



Discovery News

2022

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From the Director's desk...

If the first few days of October are any indication of our future weather. You can bet your Cass County Parks will be as busy as ever with those wishing to view the beauty of our colorful Autumn landscapes. From Dr. Lawless County Park with its rolling terrain and acres of hardwoods to Russ Forest County Park nestled along the cool, crisp waters of the Dowagiac Creek and Dodd Park located along the beautiful Dowagiac River, you will have no problem finding a place to enjoy nature's beauty.



Beautiful Russ Forest in the fall.

Building off the wonderful momentum created by the wildly successful, Cass County Historical Commission sponsored, Harvest Festival at the historic Newton Home. We are so thankful to be entering our 15th season of partnering with Ron Gunn of Cairn Stone Adventure Tours to host the Sandhill Crane All Trails ½ Marathon, 10K/5K, and kids fun run at Dr. Lawless International Dark Sky Park on October 15, 2022. Racers can expect elevation changes, beautiful landscapes, and wildlife around every corner on this very traditional course. On October 22, 2022, Dr. Lawless International Dark Sky Park will once again host Harvest Festival / Trunk -N- Treat. This Community driven event is sure to be fun for the whole family as we partner with Cass County 4-H, Michiana Jeep Club, and

The Friends of the Cass County Parks. This event has a long history of accepting can goods, in leu of traditional monies, for local food kitchens. We will be wrapping up the month of October with Dark Sky viewing at Dr. Lawless International Dark Sky Park on October 28-29, weather permitting.

Before you know it, this wonderful weather will be turning a bit colder, and snow will be in our near future so get out to your local Cass County Park today to enjoy those beautiful Autumn landscapes. I think you will be pleasantly surprised on just how beautiful it really is.

See you in our parks.....

Scott Wyman

Scott Wyman
Director of Parks

A little “paroemieology”

While fall is a favorite time of the year for many people... bonfires, cool temperatures, high school football games, hikes in our beautiful parks, and cinnamon-spiced everything, it's also the time of the year we start looking ahead and wondering what the upcoming season will bring us here in southwest Michigan. Many look to Mother Nature for a “historical” look into the weather-predicting crystal ball.

We've all heard that the tried and true Farmer's Almanac is predicting a harsh winter (cold and snowy) for Michigan, and that we should be warming up (so to speak) our snow shovels to be prepared. But what is Mother Nature saying? I like to hear the winter weather folklore that has been passed down through generations, and then compare how winter really is. (Did you know the study of weather proverbs is called paroemieology!)

Acorns... that fall heavily means a cold winter.

Walnuts... a large crop means cold and snowy.

Thick nutshells... a severe winter.

Berries... an abundant crop means cold and snowy.

Flowers... having a 2nd bloom in the fall means a colder winter.

Leaves... that fall early, winter will be mild. Leaves that fall late, winter will be severe.

Onion skins.... That are thicker indicate a rough winter ahead.

Squirrels... with very bushy tails in the fall cue a colder winter.

Squirrels... starting early “to hoard, winter will pierce like a sword”.

Corn husks... that are thicker and tighter means a cold winter.

Wild turkeys... that perch in trees and refuse to come down means snow is imminent.

Roosters... that “moult before the hen, we'll have winter thick and thin. If the hen moults before the cock, we'll have winter hard as a rock.”

Ants... if ant hills are high in July, winter will be snowy.

Woolly bear caterpillar... the wider the brown band in the middle, the milder the winter will be.

Mushrooms... “galore, much snow in store. No mushrooms at all, then no snow will fall”.

Thunder... in the fall means a cold winter.

Thunder... in the winter, it will snow 7 days later.

August... if the first week is unusually warm, winter will be snowy and long.

October... a warm October means a cold February.

If a cold August follows a hot July means winter will be hard and dry.

Persimmon Predictions

Have you ever predicted the weather using a persimmon seed? Folklore (and many people today) has it that persimmon seeds are very accurate in predicting winter.

Persimmons are small orange fruits that can be found growing wild in USDA zones 4-9, and you can also find them in some grocery stores and farmers' markets during the fall.



To predict the weather, you will need an American persimmon grown locally (it wouldn't do you any good to get a persimmon grown in the south to predict the winter here) that has seeds.

Wait until the fruit is a bit soft (almost mushy) to cut it open. Cut open the seed and look at the little kernel inside.

*Spoon-shaped, lots of snow.

*Fork-shaped, mild winter with powdery, light snow.

*Knife-shaped, frigid winds that will “cut” like a blade.

If all else fails... you can use your persimmons in a recipe, as they have a similar pumpkin-like flavor.

Adapted from: alamanac.com/predicting-weather

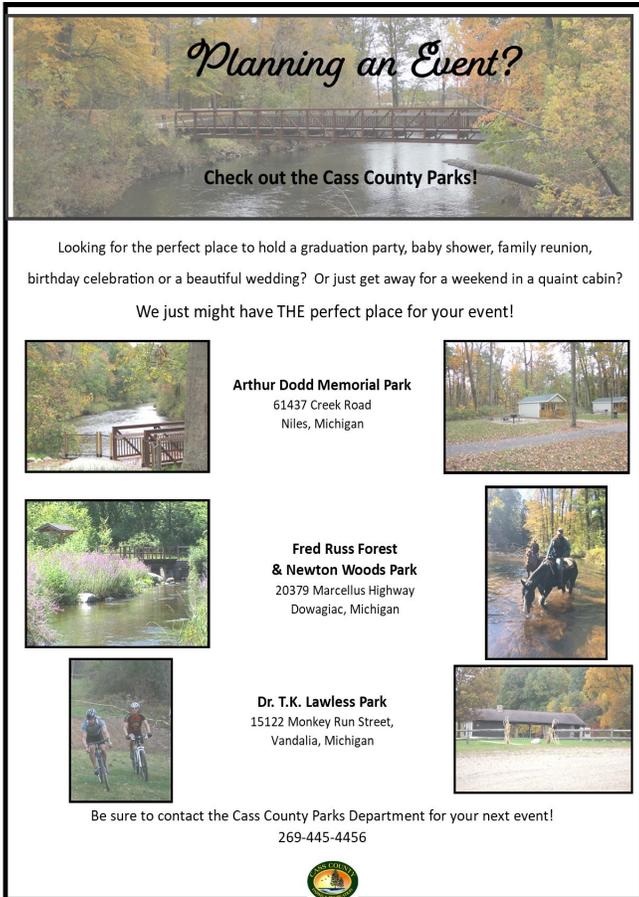
Great Opportunity

We love our county parks, and know you do too. We often get great suggestions and ideas for improvements and enhancements from our visitors near and far, but our current staff can't possibly get to everything we would love to see happen.

If you would like to become one of our valued volunteers, please contact the office at 269-445-4456. We have many, many (endless) opportunities ... whether working one of our events (Spring Egg-Stravaganza, Fall Harvest Fest/Trunk or Treat, etc.), helping clear limbs, improving trails, etc. It's also a great way to get in those needed community service hours needed to graduate high school!!

Planning an event?

We have some beautiful scenery to make wonderful memories. If you are planning an event in your future, check us out! Compared to other venues, we are pretty budget-friendly... and you can't beat our exterior decorator!



Planning an Event?
Check out the Cass County Parks!

Looking for the perfect place to hold a graduation party, baby shower, family reunion, birthday celebration or a beautiful wedding? Or just get away for a weekend in a quaint cabin? We just might have THE perfect place for your event!

	Arthur Dodd Memorial Park 61437 Creek Road Niles, Michigan	
	Fred Russ Forest & Newton Woods Park 20379 Marcellus Highway Dowagiac, Michigan	
	Dr. T.K. Lawless Park 15122 Monkey Run Street, Vandalia, Michigan	

Be sure to contact the Cass County Parks Department for your next event!
269-445-4456



From time to time, we receive questions as to why we are not open 24/7 as a "dark sky park". Please remember:

1. We are a county park system with over 900 acres in just our main 3 parks... with 2 full-time employees to oversee them.
2. The nights chosen for our dark sky experience are carefully selected to give our visitors the very best for their celestial experience.
3. We have our Dark Sky advocate that will be with you in the field on those chosen nights helping you understand and view the night sky, answering your questions, pointing out various constellations and planets. An experience quite unique to our schedule and that would not be available if we were open 24/7.

EVENTS AT LAWLESS

- October 15—Sandhill Crane 1/2 Marathon
- October 22—Harvest Fest & Trunk-N-Treat
- October 28-29—Dark Sky viewing—open until 2:00 a.m.
- November 18-19—Dark Sky viewing—open until 10:00 p.m.
- December 13-14—Geminids Meteor Shower—open until 10:00 p.m.
- December 16-17—Dark Sky viewing—open until midnight

As always, for Dark Sky viewing, please remember we are open dependent on the weather. If you call the office before heading to the park, our director puts a recording on our phone system to let you know if we will be closed. Please stay on the line to listen for his recording at 269-445-4456.



2022 Harvest Fest **Trunk-n-Treat**
October 22, 2022
Dr. T.K. Lawless Park
15122 Monkey Run Street
Vandalia, MI 49095

Admission: 1 canned good per person **OR** \$1 per person
OR donation of pet supply for Cass County Animal Control

2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Trunk Time: 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Activities:
Family Fun Trail
Inflatable Activity
Choo-Choo Ride
Hayride
Face Painting
Zipline
Costume Contest
Bonfire
(Free pumpkins to kids 10 & under while supply lasts)
Much, much more!

The Friends of the Cass County Parks will have delicious concessions available for purchase.

Special Thanks to:
Cass County Sheriff Department – Mounted Division
Dussel's Farm Market

For More Information:
Cass County Parks Director
Scott Wyman
269-445-4456
scottwy@cassco.org

Sponsored by:
Cass County Parks Department,
The Friends of the Cass County Parks,
Cass County 4-H,
And Michiana Jeep Club

JOIN US ON FACEBOOK

We are very happy to provide so many events in our parks... please join us on Facebook to make sure you don't miss out on some great family fun. While we do set some dates on our calendar early, we add lots of things during the course of the year.



And... we are always looking for volunteers. If you have some spare time, enjoy the outdoors and would like to give back to the community, please consider volunteering in the parks... we love our volunteers!

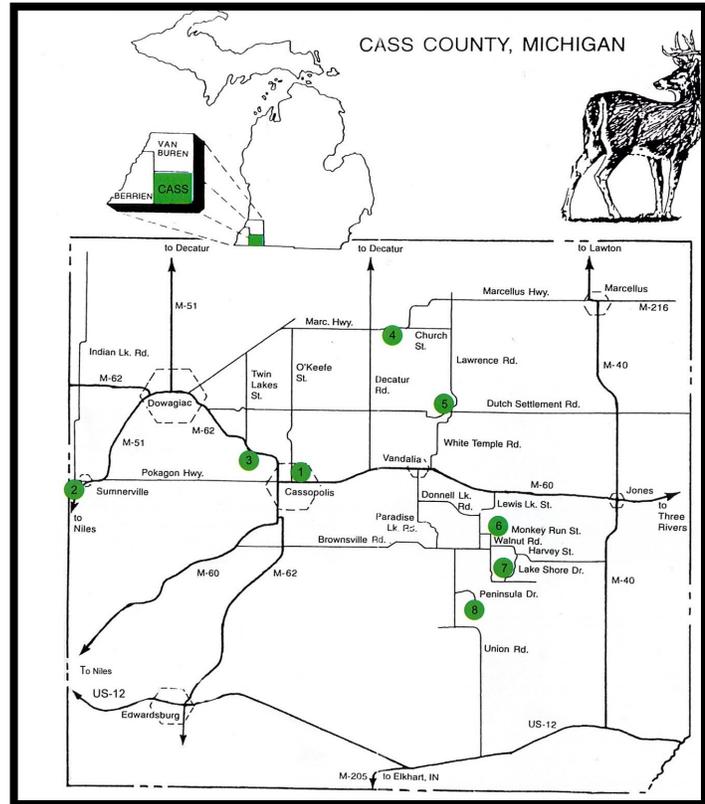
Cass County Parks & Recreation

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DISCOVER CASS COUNTY... ONE PARK AT A TIME!



Find us on Facebook: [Casscoparks](#)

MAP Key

1. Parks Department Office
2. Arthur Dodd Memorial Park
3. Veterans Memorial Park
4. Fred Russ Forest Park
5. Stevens Lakeside Memorial Park
6. Dr. T.K. Lawless Park
7. Henry Sears Boat Launch
8. Harmon Parks



We're on the Web!

www.casscountymi.org/
countyparks.aspx

AND NOW YOU KNOW...

1. The smell of the first rain in fall has a very satisfying scent, called ***petrichor***. It's "a distinctive, earthy, usually pleasant odor" that comes with rainfall following a warm, dry period.
2. There is even a word for the sound of leaves and trees rustling, so the next time you are walking in the park you'll know the name—***psithurism***, which comes from the Greek word *psithuros*, meaning whispering. By the way, the "p" is silent.
3. Catching a falling leaf is actually considered good luck, and "as many falling leaves that can be caught in the hand in autumn, so many happy months will follow".
4. Fall has some odd effects on animals. This season causes its "hippocampus" (the part of the brain that handles spatial organization and memory) to actually swell about 30%. This allows it to collect and hide massive amounts of seeds for winter.
5. Babies born in fall months are more active, and studies show people born in the fall live longer. More babies are born in September than any other month.
6. Johnnie Appleseed was a real person (John Chapman) that made his way through many states planting seeds, installing nurseries and fencing them in to protect them from livestock, then leaving them for locals to care for.
7. The Northern Lights are stronger in the fall. Whether or not we will be able to see them in SW Michigan is very questionable and depends on the atmospheric conditions.