



# Discovery News

Spring 2017

## From the Director's desk...

### Inside this issue:

Spring...	2
Spring Peepers	2
Events!!	2
Dodd News	2
Meet Linda Pruett	3
The Friends of the Cass County Parks	3
Park Locator Map	4

### Cass County Parks

#### Commission Members

Bruce Campbell—President  
 Kevin Claire—Vice President  
 Korine Blyveis  
 Ann File  
 Kevin Hershberger  
 David Kring  
 Linda Pruett  
 Johnie Rodebush  
 Jamie Stafne  
 Pauline Washington—Secretary

#### Staff

Scott Wyman—Director  
 Randy Hartley—Maintenance  
 Patty Dohm—Programming

As one our mildest winter seasons on record gently transitions into what the calendar says is officially spring, I am really looking forward to a busy season of happenings within our parks this year.

Of course number one on the list are the big improvements being planned for Dodd Park. Such things as a new set of bathrooms, two camping cabins, expanded parking area, canoe/kayak launch, accessible pathways and new footbridge are all slated to be completed by November 1.

I'd like to think for such a small department we really have a wide variety of activities and events for visitors of all ages to attend and enjoy. From traditional events like the spring Egg-Stravaganza, Harvest Festival / Trunk -n - Treat, Mountain Bike Time Trial, Cyclo-Cross and the Sandhill Crane All- Trail ½ Marathon / 10K Run to the not so traditional events like the Star Gazers "Star Weekend" Algonquian District E-Prep Challenge and Women's Day of Angling .

The Michiana Astronomical Society holds their annual "Star Gazing" event at Lawless Park (May 20-22). Open to the public, this is a fund raising event for their organization where folks can spend the night, attend educational sessions during the day and of course star gaze at night. No need to bring a telescope because there are telescopes on hand for all to enjoy.

Another non-traditional event is the first time ever Algonquian District E-Prep Challenge at Lawless Park (April 28-30). This event will invite different scouting organizations to challenge their scouts in several different survival/emergency preparation

scenarios for possible rank advancement and merit badge attainment. This is a competition with a practical real world / survival / emergency component thrown in. Early estimates are up to 250 participants expected for this first ever event. This event is open to the public with camping available.

In cooperation with a local guide, look for a Women's Day of Angling at Arthur Dodd Memorial Park (April 23 at Dodd Park). This day of food, fun and fishing is meant to celebrate the outdoor, especially fishing, opportunities for women and the positive experiences within. Look for more information as the exact details of this event become available.

As you can see there are a lot of things going on within your local Cass County Parks. We thank the many volunteers and decision makers that allow us to offer the variety of programs and events that we do. For those who visit our parks on a daily, weekly or monthly interval, we can't wait to see you again this year and for those who have never



visited our parks, I hope to see you soon. I think you will be pleasantly surprised on all we have to offer.

See you in our parks!

*Scott Wyman*

Director

Cass County Parks and Recreation

## Spring ... I can hardly wait!

I know I can't be the only one impatiently waiting for spring. Maybe it happened last month as I looked out the big windows of this old building and found daffodils peeking out of the snow about two inches tall. Or maybe it's been watching the Tufted Titmice on my birdfeeder. Whatever it is... I have spring fever!



Speaking of Tufted Titmice... did you know the "proper" reference to more than one of the comical birds is actually Titmouses? It comes from an old Icelandic word "tít", meaning "small" and the Anglo-Saxon "mase", meaning "small bird". That being said, public opinion seems to prefer Titmice and it is perfectly okay to refer to them as such. (Spell-check even says that "Titmouses" is incorrect.)

You (or at least I haven't) don't hear much about this little bird, so I did a little digging. Their

eyes actually only appear to be extra large because of the thin ring of black feathers they have around their eyes.

The article I was reading referred to them having the "avian version of mascara".

Also interestingly, their other prominent feature is the little tuft or crest on top of their heads,

which they use for communication. The little intimidators will fluff up their tufts when they are showing their dominance; and those younger, less confident birds will actually lower their crests to get out of their way.

Tufted Titmice are extremely loud birds for their size, and I imagine that you have heard the males setting their territories with their, "peter, peter, peter" song. If you mimic his song, don't be surprised if he lands fairly close to you and continues to tell you that it is HIS territory.

Reference—Bird watcher's General Store

## Dodd Park News

Our beautiful Arthur Dodd Memorial Park will be undergoing some major changes this spring, thanks to a \$375,000 Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant! We hope everyone will enjoy the facelift and new opportunities that we will be able to offer. But, while the park undergoes this transformation, for the safety of our visitors and construction crew, the park will be closed at different times throughout the summer. Signage will be posted at the entrance for closings.



## Don't miss these great events In 2017!

Spring Egg-stravaganza—April 8

Star Gazing—May 19-21

Earth Day—

Mountain Bike Time Trials—June 25

Sandhill Crane—October 14

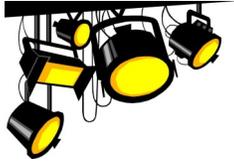
Harvest Fest/Trunk or Treat—Oct 21

## Spring Peepers...

Spring peepers are to the amphibian world as what robins are to the bird world.... and that beautiful chorus could be heard loud and clear in rural Cass County this past week during the unseasonable 64° March weather. These little tan or brown peepers have dark lines that form a telltale "X" on their backs, and grow to be about 1.5" in length.

Even though they do have large toe pads for climbing, you will most likely find them in the loose debris on the ground in wooded areas and grassy lowlands near ponds and swamps. Obviously, since they sing mostly during the evening, they are nocturnal, and feed on beetles, ants, flies, and spiders. They do lay their eggs in the water, but spend the rest of the time on land. They hibernate under logs and behind loose bark on trees... just waiting for the weather to warm up enough for the males to begin "singing" for a mate.





## Spotlight on Our Parks Board

Let's get to know one of our fantastic members of the Cass County Parks Board:

Linda Pruett

**1. How long have you been involved with Cass County Parks and Recreation?**

I have been involved with the parks for over 15 years; first as a Friend of the Parks and then as a board member.

**2. Why is volunteering your time important to you?**

I believe that I should give back to the community where I live, work and play... and I enjoy it.

**3. What do the parks mean to you?**

We have beautiful parks and they are such an asset to Cass County. I believe our parks are the best kept secret in the county!

**4. What achievement, project or event are you most proud of during your time as a park commission member?**

Driving the "Witch's Ride" during Harvest Fest. I don't know who enjoyed it more... the kids or me(?) It was great!



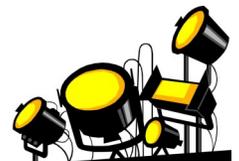
**5. What would you like to see accomplished in the near future?**

I would love to see the parks be able to build cabins at Lawless Park like the ones planned for Dodd Park, which I'm sure will be a hit with the public. The thing I would like most to see is the BOC to levy a small millage as allowed by statute so the parks could expand and become self sufficient.

**6. How many hours have you volunteered during your time with the Cass County Parks?**

I have no idea, but it's been a significant amount of time, and I enjoy every minute of it.

Did you know that Eva Stevens Memorial Park is a 2-acre swimming area on Little Fish Lake??



### FRIENDS OF CASS COUNTY PARKS

The Friends of Cass County Parks are a group of supporters dedicated to connecting people to recreation, nature, and the community of Cass County. The group is proud to announce that they have received their non-profit 501(c)(3) designation.

The designation will allow any person or organization to make donations or membership fee paid tax deductible. Donations to the local parks will be used for improvements and changes within the parks system with monies flowing to educational projects, local activities and parks development.

The Friends were established in 1989 as a volunteer group to provide support to the county's nine parks. The annual Harvest Festival, Discover Winter Nights, and Spring Egg-stravaganza, are just a few events the group supports. There is so much to see and do at your local county parks and with your donations you have the opportunity to see your dollars at work.

Anyone interested in becoming a Friend of Cass County Parks or to make a tax free contributions can contact The Friends by e-mail: [ccfriendsofparks@yahoo.com](mailto:ccfriendsofparks@yahoo.com) or by mail at P.O. Box 131, Cassopolis, MI 49031.

**Get Involved! Volunteer! Come and Visit!**

# Cass County Parks & Recreation

120 North Broadway - Suite 209  
Cassopolis, Michigan 49031

Phone: 269-445-4456  
Fax: 269-445-4418  
Email: scottwy@cassco.org



Find us on Facebook: [Casscoparks](#)

### MAP Key

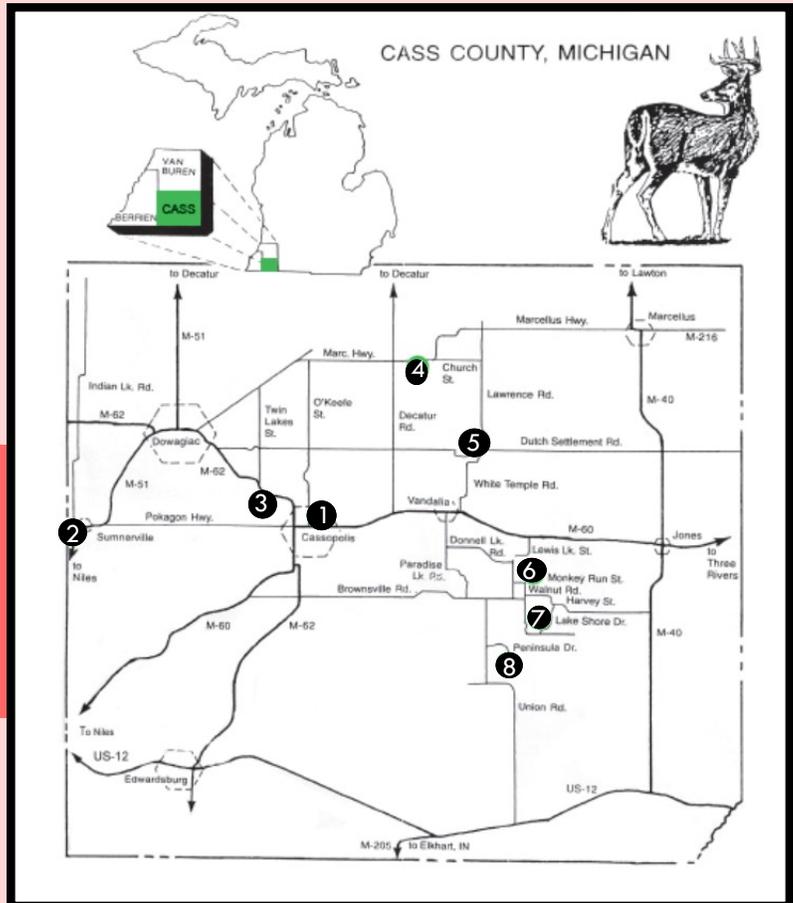
1. Parks Department Office
2. Arthur Dodd Memorial Park
3. Veterans Memorial Park
4. Fred Russ Forest Park
5. Stevens Lakeside Memorial Park
6. Dr. T.K. Lawless Park
7. Henry Sears Boat Launch
8. Harmon Parks



We're on the Web!

[www.casscountymi.org/](http://www.casscountymi.org/)  
[countyparks.aspx](http://countyparks.aspx)

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



...also a sign of spring...

Unfortunately, one of the tornadoes that was confirmed in Cass County early this month hit directly in our beautiful Arthur Dodd Memorial Park. We are very thankful that no one was hurt, and the damage minimal, compared to what it could have been. The shelter will be rebuilt, and the downed trees will be cleaned up. Later this spring, the park will see a make-over as we begin our big project involving the DNR grant we received earlier. Please bear with us as we move forward with our improvements and restorations.

