	Hoodlebug Trail	Hoodlebug vs Trolley Walk - <i>Ed Patterson</i> - Walk a portion of the Hoodlebug trail to look at the historic landscape features (remnants of the trolley line) and history of the two public transportation systems that operated in the county in the early 1900s. Meet at the parking area north of Homer City by the entrance to the Lindy Paving asphalt plant (access off Route 119 - across from the recycling center).
Date / Time	Location	Program Title / Speaker / Description
5/2/2026 Saturday 10:00 AM	Yellow Creek State Park Office Parking Lot	Native Spring Wildflowers vs Invasive Plants - <i>Ed Donley, Barb Hauge, and Jake McDermott</i> - Join the Plant Patrol group for a walk on the Laurel Run Trail. Over the last two years volunteers with Plant Patrol have been removing invasive vinca (common periwinkle) in this area abundant with native spring wildflowers. Learn about the removal strategies for vinca and other invasives to improve the habitat for native plants. Information on how you can help will be shared.
5/8/2026 Friday 1:00 PM	Vintondale, PA (Directions will be provided upon registration)	Blacklick Creek Treatment Plant Tour - <i>Jon Smoyer</i> - Join the Bureau of Mine Reclamation for this tour of the year old \$27M treatment plant used to clean up the iron, aluminum, and acidity from Blacklick Creek. We will tour the outside treatment areas and some indoor areas of the plant and learn all about this environmental reclamation facility. Space is limited and registration is required by calling the County Park Office at 724-463-8636 by 5/6/2026.
5/16/2026 Saturday 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	IUP Campus: Meet at the Heritage Garden on IUP campus between North Dining and Northern Suites 	IUP Garden Tour and Design Discussion - <i>Barb Hauge</i> - Join Landscape Architect and Allegheny Arboretum Co-Director Barbara Hauge for a walk and design discussion of three of the niche gardens on the IUP Campus (Heritage Garden, Fern Hollow, and Learning Classroom at Stauffer Hall). Learn landscape design principles and how they are used in these gardens and ideas for incorporating these ideas into your own gardens. <i>In conjunction with the Allegheny Arboretum at IUP**</i>
5/23/2026 Saturday 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM	Blacklick Valley Natural Area 800 McFeaters Rd. Seward, PA Meet at parking area at the end of McFeaters Road	Wandering the Blacklick Valley Natural Area - <i>Greg Tomb</i> - Come and join us for a morning in the Parker Tract of Blacklick Valley Natural Area. Hike a flat 2.5 mile loop trail along the Blacklick Creek floodplain. Spring bird migration will be in full swing and this is the perfect time to visit this wonderful, lesser-known Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Area. The skunk cabbage will be a month into growth for the season and the soon-to-be thick ground cover of cinnamon fern will likely be erupting. Early arriving Louisiana Waterthrush will be establishing nesting territories and resident Barred Owls will likely be rearing young. This is a great location to get your final spring sightings of white-throated and fox sparrows before they head north for the breeding season. There are also 3 or 4 convenient geocaches along the hike if you are so inclined. Please wear weather-appropriate clothing and footwear.
6/6/2026 Saturday 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM	Blue Spruce Park (Activities Throughout the Park)	Family Nature Palooza Day - The Children's Advisory Commission is sponsoring a fun day at Blue Spruce Park. Entire families are welcome: outside hiking & biking, kites, games, fishing, chances to win prizes, and many more outside activities. Food vendors and live entertainment. Pre-registration is encouraged. To register go to: www.childrensadvisorycommission.org or call 724-463-8200 ext. 8.
6/13/2026 Saturday 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	Blue Spruce Park Meet at Main Parking lot	Yoga Safari - <i>Tiffany Chan</i> - Calling all explorers—big and small! Join us for a playful Yoga Safari through the beauty of Blue Spruce Park. Together we'll discover the animals and plants that call this place home, and bring them to life through fun, nature-inspired yoga poses. From stretching like a tree to soaring like an eagle, we'll move, breathe deeply, and celebrate how good it feels to be alive in our bodies and connected to the natural world. This joyful adventure is perfect for kids of all ages (and grown-ups who love to play, too)! Please bring a towel or a blanket and wear comfortable clothing.
6/19/2026 Friday 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Blue Spruce Park Lakeside Center	How to Be Smarter When Using Your Smartphone Camera Workshop - <i>Dr. Ron Juliette</i> - Capture Nature's Beauty with Your Smartphone. Learn how to transform everyday, outdoor moments into stunning nature photographs - no fancy camera required! In this hands-on workshop, you'll discover simple techniques for composition, lighting, focus, and editing that bring your nature shots to life. Whether you're photographing landscapes, flowers, or wildlife, you'll leave with practical tips to elevate your smartphone photography and deepen your connection with the natural world. Bring your smartphone and dress for the weather.
6/24/2026 Wednesday 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM	Indiana County Conservation District 435 Hamill Road Indiana, PA	Shellebrating Reptiles - <i>Blake Mauthe</i> - Join us for an interactive adventure as we Shellebrate some of nature's coolest, cold-blooded creatures! This hands-on program lets participants get up close with live reptiles—from snakes to turtles—while learning about their unique adaptations, habitats, and the important roles they play in our local ecosystems. Recommended for ages 5 and up. Please pre-register by 6/22/2026 by emailing b.mauthe@iccdpa.org or calling 724-471-4751 x108.
7/11/2026 Saturday 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM	Donley Property 1243 Five Points Road Indiana, PA	Landscaping for Wildlife with Native Plants - <i>Ed Donley</i> - Experience a home landscape that is designed to benefit wildlife, including ponds, meadows, flower beds, and a bog garden. Learn how native plants support pollinators, caterpillars, birds, and small mammals. Discover ways to make your own suburban or rural landscape an integral part of nature's food web. Take home some free native flower seedlings to enhance your own garden. Please pre-register by emailing Ed at hedonley2@gmail.com or calling the County Park Office at 724-463-8636.
7/18/2026 Saturday 11:00 AM	Blue Spruce Park Pavilion #4 	Colonial Cooking - <i>Katie Gaudreau</i> - Learn about the different types of foods that the first settlers to the county had access to, how they would have cooked them, and what they would have eaten. This will include a cooking demonstration over an outdoor fire, weather permitting. All ages are welcome. <i>In conjunction with the Indiana County 1776 Speaker Series*</i>
7/22/2026 Wednesday 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM	Blue Spruce Park Pavilion #2 	Frontier Foraging: Edible & Medicinal Plant Walk - <i>Dana Driscoll</i> - Join us on an interactive walk to learn about 15-20 edible and medicinal plants that are in-season during the summer months. To celebrate the Indiana County 1776 and America 250 programming, a special emphasis will be placed on historical uses of local plants in season in the summer months - preparation, recipes, and uses. We will also place a special emphasis on harvesting invasive plants and on foraging ethics, practices, safety, and plant identification. Please have appropriate footwear for light hiking and bring bug spray. The walk will be cancelled in the event of an active thunderstorm. <i>In conjunction with the Indiana County 1776 Speaker Series*</i>

Date / Time	Location	Program Title / Speaker / Description
7/25/2026 Saturday 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM	Indiana County Conservation District 435 Hamill Road Indiana, PA	 Innovative Garden Tour: Mixing Modern & Traditional Methods - <i>Blake Mauthe</i> - Discover how technology, creativity, and tradition can work together to grow a healthier future. This interactive, gardening program showcases innovative methods - such as greenhouse growing, vertical systems, and pollinator-focused design - while also honoring Native American agricultural practices like the Three Sisters planting method. In recognition of America250PA, we'll explore how modern gardening continues to be shaped by Indigenous knowledge, and how gardeners today can blend both to build thriving, sustainable spaces. Recommended for ages 8 and up. Please pre-register by 7/23/2026 by emailing b.mauthe@iccdpa.org or calling 724-471-4751 x108. <i>In conjunction with the Indiana County 1776 Speaker Series*</i>
9/2/2026 Wednesday 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM	Yellow Creek State Park Woodland Pavilion	 Frontier Herbalism: Traditional Herbalism Practices in Western Pennsylvania - <i>Dana Driscoll</i> - Join Dana Driscoll from the Pennsylvania School of Herbalism to learn about how early Americans used plants for a range of medicinal practices. We will cover a number of plants growing in our local ecosystem including sassafras, black birch, willow, plantain, comfrey, and hawthorn. We will have a chance to meet these plants and trees, learn about their identification and core medicinal uses, and also make medicine from them. Participants will have an opportunity to learn to make several traditional preparations including poultices, tinctures, and salves. Optional donation of \$5 for supplies, if you can afford it. <i>In conjunction with the Indiana County 1776 Speaker Series *</i>
9/16/2026 Wednesday 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM	Indiana Community Garden at Mack Park	Pick, Press, and Drink: Apple Cider Making - <i>Jean-Yves Boulard</i> - This is a hands-on workshop designed to show the participants the successive tasks of cider making. The participants will pick apples from the trees in the community garden, wash, crush, and press them using modern versions of traditional tools (a fruit crusher & a hand press). The participants will be invited to taste the product of their work and take it home (please bring a sealable bottle or container). During the process, I will deliver information regarding cider pressing (my family history, cultural history of cider, the rebirth of cider pressing in the U.S.). Please pre-register by emailing icg15701@gmail.com or calling 724-840-3360.
9/27/2026 Sunday 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM	IUP Campus: Meet at the IUP Band Parking Lot near Zink Hall	 Allegheny Arboretum and Confluence Discovery Park - <i>Barb Hauge & Dr. Mike Tyree</i> - Join Allegheny Arboretum Co-Directors Dr. Mike Tyree and Barbara Hauge to discover what an arboretum is and the vision for a park known as the Confluence Discovery Park to be located below the Kovalchick Conference and Athletic Complex. Discussion will include concept images as well as challenges for this brownfield site. <i>In conjunction with the Allegheny Arboretum at IUP**</i>
10/3/2026 Saturday 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM	Indiana County Conservation District 435 Hamill Road Indiana, PA	Apple Fest - <i>Blake Mauthe</i> - Celebrate the bounty of fall at our annual Apple Fest! Enjoy a day filled with local vendors, live music, delicious food, and family-friendly activities that highlight our community's connection to agriculture and the environment. Watch cider pressing demonstrations, explore educational displays, and visit with local organizations that help make Indiana County a vibrant, sustainable place to live. This free event is a community favorite and a wonderful way to welcome the harvest season together! Good for all ages!
10/19/2026 Monday 4:30 PM	Indiana Community Garden at Mack Park	Exploring a Food Forest - <i>Marie Olson</i> - We will be exploring the Mack Park food forest to discuss the concept of a food forest and identify the native trees, berry bushes, and perennial plants that make up this edible space. Some of the species we will encounter include elderberries, mulberries, pawpaws, persimmons, and many others. We may even have the opportunity to enjoy some persimmon fruit. This event will be cancelled for inclement weather. Please check the FOP Facebook page for updates.
11/6/2026 Friday 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM	Blue Spruce Park Lakeside Center	Orientation to the Night Sky at Blue Spruce Park - <i>Tiffany Chan</i> - Did you know that Blue Spruce Park has some of the darkest skies in Indiana County? Join us for an evening under the stars and experience the brilliance of the night sky in all its natural beauty. In this engaging program, we'll explore the importance of darkness, learn to recognize the circumpolar constellations that stay with us year-round, and discover the seasonal stars that come and go. Ever wondered why the moon has phases? We'll uncover that mystery—and many other fascinating facts - while reconnecting with the wonder of the cosmos above. You're welcome to bring your binoculars or telescopes.
12/11/2026 Friday 4:30 PM - 5:30 PM	Indiana County Conservation District 435 Hamill Road Indiana, PA	Christmas Cookies & Conservation Districts - <i>Blake Mauthe</i> - Join us for a festive evening of community, conversation, and cookies! Hear from Indiana County Conservation District staff as we share some of our favorite projects, highlights from the past year, and exciting plans for the future. Learn about the programs and services offered through ICCD, discover how we can support you and your land, and see how together we can continue to strengthen our community and protect the environment through education and technical assistance. Suitable for ages 8 and above.



*** The Indiana County 1776 Speaker Series** will take place over the 2026 calendar year to celebrate America's 250th birthday. The series explores facets of our region in the late 1700s. Join speakers from various organizations throughout the year as they explore what life was like on Pennsylvania's Frontier. For more information, go to: <https://www.visitindianacountypa.org/series/indiana-county-1776-speaker-series/>.

Learn more about local history along the **Indiana County 1776 GeoTrail**, an outdoor treasure hunt for the whole family. Participants visit 12 locations throughout the county that were significant in the late 1700s, when the U.S. was born. Complete a passport of rubbings and earn a collectable geocoin, while supplies last. See: www.visitindianacountypa.org/1776geotrail/.



**** The Allegheny Arboretum at Indiana University of PA** consists of the entire 354-acre IUP campus including the much-loved Oak Grove. Our arboretum consists of a living collection of trees, shrubs and vines and is devoted to their study, conservation, and enjoyment. For more information, go to: <https://www.iup.edu/arboretum/>.

Information About the Programs

Who can attend the programs? We welcome both families and individuals.

Must I pre-register? Yes, due to restrictions on group size, some 2026 programs have pre-registration requirements. Please email the address or call the number indicated in the program description to pre-register. If a program is cancelled, we will make every effort to contact those registered. Since most programs will be smaller, if you can't attend after pre-registering, please contact us so that we can give your space to someone else.

How long are the programs and how should I dress? Programs usually last from 1 to 2 hours, unless noted. Dress appropriately for the outdoors and for walking. Most programs are held regardless of the weather.

Is there a fee? Programs are offered free of charge unless otherwise indicated.

How do I get there? Directions to various program locations are available at indianacountyparks.org. Follow the link to Friends of the Parks or get directions to program sites by calling 724-463-8636.

Want to receive program reminders throughout the year?
Register at: <https://www.plantpatrol.org/friendsoftheparks>


Friends of the Parks is a volunteer, non-profit organization dedicated to providing quality environmental education programs in the Indiana County Parks & Trails and Yellow Creek State Park.


For additional information about a program, contact:

Program listings for Yellow Creek can be found at:
<https://www.facebook.com/yellowcreekSP>

For Indiana County Parks & Trails Programs:
(724) 463-8636 indparks@gmail.com
<https://www.facebook.com/p/Friends-of-the-Parks-100064881660015>

Our program schedule is available under “Friends of the Parks” at www.indianacountyparks.org or by scanning this code:





FRIENDS OF THE PARKS
1128 Blue Spruce Road
Indiana, PA 15701



2026 Program Schedule

