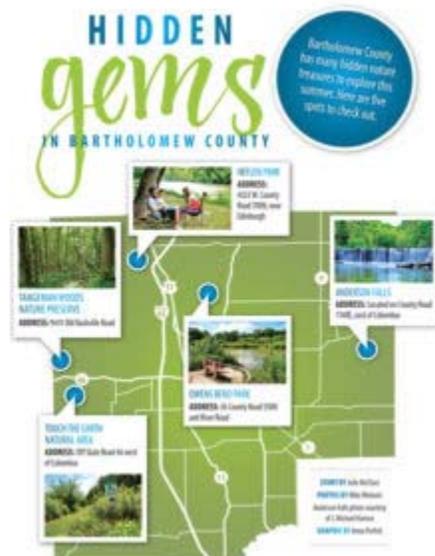


# You've got to see these: Hidden gems in Bartholomew County

By Julie McClure - July 14 7:50am



Hidden gems in Bartholomew County

Summer is the perfect time to explore those out-of-the way places that you've heard are hidden treasures near your hometown.

And Bartholomew County is home to some unique close-to-hon day trips that offer hiking, scenic views, picnic locations and some great fishing.

Here are some to consider in your summer travels:

## Hidden gems

1 of 12 < >



Signage marks the Touch the Earth Natural Area located off Country Club Road on outskirts of Columbus, pictured, Friday, July 1, 2016. Mike Wolanin | The Republic

## **Falling for Anderson Falls**

Located in eastern Bartholomew County, many people know of this famous landmark, but its out-of-the-way location doesn't attract an overwhelming number of visitors. Purchased by the Nature Conservancy in 1977, the Anderson Falls Nature Preserve is part of the Bartholomew County Parks system, located on 44 acres east of Newbern on County Road 1140E.

The main attraction and the preserve's namesake is Anderson Falls, a 12-foot waterfall which is about 100 feet wide that is fed by the Fall Fork of Clifty Creek, and usually has water flowing year-round.

Robert Harden, president of the county park board, said the preserve also has hiking trails, a wooded area to explore and areas to picnic.

People do swim at the base of the falls, but there are no lifeguards — and some water rescues have been performed after people slipped on rocks and fell.

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources geologists say the falls were formed where the Louisville Limestone overlies the less resilient Waldron Shale.

The walls at the near side of the falls have an undercut so there is a small rock house underneath, which can be explored.

The Falls are a favorite of local photographers — a photo of the waterfall was selected for "Go Outside and Come Back Better," published in 2013 by Connecticut author Ron Lizzi.

For more information: [columbus.in.us/see-do/anderson-falls](http://columbus.in.us/see-do/anderson-falls)

## **Camping close to home**

If you're looking for a camping overnight getaway, Heflen Park offers a campground close to home. Located at 4323 W. County Road 700N near Edinburgh, Harden said the Heflen

campground offers 33 campsites, some with pads, and water and electricity hookups. Two shell houses are featured along with a scenic 2-acre fishing lake, he said.

The lake is stocked with bluegill and bass, Harden said.

The campsites are also along the Flatrock River, offering more recreational options. There are hiking trails and basketball, volleyball and horseshoe pitching areas as well as an all-purpose playing field.

Reservations aren't accepted, but check-in is from 9 to 11 a.m. and 4 to 6 p.m. daily. Pets are allowed, but no alcoholic beverages or firearms.

Heflen is open from Memorial Day weekend through the end of September, and the county park department contracts out Heflen's park management for the summer season, Harden said.

For more information: [bartholomew.in.gov/parks-and-recreation.html](http://bartholomew.in.gov/parks-and-recreation.html)

### **Gone fishin'**

If you need to get away from it all for some fishing, Bartholomew County's Owens Bend Park might be just what you're craving. Located on County Road 550N and River Road, this fishing area offers a quiet lagoon that has been stocked for the fishermen, and a shelter house for the non-fishermen in your life to relax while you're out on your boat.

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources provided a boat launch, the shelter and a trail at the park, but be aware that in times of high water or flooding, the park may be closed due to the parking area being covered by water, according to county park officials.

Even when the parking lot is inaccessible and the gate is closed, however, county officials allow visitors to park near the entrance and walk to the fishing area to fish off the bank.

For more information: [bartholomew.in.gov/parks-and-recreation.html](http://bartholomew.in.gov/parks-and-recreation.html)

### **An Indiana prairie, undisturbed**

Sycamore Land Trust offers a glimpse into what Indiana's prairie once looked like, and it's free

tour. Touch the Earth Natural Area, just off State Road 46 west of Columbus, is the largest piece of protected land in Bartholomew County at nearly 100 acres.

Known for its hiking paths and bird-watching opportunities, the preserve is covered with wildflowers at this time of year, said Abby Perfetti, communications director at Sycamore Land Trust.

A parking area is offered along Country Club Road, with access to 2 miles of trails that meander through the preserve, which are actually old farm fields that are reverting back to Indiana prairie, Perfetti said.

There are educational touches throughout the preserve, helping visitors identify types of trees. Classes at the natural area are announced periodically on the land trust website.

The next event there is a Butterflies and Blossoms Stroll, from 1 to 3 p.m. July 23, led by volunteer naturalist Doug Johnson.

He will lead a group of about 25 in learning about butterflies, plants and common insects. The guided hike is free for Sycamore Land Trust members and there is a suggested donation of \$5 per person or \$10 per family for those who aren't members. To make a reservation, call 812-336-5832, ext. 100, before July 21 and provide your address, telephone number and name and ages of any children who are participating.

For more information: [sycamorelandtrust.org](http://sycamorelandtrust.org)

## **Into the woods**

Close to the Touch the Earth Natural Area is another Sycamore Land Trust property, the Tangeman Woods Nature Preserve at 9441 Old Nashville Road. The 32-acre property is nearly all forest and has an Outdoor Lab nature trail created by the Bartholomew County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Like the Touch the Earth Natural Area, hiking here is free, but the area is not staffed and there are no restrooms. Parking is at the Harrison Township Fire Department, and firefighters respectfully request that cars don't block their exit doors from the fire station. Trails begin and end from the fire station.

The property was donated by the Irwin-Sweeney-Miller Foundation to the land trust in 2007. The property is named after the late Clementine Tangeman, a sister of the late industrialist J. Irwin Miller, who once owned the property.

Trails are marked by 59 numbered sign posts. Perfetti said many people visit Tangeman Woods the fall for the leaf colors, but the woods are also great to hike during the summer.

For more information: [sycamorelandtrust.org](http://sycamorelandtrust.org)

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