

2021 IMN Gathering Pre/Post hike info

Optional programs



Pre-Gathering-Option 1- Nov. 5

Where – Portland Arch Nature Preserve and Sugar Creek Conservation Area

Limit – 30 people

Cost \$5 Time: 12:30 pm to 5:00 pm

Meet at: 1599 W Scout Camp Rd, Covington, IN 47932 (near the community of Fountain, IN)

Description of tours...

Portland Arch Nature Preserve is a 435-acre National Natural Landmark and State-dedicated nature preserve managed by the Indiana Division of Nature Preserves in Fountain County. Assistant Division Director, Tom Swinford, will lead IMNs through the moderately rugged north and south trails. Bear Creek flows through both trails with mature bottomland and upland forests. The north trail has a small tributary stream that has carved an opening through a massive Mansfield sandstone formation and created a natural bridge known as Portland Arch.

Sugar Creek Conservation Area was purchased in 2010 making it one of Indiana's newer natural areas in Parke County and is managed by the Indiana Division of Fish & Wildlife. Turkey Run State Park is nearby so this area shares its rugged topography. There are waterfalls, canyons, and rock faces hidden within this property. Aaron Douglass, Interpretive Naturalist at Turkey Run & Shades State Parks, will lead hikers on a 1-mile-long flat old county road (2 miles there and back round trip) where IMNs will see some rock faces, a waterfall, and a beautiful bend along Sugar Creek.

Pre-Gathering-Option 2- Nov. 5

Where- Atherton Island Natural Area and Mossy Point Nature Preserve

Limit – 30 people

Cost \$5 Time: 12:30 pm to 5:00 pm

Meet at: 6508 W 800 S, Rosedale, IN 47874 (near the community of Lyford, IN)

Description of tours...

Atherton Island Natural Area is a new 188-acre nature preserve (managed by Ouabache Land Conservancy) in southern Parke County that is currently open by appointment only. This preserve is so named because it is located on an island that was formed by glaciation and used to be in a much larger Wabash River. Jim Nardi, University of Illinois Research Entomologist, will lead this moderately rugged hike skirting 4-acres of a recently planted shortgrass prairie and 40-acres of newly planted hardwood tree seedlings. The hike will then continue into the mature oak-hickory woodlands, along a stream, and into a constructed tallgrass prairie that was the site of a former orchard.

Mossy Point Nature Preserve is a State-dedicated nature preserve in Parke County that is managed by the Central Indiana Land Trust (CILTI). Cliff Chapman, CILTI Executive Director, will lead IMNs through Mossy Point Nature Preserve's hidden sandstone canyon. This rugged loop hike will highlight an unknown gem in Parke County reminiscent of popular areas at Turkey Run State Park, but one with no trails and not open to the public. Hiking along the creek bed itself will be slippery in places and is very steep going down and then back up again, so be prepared for a rugged hike.

NOTE: There are no facilities at any of the above natural areas, however there will be opportunities for participants to stop at gas stations, etc. between both the north and south options. More details and directions will be provided after registration is complete.

Post-Gathering-Optional- Nov. 7

Where- Pine Hills Nature Preserve

Limit – 30 people

Cost \$3 Time: 9 am -noon

Meet at: Pine Hills Parking Lot within Shades State Park

Description of tour...

Pine Hills was Indiana's 1st State dedicated Nature Preserve in 1969. The rugged hike will be ~2 miles long with two rock scrambling spots on top of the Devil's Backbone. The unique geology here are the best examples of incised meanders east of the Mississippi. Indiana State Parks has been doing some invasive species management work along the trail to Pine Hills which will be discussed. Bring snacks, water, and hiking stick if you have one.