



For Immediate Release

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Kent County Organizations Seek Community's Help to Record Biodiversity During a Two-Week 'BioBlitz' Program
'Parks for Pollinators BioBlitz' to Run June 21-July 6 as Part of Community Effort to Identify Flowering Plants and Pollinating Insects in Kent County

Kentwood, Michigan, June 16, 2021 – Community members are invited to help in a countywide effort to identify biodiversity as part of a “Parks for Pollinators BioBlitz” program June 21-July 6 in conjunction with National Pollinator Week, which is June 21-27.

The Kent Conservation District, Kent County Parks and City of Kentwood Parks and Recreation Department have partnered on the “BioBlitz” program, which is an effort to record as many species of flowering plants and pollinating insects as possible in Kent County within a two-week period.

The program seeks community participation to observe and record pollinators such as butterflies, bees and other insects, as well as flowering plants. Together, the community will create a snapshot of the variety of plants and pollinator species found in Kent County.

Several events will occur during the program to help participants increase their knowledge of pollinators and their impact on the natural environment. At the BioBlitz's conclusion, program organizers will present information about the recorded species and pollinators, as well as award several pollinator posters to participants including the youngest naturalist and the one who identifies the most species.

“Through this program, we hope to help Kent County residents become more familiar with native bees and butterflies and the environments they prefer,” Kent Conservation District Manager Jessie Schulte said. “The project also will help us answer the important question, ‘Do we need more habitat?’”

To participate in the “Parks for Pollinators BioBlitz” program, community members can download the [iNaturalist app](#) on their smartphones and join the “Parks for Pollinators – Kent County, Michigan” project to record and report plant and pollinator species they see. The app will help users identify their findings.

Community members are also invited to take part in the following activities:

- **6 p.m. Friday, June 18** – Online meet and greet on [Zoom](#) with Kent Conservation District and Kentwood Parks and Recreation staff to learn more about how the “BioBlitz” program and iNaturalist app work. Staff will also review some of the common species one might encounter during the project.
- **1 p.m. Saturday, June 26** – Free guided naturalist hike with Michigan Lepidoptera Society at Northeast Park, 1900 Middleground Drive SE in Kentwood.

- **6 p.m. Wednesday, June 30** – Free prairie walk in a wildflower and pollinator habitat on a converted family farm at 4790 Peach Ridge Ave. NW in Sparta with local landowner Persephone Rana.
- **9 a.m. Monday, July 5** – Butterfly count with the West Michigan Butterfly Association at Rogue River State Game Area, 13747 Krauskopf Road NE, Sparta, MI 49345. The cost is \$3 per person.

Kentwood Parks and Recreation Program Coordinator Kristina Colby says the program will encourage residents to spend time outdoors visiting new parks and looking for pollinators.

“We’re delighted to host the guided naturalist hike right here in Kentwood in partnership with the Michigan Lepidoptera Society,” Colby said. “Butterflies in particular are most active in the middle of the day when the sun is shining, so it is sure to be a successful outing for observing and recording these beautiful local pollinators, as well as other species.”

More about the project is available at [iNaturalist.org](https://www.inaturalist.org). Interested participants can contact Kent Conservation District Manager Jessie Schulte with questions at jessie.schulte@macd.org or 616.222.5801.

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