



Eagle Creek Park More... Outdoors Naturally

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

New President

by Michelle Cloud, President

I am pleased to be writing to you as your new Eagle Creek Park Foundation President. I am stepping in for Aga Morgan our recent President who had to end his duty due to new job responsibilities. Aga will remain on our Board and continue to provide us with his energy and wisdom. Under his leadership the Eagle Creek Park Foundation saw the opening of the new Earth Discovery Center. This public-private partnership of the Indianapolis Parks Department, your Eagle Creek Park Foundation, and individual and institutional donors who made this visionary project possible is a model of how a community can achieve a common goal. I am looking forward to an equally exciting year in 2008 and to working with you.

As one project draws to a close another emerges. Immediately after the naturalists moved from the former Nature Center into the new Earth Discovery Center, the remodel-

ing of the former Nature Center into an Ornithology Center began. Kevin Carlsen, who will manage the Ornithology Center did a great deal of research into the project and has created a plan that will place Eagle Creek Park on the map as a premier birding destination. Kevin has an extensive background in construction and will put that experience to work in supervising the remodeling project. He plans to use volunteer labor and do a great deal of the work personally. Our task will be to raise the funds he needs for materials and technology. The estimated cost is \$100,000. Unlike the Earth Discovery Center, this project did not have to go through the bid process and construction is well underway. If you have an interest in birds, this facility will offer you an opportunity to study birds at a whole new level. If you would like to learn more about the project and help support it, please call us at 317-327-7100 and we'll fill you in on how you can help.



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Dates to Remember

- Every Sunday: 9:00 a.m. — Sunday Morning Birdwalk*
- February 9: 1-3 p.m. Smokey Mountain Pilgrimage Info Meeting*
- February 20: 8:30-10:00 p.m. Lunar Eclipse Night Hike*
- February 22, March 14, April 25: 8:00-9:00 p.m. Coyote Calling*
- March 28, April 18: 8:30-10:00 p.m. Frog Watch*
- April 11: 10:00-3:00 p.m. Homeschool Jamboree*
- April 22-27: Smokey Mountain Wildflower Pilgrimage*

Enjoy Winter

by Karen LaMere, Park Manager

We need 4" of ice to open the Skating Ponds and 4" of snow for Cross-country Skiing at the Park.

After you enter the park check out the ice skating ponds to see if the green flag is flying? If it is, don your ice skates and hit the ice. What a great place to teach the children to skate or refresh your memory on how to skate backwards. You can warm up in the "warming hut" next to the pond. Bring along cocoa and marshmallows. Nothing tastes better than hot cocoa after skating.

If cross-country skiing is your sport bring along your own skis or rent a pair from the Marina. Look for the Pileated Woodpecker, listen for Carolina Chickadees, or spot our resident Barred Owl in a tree as you schuss across the snow. If you want to learn about birds or snow crystals

stop by the new Earth Discovery Center. The new EDC, as we call it, is now open. The hours are Monday through Saturday 9 – 5 and Sunday 1- 5. The naturalist staff can give you a quick tour of the facility if they are not busy with a program or school group.

Does your dog have cabin fever? The Gordon Gilmer Canine Companion Zone is always open from sunrise to sunset to exercise your dog. What fun to watch your dog catch snowflakes on his nose or roll around in the snow?

I hope you have an opportunity to visit Eagle Creek in the winter months. It is a great time to hike along the trails, view a Bald Eagle if it happens to fly by, spot more deer through the trees or meander through the park identifying trees without their leaves. See you on the trails.

The State of the Foundation

by Jim Weir, Executive Director

We are pleased to report 2007 was a year of successes for the Eagle Creek Park Foundation. The construction on the Earth Discovery Center (EDC) was completed and the naturalists moved in and began programming. In September, the official ribbon cutting took place with Mayor Bart Peterson; Joe Wynns, Director of Indy Parks; and Aga Morgan, President of Eagle Creek Park Foundation officiating and a distinguished group of dignitaries attending. Funding for the EDC came from Lilly Endowment, the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust, the City of Indianapolis and more than 400 individual and corporate donors. Planning and fund raising for the EDC began ten years earlier and despite several challenges during those ten years the result is a beautiful, functional state-of-the-art environmental education facility that will serve everyone from "K to Gray" interested in learning about our natural world.

A pond nearby the EDC was renovated to create an ADA accessible ecology pond that will be used for programming. The Eco Pond will allow students to take samples from the pond

into the wet lab at the EDC for study. Funding for the renovation was provided by the Efromson Fund.

Concert goers were treated to 20 concerts in 2007. The 13 acoustical music "In Concert with Nature" concerts were held on Wednesday nights May through August and the 7 jazz concerts in the "Jazz on the Point" series were held on Tuesday nights July through August. Concert goers learned about the foundation's plan to build a roof over the performance stage at the marina and generously contributed to the "Raise the Roof" fund. The roof will be constructed during the off season and will be ready for the 2008 concert season. Please take a few minutes to explore our newly renovated website. It will be your best vehicle to keep up with what's happening in the park and at the foundation

With the completion of the EDC work began immediately to remodel the former nature center building and convert it into a new Ornithology Center. Unlike the EDC the construction of the Ornithology Center (OC) will be an inside



job. Kevin Carlsen, who will be OC Manager, is also supervising the construction. Kevin has a construction background and will do the remodeling work with the help of volunteers. The cost estimated at \$100,000 will be for materials only. The foundation has committed to funding \$50,000 for materials. We are actively seeking support to fund the remaining \$50,000. The Ornithology Center is scheduled to open in July 2008.

In addition to raising funds for the OC there are many areas of the park that will require attention. Plans are already in place to freshen up the fitness trail and create the Edesses Trail. It's obvious that work needs to be done on the Lilly Lake Dam and the bridge below and planning has begun on the Westside of the Park as a vehicle free nature experience. It is interesting to note that of the 194 parks that make up Indy Parks the 5,200 acres of land and water of Eagle Creek Park represent almost 50% of the acreage. With city budgets being tightened it becomes absolutely vital that the people who use the park and enjoy the park, support the park.

As we enter into 2008 we hope you will take the opportunity to visit Eagle Creek Park often. We know that there are many different interests represented in Eagle Creek Park Foundation memberships. For some it may be bird watching, hiking trails and communing with nature. For others it may be fishing, canoeing or sailing. And for still others it may be cycling, running, swimming or training. When we interviewed park users this summer the common answers we received were varied, but almost all of them began with, "It's my place to..." Park users at Eagle Creek Park view the park with a sense of ownership and as owners they want to keep the park from harm and make the park a better place. That is precisely why the Eagle Creek Park Foundation exists. Our mission statement states, "The Eagle Creek Park Foundation provides volunteers and financial support to enhance, promote, preserve and protect Eagle Creek Park." Our

purpose is to help make your park a better place and keep it from harm. So, as we enter into 2008, with your help, we will take on the challenge of fund raising to meet the needs of the nation's 6th largest city-owned park with the goal of making "Your Place" the best it can be.

Creating the Ornithology Center

by Jim Weir, Executive Director

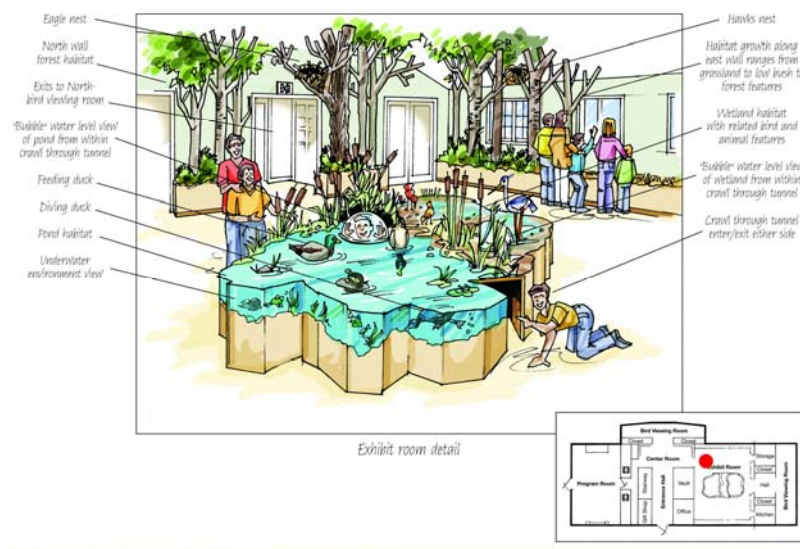
When the naturalist staff moved to the new Earth Discovery Center (EDC) this past June, work began immediately to convert the former Nature Center into a new Ornithology Center. However, unlike the EDC project, the Ornithology Center (OC) project is not being done by an outside contractor. In-

stead, the future manager of the OC, Kevin Carlsen is employing his extensive construction background and, with the help of volunteers, completely remodeling the former Nature Center building into a state-of-the-art facility devoted exclusively to the study of birds. This approach will represent huge savings in construction and allow a much better result because the only costs are for ma-

terials and the technology and equipment needed in the OC. The timetable on the project is right on schedule and the OC is planned to open in July 2008.

Eagle Creek Park has long been recognized as one of the premier birding sites in the nation. People travel from all over the country to experience the variety of migrating and native birds found in the park. Some 270 species have been identified and a few years ago when a rare Arctic Tern was spotted in the park visitors came from as far away as Europe to see the bird. The new Ornithology Center will provide children and adults with educational, hands-on opportunities to experience and learn about birds in their natural habitat. Programming will focus on school groups during the week and families and adults on weekends. It is estimated that 50,000 people will visit the new Ornithology Center each year.

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EAGLE CREEK PARK FOUNDATION, INC.

7840 West 56th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46254-9706

Phone: 317 327-7100
Fax: 317 327-7122

www.eaglecreekpark.org
e-mail: ecpf@comcast.net

***Eagle Creek Park
The Natural Place To Be***

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Birds have attracted the interest of more people than any other living thing because of the variety and vividness of their colors, the beauty of their voices and their fascinating behavior. In 1983 it was estimated that there were 21 million birders – in 2004 there were over 83 million. This is a (275%) growth in the past twenty years.

Birding is one of the most popular outdoor activities. Other popular activities in the survey were: walking for pleasure, visiting nature centers, picnicking, viewing and photographing natural scenery and wildlife. Eagle Creek Park has the great distinction of offering all of these.

Eagle Creek Park's reputation as a premier birding site goes far beyond central Indiana as indicated in these reviews:

National Geographic Guide to Birdwatching Sites

“Indianapolis residents don't need to go far for excellent birding. The reservoir can be great for waterbirds. With low water levels, this area can also have migrant shorebirds and waders.”

National Geographic Guide to Birding Hotspots of North America

“A superb destination near Indianapolis. It is excellent for spring songbird migration, with 30 species of warblers on a good day.”

Indiana Wildlife Viewing Guide

“The shallow north end of the lake offers excellent waterfowl viewing. In dry years, large mudflats are exposed on the north end which attracts shorebirds and waders.”

The Eagle Creek park foundation has already raised half of the projected funds needed to complete the OC and construction is well on its way. You can make a difference! Your support will help us ensure that the citizens of and visitors to central Indiana have the opportunity to learn more about their natural world. Your support will help us make certain that our naturalists have the tools they need to accomplish that task. We greatly appreciate your consideration.

Wow!!!

**Check out our new website at:
www.eaglecreekpark.org**

Please take a look and let us know what you think!

Did you know? The Foundation makes \$\$ each time you make an Amazon.com purchase if you link from our Support Us—Foundation Store page!