Written by Stephanie Groves Monday, April 15, 2013 1:43 PM - Last Updated Tuesday, April 16, 2013 10:39 AM



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KENDRICK WOODS — Located in Allen County, Kendrick Woods State Nature Preserve is the largest park in the Johnny Appleseed Park District. There are 159 acres of extensive woodland encompassing a comprehensive ecosystem comprised of the largest number of plant species in the area.

Park Naturalist Mark Mohr said that near the southern end of Kendrick Woods is where two bald eagles are nesting and it is the first time they have inhabited the area.

"The birds of prey mate for life and will have 2 or 3 eaglets," Mohr explained.

Kendrick Woods boasts bald eagles, rare flora, walking trails

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Among the abundant wildflowers are several species uncommon to Allen County found in the mixed swamp woods, including; Swamp Saxifrage, Virginia Bluebells, Green Dragon, Fire Pink and Blue Cohosh. Mohr said that the ecosystem hosts plant species that are not normally found in the area and are indigenous to Kendrick Woods.

"The Marsh Marigold and Skunk Cabbage only grow here," Mohr detailed. "This is the only park designated as an Ohio State Nature Preserve because of the 300-year-old White Oak growing along the south trail."

Since it has been cooler this spring, wildflowers and their foliage are just beginning to emerge. During a walk through Kendrick Woods at this time, nature lovers will see Blood Root, Cut-Leaved Toothwort, Dutchman's Breeches, Trillium, Rue Anemone, White Trout Lily, Wood Anemone and Spring Beauty.

Since 1994, Mohr and crews of volunteers have worked to eradicate Garlic Mustard, an invasive species from Europe, which secretes a toxin into the soil and damages the ecosystem, particularly wildflowers.

The waterways, the Auglaize River and Six Mile Creek, and larger un-broken tracts of forests to connect different wood lots have promoted a larger bird migration through the area. Warblers and Pileated Woodpeckers, which are the size of a Hawk, have been seen more frequently the last 10 years. The park is also home to Great Horned, Barn and Screech owls and Wild Turkeys.

The preserve is home to an array of aquatic life: Leopard, Western Chorus, Green and Spring Peeper frogs and a purebred population of salamanders.

"To really appreciate the park, people need to come out and visit more frequently," Mohr said with conviction.

Kendrick Woods is located approximately 10 miles west of Lima. Take SR 81 west to Defiance Trail. The preserve is located 1/2 mile north on the west side of Defiance Trail. Visitor parking,

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nature trails and restrooms are available.

Contact Mohr at 419-223-1025 for further details or to register to help with Garlic Mustard pulls. The dates for the project are 9 a.m. to noon on Mondays including April 22 and 29 and May 6 and 20.

For more information, please visit dnr.state.oh.us/location/kendrick_woods.