



# Eagle Creek Park Foundation

*"The Eagle Creek Park Foundation provides volunteer and financial support to promote, preserve, protect, and enhance Eagle Creek Park."*

## President's Note

by *Michelle Cloud, President*

November—Thanksgiving, Black Friday and time to renew your Eagle Creek Park Foundation membership. This year it will be easier than ever because you can go to [eaglecreekpark.org](http://eaglecreekpark.org) and renew online! Finally the Foundation website has arrived in the 21st century with a spectacular new website and pay online capabilities. You can purchase memberships, park passes, and donate right there with no stamps required. In addition to this feature, a whole host of

new improved features take you to all the information about Eagle Creek Park, the Earth Discovery Center and the Ornithology Center. There are great articles and photos about nature in the park as well as programs and events right at your fingertips. All the contact information to find out about renting shelters to maps of the park. We want to thank volunteer Eric Lundberg, Boneau Productions and our very own Board member Mike Davis for working so hard to bring this effort to fruition. Check us out online!

Some very exciting initiatives are taking place in the park. At the Ornithology Center staff member Brad Shoger has come up with a plan to bring together a group to address invasive plants in the park. We have men-

tioned this issue in past newsletters and Brad will be heading up a task force to formally attack the problem on an ongoing basis. See the Meet the Staff section to learn more about Brad and this initiative.

The Foundation in partnership with the IU-PUI Solution Center is working with Kevin Carlsen, senior naturalist at the Ornithology Center, to develop the Learn Your Birds kiosk. Senior computer engineering students at IUPUI will work with Kevin to develop software for the kiosk. In keeping with Kevin's approach to use volunteers and students to develop and enhance the Ornithology Center,

the initiative will give students a real life hands on learning experience that will benefit the many visitors to the "OC". This effort is just one of the many projects that are made possible by the Foundation to enhance the experience of visitors to Eagle Creek Park. New construction is taking place on

the second floor to provide working space for the naturalists and to renovate the restrooms. We are very proud of the dedicated naturalists at Eagle Creek Park who work so hard to provide the exceptional natural history and environmental education to so many kids and adults.

The Ornithology Center is fast becoming a very popular destination for students of all ages, birders, families and international visitors to Indianapolis.



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## Dates to Remember

*Feb. 12-13 Woodcarvers & Turners*

## Invasive Species Strike Team

*With Brad Shoger*

Brad Shoger, a recent addition to the Indy Parks staff at Eagle Creek Park is heading up a new initiative at the park. You have been reading in this newsletter about the issue of invasive species and their impact on the health of the native habitats that are so important to the diverse plants and wildlife in Eagle Creek Park. Brad has spearheaded an approach to tackling this problem head on. With the establishment of an ongoing and coordinated effort to reduce invasive species we can begin to see wildflowers returning to areas where they were plentiful, and protect native habitats from decline and extinction.

So, if you want to know the answers to the following questions, join Brad at the Ornithology Center to find out what you can do to help.

What is an invasive species?  
Why are invasive species a problem?  
What can I do about it?

If any of these questions has ever crossed your mind, the Eagle Creek Park Invasive Species Strike Team is for you. Eagle Creek Park is starting an Invasive Species Strike Team to help control and eradicate invasive plant species within the park. This collaborative Team will be made up of volunteers, park naturalists, and ecologists from IndyParks. Occurring on the second Saturday every month, the Team will meet at the Ornithology Center and set out to treat invasive species. The Team will focus on treating satellite populations and smaller infestations in an effort to increase the effectiveness and scope of larger treatments performed by Land Stewardship. Team members will gain hands on experience in ecological restoration by manually removing invasive plants, planting native species, and even learning how to map infestations using handheld computers. Volunteers will also learn about the ecological problems caused by invasive species, different methods of control, plant identification, and habitat restoration. This Team will perform a vital role in the ecological health of Eagle Creek Park. Come enjoy the fresh air, camaraderie, and help secure the ecological future of our native plants and animals in Eagle Creek Park.

**What:** Eagle Creek Park Invasive Species Strike Team

**Who:** Anyone 18 or older with an interest in nature

**When:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday, Monthly, Beginning January 8, 2011 9 AM – NOON

**Where:** Ornithology Center, Eagle Creek Park

**How Much:** Free, Coffee provided in the morning

**What to Bring:** Dress for the weather and outdoor work, work gloves

Contact Brad Shoger, Naturalist at the Ornithology Center for more information.

Eagle Creek Park

317-327-2473

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## Members Stories

by Hunter Heath

We regularly see great blue herons in the park, and enjoy their seemingly peaceful and calm demeanor, slow movements through the water, and their elegant flight. I learned one day last year, while birding along the refuge trail, that the great blues have a fierce side, as well. I had stopped at the northwest corner of the cofferdam to chat with another binocular-bearer. I had seen a blue heron standing in the shallow water just a few yards north of our position. As we watched, a second heron flew into the area and settled in the water a few feet from the first one. There ensued a battle for dominance that made us drop our jaws. The intruder heron began great squawking, wing spreading, and feather ruffling, and pecking attacks on the first heron. After only 30 seconds or so of surprised backing up, the first heron flew away, just feet over our heads, as the intruder lunged at it. Once the first heron had flown away, the intruder settled its feathers and assumed the fishing posture as if he owned the place. One of the greatest treats of walking in the Eagle Creek Park over the years has been observation of plant and animal life, but this was one of the most exciting, close-up, and treasured events of the last 14 years. Oh, if only I'd had my camera with me and at the ready!

## Research in the Park

University of Indianapolis - Amphibian Fungus Study 2009-2010

Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis: Behavior, Prevalence, and Effects Within Indianapolis.

An Honors Project conducted by Ben Loschky, under the direction of Dr. Douglas Stemke, University of Indianapolis [stemked@uindy.edu](mailto:stemked@uindy.edu)

Ben's project extends work he began last semester in amphibian research to determine if *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* is present within the Indianapolis metropolitan area, and particularly, where it can be found. This fungus (*B. dendrobatidis*) has been connected to major declines in frog populations in other parts of the world including evidence of sites within Indiana (23)(28). However to date, no surveys have been conducted in Central Indiana, including the Indianapolis metropolitan area. My intention through this work is to determine how *B. dendrobatidis* spreads and grows throughout the year by testing with both DNA technologies and through culturing techniques. I will test for the presence of this fungus in various regions within Indianapolis and raise awareness, through programs at Eagle Creek, of its potential threat to amphibian populations.

*Naturalist Note: In spring of 2010, participants in the family "Friday Night FROGWATCH" programs and third grade students from Indian Creek Elementary on their annual "FrogQuest" field trip have helped collect an abundance of frogs and tadpoles so Ben could take skin swabs and later test for the fungus.*



**EAGLE CREEK PARK  
FOUNDATION**

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*Eagle Creek Park  
The Natural Place to be.*

**Our New Improved Web-  
site is now online**  
**[Eaglecreekpark.org](http://Eaglecreekpark.org)**

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**Share Your Eagle Creek Experiences**

We would like to offer a section of the newsletter for our members to share a special experience while at Eagle Creek. The park offers so many wonderful opportunities to experience the natural world and no one person can possibly see them all. I often hear about a wildlife event, a rare bird, a spiritual moment, or a first time discovery and think how wonderful it would be to share that with everyone.

You can mail or email your article for consideration for inclusion in our newsletter to the address below.

We will also be creating a page on our new website to post photos you have taken of the park. Please check the new website for more details.

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