

Historic Hoosier Hills

RESOURCE, CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT, INC.

Newsletter

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A WILD SUMMER WITH WILD PRODUCTIONS

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It was the fourth summer for the Historic Hoosier Hills sponsored project, **Wild Productions**, to be in full swing at Versailles and Clifty Falls State Parks. Various educational programs and exhibits were completed during the summer of 2003, many with the aide of park staff and volunteers from across Southeast Indiana. More than eight projects and six public presentations were among the highlights of another successful summer that influenced more than 15,000 state park guests' experiences.

Each summer, collectively, Wild Productions' projects typically revolve around a central theme. The Civilian Conservations Corps was a historic theme for 2002, after an exciting severe weather theme in 2001. Individual themes produced individual exhibits that would remain at their respective nature centers for decades.

A scaled version of an authentic, early 1940's CCC cabin was constructed at Versailles State Park.



Poster panels, artifacts, and audio-visual equipment allow visitors to actively

learn about the history of the park. The severe weather theme produced a Tornado Chamber, also at Versailles, where severe weather is actively demonstrated with a moving tornado right in front of the visitor's eyes. Exhibits that encourage active learning, as opposed to passive learning, are a key to enhancing the educational and interpretive values of our state parks. Technology was the theme for this past summer at both Clifty Falls and Versailles State Parks.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Oct. 7.....	Conservation Education Committee Teacher Workshop
Oct. 9.....	Laughery Valley Fish & Game Club Meeting
Oct. 13....	Columbus Day (Office Closed)
Oct. 17....	RC&D Executive Committee Meeting
Nov. 5.....	Woodland Committee Meeting
Nov. 11...	Veteran's Day (Office Closed)
Nov. 13...	Laughery Valley Fish & Game Club Meeting
Nov. 24...	RC&D Council Meeting

New Interactive DVD Exhibit completed at Clifty Falls State Park Nature Center....

Expanding from a Whitetail Deer video produced during the summer of 2000, an interactive DVD (Digital Versatile Disc) touch-screen exhibit was completed at the Clifty Falls State Park Nature Center. The exhibit was constructed to be incorporated with an existing exhibit featuring that park's native prairie ecosystems and how deer, birds, plants, and insects affect the life and longevity of that habitat. The opportunities presented by this exhibit are boundless as DVDs can be changed regularly to meet the environmental educational needs of the visiting public. Currently, a DVD about Lewis and Clark is on exhibit while the deer DVD and others are under production.



Boy Scouts from Richmond, Indiana, volunteer to help construct a fence for the bird viewing area at the Versailles State Park Nature Center.



State Park Seasonal Interpreter, Katherine Fourhman, uses the new interactive DVD exhibit at the Clifty Falls State Park Nature Center.

Surround-sound system installed at the CCC exhibit.....

Starting at the CCC exhibit from 2002, a surround-sound system was installed so that visitors can hear a narrator depict the stories of the young-men that built the state park. Future expansion of that exhibit includes a hologram projection system to present a "ghost-like" appearance to further enhance the learning objectives for our younger audiences.

Rising Sun Regional Foundation provides grant for Versailles State Park Website.....

The reception of a grant from the Rising Sun Regional Foundation paved the way for the most exciting technological advancement in the Indiana State Park system today. With the grant, a unique website will be produced for Versailles State Park. The website will feature all of the park's facilities, activities, and unique natural resources. The grant funded a graphics workstation to be used by interpretive staff to produce graphics, video, audio, and programs for presentations, exhibits, and the website. A professional digital camera was also funded to allow interpretive and park staff to take high quality photographs for use in a variety of applications. A 120 gigabyte server was also purchased to host the park's new website (<http://www.versaillesstatepark.com>). The unique opportunity was presented during this summer for Wild Productions to co-sponsor a project by the Division of State Parks and Reservoirs that will map the park with GPS (Global Positioning Satellite) technology. New GPS maps will be made to highlight all of the park's natural resources, public facilities, and resource management strategies. Versailles State Park was one of eleven state parks chosen for this opportunity and will be the first to publish this information online for public use (GPS data will be extremely useful for hikers, campers,

fishermen, and tourists). Custom programming from students at the University of Oklahoma will also allow the server to manage databases used by the nature center staff and to process live weather data from the park's weather stations.

Weather station installed at Versailles State Park...

In November of 2002, the Director of the Department of Natural Resources approved a Wild Productions' project to install weather stations at each Indiana State Park. The stations will report weather data every five minutes to a central computing system that will produce and publish high-resolution graphics on the internet. This group of weather stations, named the Indiana Mesonet (Mesonet is derived from a NETWORK of weather stations on a MESOScale), will aide park visitors with forecasts and current conditions, park staff for various management decisions, local community emergency managers and school districts during severe weather, meteorologists for research purposes, and the public for general weather observation. The first tower is under construction at Versailles State Park while more funding is being acquired to complete the entire project statewide. It is expected to start recording climatologically data of Versailles State Park on January 1, 2004, with the other state parks to follow within a year. This data will also be available on the park's new website and in your local library.

"Masters of the Night – Hike" popular event at the park.....

While technology can be an asset to nature center exhibits, resources, and operations, exposing visitors to the outdoors is also a very important asset of any nature center. For the third summer, Wild Productions sponsored and hosted the popular "Masters of the Night – Hike" at Versailles State Park. More than 140 people were in attendance for two hikes that included a custom slide show about the park's nocturnal wildlife and lots of fun activities conducted on a custom trail for the program. Other night hikes sponsored by

Wild Productions included an "Owl Prowl" that took more than 70 guests into the dark Versailles woods for a unique and personal experience with the park's Barred Owls.

Butterfly Garden constructed at nature center...

In order to provide years of annual, outdoor education to the park's visitors, a Butterfly Garden in the backyard of the nature center at Versailles was constructed. Wildflowers were donated by Beaver Creek Nursery and planted by volunteers to produce a wonderful array of color and scents that have attracted dozens of butterflies. The garden, once in full bloom, will be incorporated into weekly and daily programs offered by the naturalist at the nature center.



The new Butterfly Garden at Versailles State Park is complete with informative labels, dozens of butterflies, and lots of educational opportunities for the interpretive staff and the park's visitors.

Since its beginning in 2000, each year has provided new challenges and produced exciting results for Versailles and Clifty Falls State Park Nature Centers. Expect to see more advancement within the next few years at Versailles State Park as Wild Productions continues to grow and expand. The new website is expected to go online for public use during the fall season of 2003. Be sure to log on and check out all of the information and opportunities that await your next visit at your local Indiana State Park.

DENVER SIEKMAN 4-H ENVIRONMENTAL PARK AHEAD OF SCHEDULE

The completion of the **Denver Siekman 4-H Environmental Park**, Ohio County's new outdoor recreational and education facility is progressing ahead of schedule, according to the latest report of the project committee. The park consists of 67 acres donated by Jack Gallagher, located on Walston Road across Arnold Creek in Rising Sun, and is named for his long time friend, Denver Siekman.

Historic Hoosier Hills RC&D, Inc. in Versailles is a sponsor of the project committee whose mission is "to provide the community with life-long learning experiences outside the traditional educational setting by creating and operating the Denver Siekman 4-H Environmental Park." Its objectives are to develop and maintain the Park for those who visit, to promote it as a tourism attraction for visitors to the county, and to promote educational opportunity for all ages in Ohio County and the surrounding area. With the help of grants from Ohio County Community Foundation and Rising Sun Regional Foundation, and other donations of time and funds from several community organizations, Phases I, II, and III have been completed. Classroom



renovation was completed in September 2002, tractor and beginning trails were completed in January 2003, and additional trails, wetlands and the parking lot were completed in July 2003.

Four phases yet to be completed include the bench project (Phase IV), bathroom project (Phase V), Prairie Meadow Ornithology Team project, 50 trees and forestry projects (Phase VI), and archeological dig, sculpture garden, historical project, and homestead (Phase VII). The targeted completion date for the park is September 2005.



For more information on the Denver Siekman 4-H Environmental Park or to become involved, please contact Janie Eldridge, Ohio County Extension Office, 412 Main Street, Rising Sun Indiana 47040.

MARKETING THE MORGAN MESSAGE

The **John Hunt Morgan Heritage Trail** project is now in a promotion phase. The goal of the group was "to identify, interpret, and promote" the 1863 historic route of the Confederate raider John Hunt Morgan. With the "opening" and formal dedication of the 185-mile trail in February, efforts turned to making the public aware of how they might trace a Civil War cavalry raid in an automobile.

To draw attention to the Trail at a local level, reenactments were conducted in four Indiana communities during April. For two days, Confederate re-enactors portraying the infamous Morgan Raiders stirred excitement in Corydon,



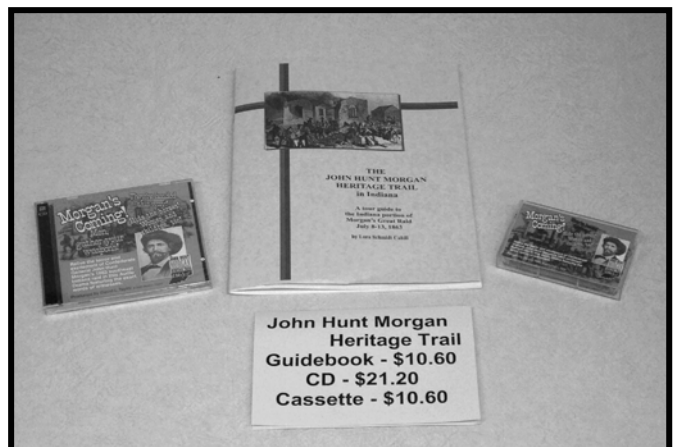
Salem, Lexington, and Versailles. The horsemen were lead by the swaggering John Hunt Morgan, otherwise, Morgan Roque of Harrison County.

Additional encouragement has come in the form of the sale of JHMHT products: guide books, CDs, and audio tapes. Sales to date total approximately \$5800. These funds are being accumulated to replace Trail signage when necessary and resupply the brochure materials when they become depleted. Check out www:hills.org/jhmht to order JHMHT products.



Much of the organization for these events can be attributed to local Convention and Visitor Bureau personnel and specifically Susan Walters in Jennings County, Linda Lytle in Jefferson, Katherine Taul in Ripley, and Jennifer Clayton in Dearborn. The JHMHT committee provided funds for the publicity materials.

Publicity in the form of newspaper articles also has encouraged the public to explore the Trail and "feel" the Civil War in Indiana. A lengthy, illustrated, article in *The Indianapolis Star* appeared in April and was subsequently picked up by other papers, including *The Louisville Courier-Journal*. Papers in the South Bend and the Chicago suburbs as well as national Civil War publications have spread the word.



The JPG Heritage Partnership Story

There is a fascinating story associated with the history of JPG, one that few people fully comprehend.

...It is a story of vanished communities and great personal sacrifice as 2500 Hoosiers were forced to pack up and vacate their homes and farms.....

...It is a story of basic Midwest dedication and ingenuity as farmers and other civilians were trained to fire and maintain massive guns....

...It is a story of irony – a 55,000 acre time capsule containing great natural and cultural treasures, ...

...yet filled with unique danger.



JPG Heritage Partnership, a 501(c)3 nonprofit, tax-exempt organization under the sponsorship of Historic Hoosier Hills RC&D, was established to promote public awareness of the significant sacrifices and contributions made in connection with Jefferson Proving Ground, a WWII era 55,000 acre former Army munitions testing facility located north of Madison. The goal of this committee is to make sure the full history of JPG is communicated through a variety of means including seminars, a newsletter, field trips, web page and virtual museum. It remains important that people today recognize and appreciate the installation's impact on former residents who were forced to give up their land and homes. We invite you to become a member of the partnership. Monthly meetings are held rotating between Madison, North Vernon, and Versailles, IN.



Diane Coon leads the JPG Heritage Partnership on a tour of Underground Railroad sites in JPG.

For more information on Jefferson Proving Ground Heritage Partnership or meeting dates, please call (812) 273-6075 or (812) 689-6410 extension 5.

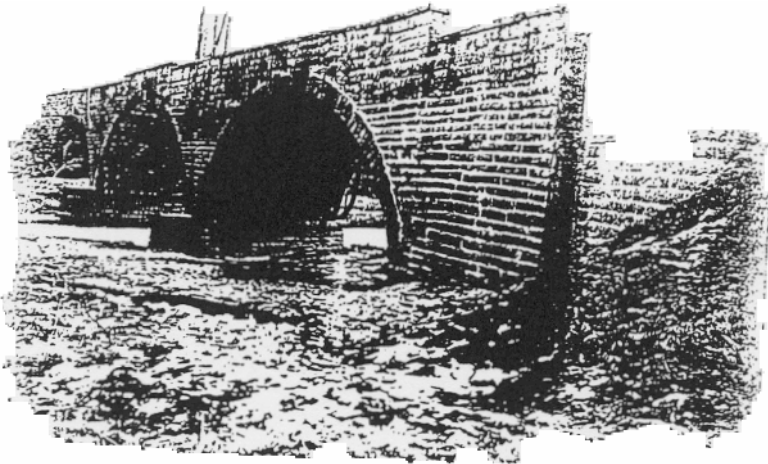
The 2nd Annual Jefferson Proving Ground Heritage Seminar

Saturday, November 8, 2003 from 9:00 A.M. until 3:00 P.M.

**Madison-Jefferson County Library Auditorium
420 West Main Street
Madison, IN**

Presentors:

- **JPG's Military Story – Mike Moore, JPG Historian**
- **The Vision for the Future – Joe Robb, Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge Manager**
- **The Wonderful Stone Arch Bridges – Dr. Jim Cooper, Retired History Professor, DePauw University**
- **Remembrances of Attending Oakdale School – George Bayless, Former Resident**



**Registration Costs: Early registration (before 11/7) \$20.00
Saturday, 11/8 \$25.00
Student registration \$15.00**

Costs cover the presentations, information packets and lunch.

**Sponsored by the JPG Heritage Partnership and Historic Hoosier Hills RC&D.
Please call (812) 273-6075 or (812) 689-6410 extension 5 for registration information.**

Historic Hoosier Hills RC&D

Mission Statement:

“Serve as a catalyst to empower local people to solve the overall economic and natural resource problems of the area, and to properly develop, utilize, and conserve our natural and human resources.”

Vision Statement:

“Workable economic climate in harmony with natural resources developed to their full potential for a higher quality of life.”

Officers & Staff

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1st Vice-President – Galen Eberhart
2nd Vice-President – Bob Hughes
Treasurer – William Corning
Secretary – Barbara Corning
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Historic Hoosier Hills RC&D Council meets on the 4th Monday of every other month. The Executive Committee meets on the 3rd Friday of every other month that the Council does not meet. All meetings are open to the public. Anyone wishing to attend will certainly be welcome.