



# JOURNAL

SUMMER 2026

## NATURE SPOTLIGHT: THUNDERSTORMS

Nature is neither good nor evil... it is balance.

For this season's spotlight, we're turning our eyes to the night sky, where brilliant flashes of light illuminate the darkness, and deep rumbles shake the earth... thunderstorms.

### Quick facts & stats

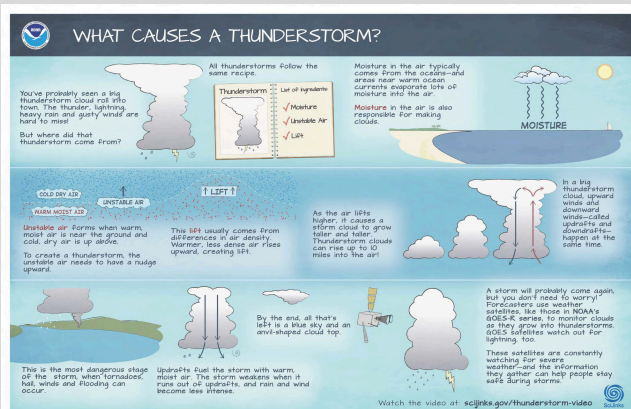
- Definition: A rain cloud that also produces lightning.
- Warm, humid conditions influence thunderstorm development.
- A thunderstorm is considered severe when it has one of the following: hail (1 inch or more), wind gusts of 57.5 mph and above, or a tornado.
- Thunderstorms are most likely to occur during the Spring and Summer months.
- The U. S. experiences about 100,000 thunderstorms each year. Worldwide, there are approximately 16 million thunderstorms that occur.
- There are multiple types of thunderstorms, multi-cell storms, squall lines, and derecho, just to name a few. They each have their own characteristics that fit into one of the types.



### How are they formed?

#### The ingredients:

- Definition: A rain cloud that also produces lightning.
- Warm, moist air
- Unstable air; cold air rising, and hot moist air lowering.
- Lift; hot air rising towards the cold air.



### The rise & fall of thunderstorms

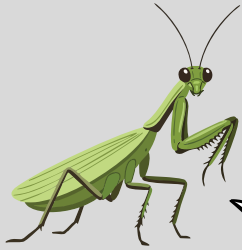
Now that our ingredients have been gathered, the action begins. The air rises higher and higher, causing the storm cloud to grow taller and taller. Within this large storm cloud, both updrafts and downdrafts occur. This is the most dangerous stage of the storm, when hail, high winds, flooding, and tornadoes can develop. The storm's energy comes from the updrafts, and as the updrafts disappear, the storm begins to weaken. By the end, only a small cloud remains.

All information is from NOAA

# THANK YOU!

## Thank you!

Without the help of our amazing sponsors, donors, and volunteers we wouldn't be able to provide the programs and events that we do! If you or your business are interested in becoming a sponsor, donor, or volunteer please email [hannahh@warrencountyia.org](mailto:hannahh@warrencountyia.org)



Southeast Warren High School: Genesis Bows  
Carla Kuehl-Purdum: Praying Mantises



Why don't praying mantises argue for long?

Because someone always loses their head.

What's a praying mantis's favorite magic trick?

The *disappearing head* act.

## Volunteer Opportunities for 2026

### Summer

**Geocache Adventure:** Contribute to our geocaching adventure by adopting a geocache! By adopting a geocache, you take responsibility for regularly restocking and ensuring it remains in excellent condition.

**Kids Fish Day:** Help us give youth the opportunity to learn how to tie knots, cast, and fish safely!

### FALL

**Halloween Hike:** Halloween hike is a family hike, where characters are placed along the trail. Participants will have the opportunity to interact and learn about each living thing. They will also have a snack and do a craft. As a volunteer you would have the chance to play one of these fun characters, lead a hike, help in the craft room or help with snacks. Help us make this a fun filled experience for our local families!

**Farm to table (Decorations):** Are you skilled at arranging decor? We are seeking assistance in decorating for our upcoming farm-to-table event. Join us in creating a beautiful atmosphere that showcases the elegance of farm-fresh ingredients.

# MEET-A-MEMBER

## Ryan Williams Board Member



I moved to Indianola in 2020 with my wife, Nealey, who was born and raised in the community. With over 15 years of experience in the financial industry, I've built a career focused on helping individuals and organizations navigate complex financial decisions and challenges.

Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with my family, traveling, hunting, and getting outdoors for walks. We have two dogs—Ali, a bloodhound with a strong instinct for tracking deer, and Dierks, an energetic puppy we adopted from a Kansas City rescue.

I'm passionate about giving back and being actively involved in the community. I currently serve on several local boards, including Indianola Main Street, the Indianola Chamber of Commerce, Indianola Young Professionals, and 100 Men of Indianola. My appreciation for the outdoors, combined with my financial background, drives my interest in supporting Warren County Conservation. I hope to contribute to responsible stewardship of our natural resources while helping ensure thoughtful, sustainable use of county funds.

# EVENTS

## June

### **StoryWalk** **June 1 | Otter Creek**

StoryWalk® is a fun idea to get communities outside and reading. Each month, we will put new nature-themed children's stories along trails in different parks. Stories will all be nature-themed and fun to read! Bring your whole family out to hike and read a page of the story every few feet as you go along. Below is a schedule of where and when the books will be placed. A few days before the end of the month the storywalk will move to the next park.

### **Kids Fish Day**

#### **June 6 | Lester Pond/ Annett Nature Center**

Have some fishing fun with us! Bring the family out to participate in the art of fishing. The fishing competition will take place at Lester Pond. There will be awards, door prizes, and a free fish-cleaning demonstration. Bring your own pole or borrow one of ours. Bait will be provided. You will also be able to try fish bites cooked by the Izaak Walton League. Fish will be fried in peanut oil. It's FREE — join us! A fishing license is not required for participants at Kid's Fish Day. Please register each child so we can plan for bait and materials! This program is put on by Friends of Warren County Conservation and the Warren County Izaak Walton League.

Registration opens April 6th, 2026.



### **International Mud Day**

#### **June 18 | Annett Nature Center**

Did you know there is a National Mud Day? It takes place annually in June!

Come out and help us celebrate National Mud Day with an invitation to get muddy and enjoy exploring mud with your kids! Discover, or rediscover, the messy joy that comes with a good mud pile. We will be watering down a mud pit at the Annett Nature Center to celebrate this holiday. You can observe this festive day in any way you like, make a mud pie, have a mud bath, or a mud mask!

Get as muddy as you can, we'll have a hose available for a quick rinse-off after you are done enjoying yourself. Share your photos and tag us on Instagram or Facebook. You will want to wear clothing and shoes that you don't mind getting dirty or becoming your "mud clothes."

\*This program will be canceled if we are under drought conditions\*

## July

### **StoryWalk** **July 1 | Lundy Acres**

StoryWalk® is a fun idea to get communities outside and reading. Each month, we will put new nature-themed children's stories along trails in different parks. Stories will all be nature-themed and fun to read! Bring your whole family out to hike and read a page of the story every few feet as you go along. Below is a schedule of where and when the books will be placed. A few days before the end of the month the storywalk will move to the next park.

## August

### **StoryWalk** **August 1 | Annett Nature Center**

StoryWalk® is a fun idea to get communities outside and reading. Each month, we will put new nature-themed children's stories along trails in different parks. Stories will all be nature-themed and fun to read! Bring your whole family out to hike and read a page of the story every few feet as you go along. Below is a schedule of where and when the books will be placed. A few days before the end of the month the storywalk will move to the next park.

# EVENTS

## Summer Birding Hike August 29 | Eckoff Nature Preserve

Calling all beginners to experienced birders! This is your chance to get out and see (or hear) what birds are out and about. No binoculars? No problem. We will provide binoculars and guidebooks, along with some tips and tricks for birding. Have your own binoculars? Perfect, bring them along!

Registration opens July 29.



## Homeschool Wednesday- Monarch Tagging September 16 | Annett Nature Center

Come to Annett Nature Center and discover all about monarch butterflies, their unusual lifestyle and life cycle and their migration to Mexico! A Warren County Conservation Naturalist will teach you how to catch and handle a monarch, determine its gender, and properly tag them as part of a national research project. All monarchs will be released after they are tagged.

Bring a butterfly net if you have one, or share a net at the park if you don't. Fun for the whole family! Free event, but registration is required.

Registration opens August 12th.

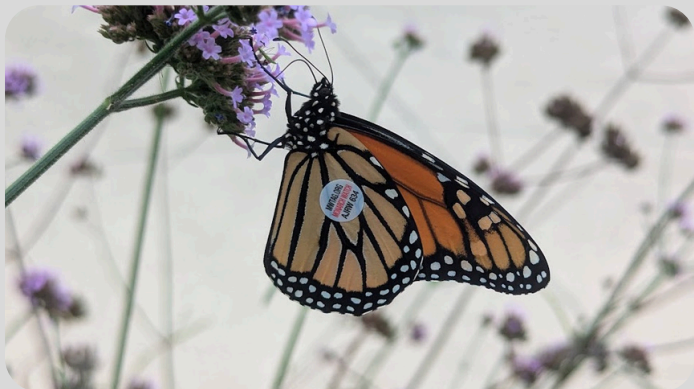
## September

### Monarch Tagging September 12 | Otter Creek

Come to Otter Creek and discover all about monarch butterflies, their unusual lifestyle and life cycle and their migration to Mexico! A Warren County Conservation Naturalist will teach you how to catch and handle a monarch, determine its gender, and properly tag them as part of a national research project. All monarchs will be released after they are tagged.

Bring a butterfly net if you have one, or share a net at the park if you don't. Fun for the whole family! Free event, but registration is required.

Registration opens August 12th.



### Monarch Tagging September 19 | Buxton

Come to Buxton Park and discover all about monarch butterflies, their unusual lifestyle and life cycle and their migration to Mexico! A Warren County Conservation Naturalist will teach you how to catch and handle a monarch, determine its gender, and properly tag them as part of a national research project. All monarchs will be released after they are tagged.

Bring a butterfly net if you have one, or share a net at the park if you don't. Fun for the whole family! Free event, but registration is required.

Registration opens August 12th.

**This summer, WCCB naturalists will be presenting programs for local parks and recreation departments. Keep an eye on their Facebook page and newsletters for upcoming programs and information on how to sign up.**





# HOPPING INTO WARMER WEATHER

## Music of the Pond

This time of year can be quite nosey. So, who's making all of that nose? FROGS!

With all of this warm weather, frogs have come out and got right to work singing. Male frogs have gotten right work singing, this singing helps them attract mates. During this time of year they utilize vernal pools (temporary/ seasonal pools) for their breeding grounds.

Learn how to identify these frogs below by their sounds!



**Blanchard's Cricket Frog**

- 🔊 These sound like two marbles being clicked together.
- 🔍 A small, warty frog with light and dark stripes on the body.



**Boreal Chorus Frog**

- 🔊 Sounds like running your fingernail on a plastic comb.
- 🔍 A small, striped frog found in tan, gray, brown or green coloring.



**Plains Leopard Frog**

- 🔊 Make a "chuck, chuck, chuck" call.
- 🔍 A medium to large frog, that is brownish green in color. They have round dark spots on their back.



**Spring Peeper**

- 🔊 Just like their name suggests their call is a peeping sound.
- 🔍 A small frog with a recognizable 'X' on its back. Its color ranges from tan, brown, olive, or grey.

# SUSTAINABLE LIVING

## EARTH DAY EVERYDAY

Since 1970 each year on April 22nd we celebrate Earth Day. There are a variety of events available for people to take part in like trash clean-up or trail maintenance. Each year we think about different ways we can be more sustainable in our everyday lives. In a world full of plastic and waste, how can you do minimize your usage.

Let's meet the offenders.

### ONE USE PLASTICS

These include grocery sacks, cutlery, straws, coffee cups and water bottles. There are so many solutions and alternatives for each of these. Reusable grocery sacks, bring your own cutlery (lets be honest the plastic ones are exactly where they'll end up... trash), reusable straws, coffee cups and water bottles. We all have WAY too many reusable water bottles and coffee mugs, so use them!

Here are a few practical ways we can always have reusable ones available.

- Keep reusable bags in your car or by the door so they're hard to forget
- Toss a set of cutlery (even just a fork and spoon) into your work bag
- Leave a reusable cup in your car if you often grab coffee on the go
- Pick one or two water bottles you actually like and rotate those instead of collecting more



### CONSUMPTION

Overconsumption is something many of us are likely fighting against. Social media is a huge contributor to this. New clothes, shoes, and, let's be honest, junk are constantly being pushed in our faces. It's easy to fall into the habit of buying more simply because it's always right in front of us.

To combat this, it has to come from you, the consumer. Think about the brands you're buying from: is it fast fashion junk, or is it quality that will last? Consider whether you actually need the item or if it's just a quick impulse. Choosing to buy less, reuse what you already have, and invest in things that are made to last can make a real difference over time.

Small, mindful decisions add up and they're one of the simplest ways to push back against a culture that constantly tells us we need more.

### Food Waste

Food waste is a major but often overlooked part of sustainability. When we throw away food, we're not just wasting what's on our plate—we're also wasting the water, energy, and resources used to produce and transport it. In landfills, food waste breaks down and releases methane, a powerful greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change.

Reducing food waste by planning meals, storing food properly, and using leftovers is a simple but meaningful way to live more sustainably and make better use of the resources we already have.



# SUMMER 2026

## Warren County Conservation Board

The Warren County Conservation Board manages over 2,700 acres of land for the benefit of its citizens. Visitors can enjoy a variety of outdoor activities on areas being conserved for this generation and generations to come.



Subscribe to Three Rivers Journal via email! Reduce waste and get frequent updates on programs, parks, & projects:



[wccb@warrencb.org](mailto:wccb@warrencb.org)

### Board Members

Mark Kickbush, President	Indianola
Joe Schettler, Vice-President	Carlisle
Angie Croll, Secretary	Norwalk
Ace Hendricks	Ackworth
Jake Sickels	Indianola
Ryan Williams	Indianola

### STAFF

Zach Hall	Director
Tyler Seufferer	Park Superintendent
Kevin Brown	Conservation Technician
Mankato Stonebrook	Conservation Technician
Colton Schwenke	Conservation Maintenance Technician
Kelsey Longnecker	Environmental Education Coordinator
Hannah Van Loon	Naturalist
Mallory Wells	Office Manager
Jon Livermore	Conservation Ecologist

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