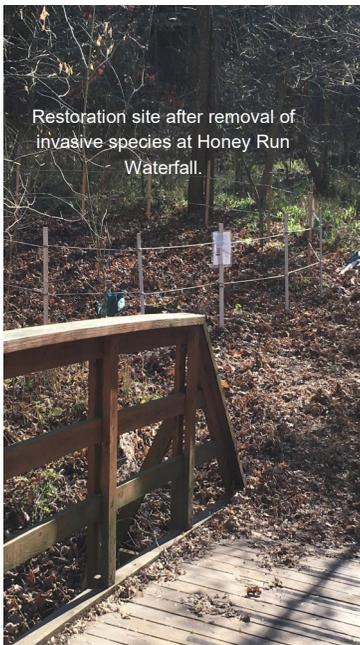


FRIENDS OF THE WOODS

January 29, 2021 edition



Restoration site after removal of invasive species at Honey Run Waterfall.

Invasive Species

The purpose of our newsletter is to raise awareness of invasive species and the harm they can do to an environment. A group of volunteers known as “Friends of the Woods” have begun to make improvements to the Honey Run Waterfall area by implementing a restoration area within the park. The volunteers have been removing invasive plant species such as garlic mustard, multiflora rose, poison hemlock and barberry throughout the Knox County Parks. This project at Honey Run Waterfall is just the beginning of restoration areas in the parks. Invasive plants make it very difficult for native plants to flourish. Honey Run Waterfall is a fragile ecosystem (a community of plants and animals) and requires careful stewardship. The volunteer group hopes this task will allow space for native plants to continue to thrive in the Park.

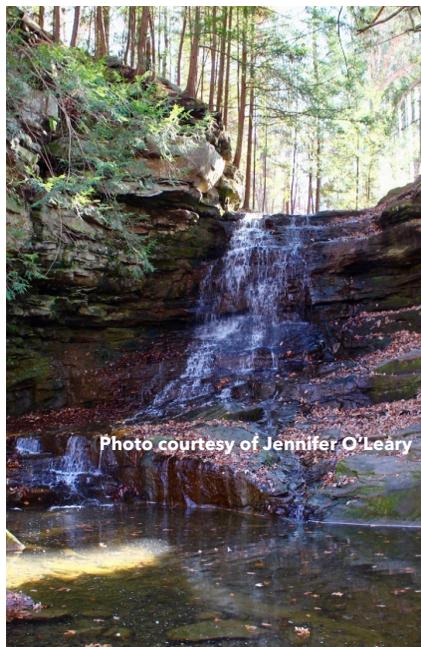
Pressure—from water and people makes a mark—at Honey Run Waterfall

By: Sue Hagan

Pressure and time. Put together, they are a powerful force for change, whether caused by nature or by humankind. At Honey Run Waterfall Park, the effects of pressure and time are readily seen. Water changes the face of the landscape, as rain and snowmelt rush past rock and scour away tiny bits of grit. Over time, pressure from the moving water can alter rock formations and change the course of a stream.

Water forces have been at work at Honey Run Waterfall for thousands of years, applying pressure to the ancient Black Hand sandstone formations created during the Mississippian age 331 to 359-million years ago. Where the sandstone is exposed at the surface, water has had a chance to create gorges, stone arches and cliffs during a steady onslaught on the seemingly solid stone. Pressure over time results in geology of breathtaking beauty. At Honey Run, masses of visitors arrive to take in the 25-foot-tall waterfall, the cliffs, the massive slump blocks (stone broken away from the main formation), and the tumbled boulders.

Just as pressure from water will alter the stone formations, pressure from the presence of humans will make its mark as well, especially on the plants in the park. If one person walks through a stand of wildflowers, not much damage is done. But the cumulative steps of thousands of visitors eventually take their toll, with the result being that plants are trampled into nonexistence and soil is laid bare – leaving it vulnerable to



erosion or the incursion of hardy invasive plants.

Staying on delineated paths mitigates that to an extent. Limiting the trails means that park personnel have the time and resources to maintain the paths, instead of having to tend to random bare areas created by traffic. Visitors can demonstrate their love for the parks by trying to care for every wildflower, every pristine stream, every habitat. Staying on the paths – lessening the impact of the destructive pressure that ends in bare soil—is one step toward showing the love.

Please watch the Knox County Park District website and social media for more posts focusing on restoration work planned for Honey Run Waterfall. It will be followed by articles that will discuss specific invasive plants, such as autumn olive, multiflora rose, poison hemlock, and others, and what you can do to help remove them from some of the most beautiful and botanically diverse areas of the county.

A little restoration project at Honey Run Waterfall

By: Sue Hagan

In 2020, the Friends of the Woods volunteer group removed garlic mustard and other invasive plant species from Honey Run Waterfall Park. In the fall, a large stand of multiflora rose was pulled, leaving a bare patch of soil.

Visitors to the park can see that the area is cordoned off. The idea is to see what native plants might fill the space, if left on its own. Without people further tramping down that area, it's possible that wildflowers will reassert themselves. If not, volunteers can purposefully introduce native Ohio plants in that spot, as well as along the stream bank where invasive plants also were removed.

It's fun to imagine what might pop up in the roped off area. Might trilliums and violets move in, complementing other sections of the park that are filled with those pretty spring wildflowers? Maybe a tree will take root, facilitated by gravity, the wind, or a bird – any of which might have carried a seed there. Time will tell. And seeing what happens in this one plot of land will help volunteers and park staff decide what to do with other areas recently freed of invasive plants: let nature take its course, or help it along a little? Watch with us as we see what happens in the spring. We can't wait to find out our next steps!



Round-leaf Hepatica at Honey Run Waterfall

Photo courtesy of Terri Heironimus