

Spring Newsletter 2023



Fire and Ice Wrap up In spite of the threat of inclement weather, we enjoyed a very successful Fire and Ice event at Honey Run Waterfall on December 9, 2022. The Knox County Park District, Millwood Church of Christ, Knox Area Transit, Knox County Sheriff and over fifty volunteers (Park District

and Millwood Church) teamed again to bring to reality the popular Fire and Ice event that benefits Food For The Hungry of Knox County.

After parking at the Millwood Church of Christ and contributing either food or funds to Food for the Hungry, guests were transported to the park by Knox Area Transit where they embarked on a magical journey to the waterfall, guided by enchanting luminaria.

KAT transported 954 people on their round trip to the falls, \$1,100 was raised for Food for the Hungry as well as a pickup truck load of donated food. The total county-wide contributions were \$353,367.86 and 20.7 truckloads of food.

Many thanks to our sponsors: The Knox County Commissioners, Millwood Church of Christ, Knox Area Transit, United Aggregates, Inc., Griffin Insurance, Revere Roofing Co. Inc., Holmes Rental, and Pine Row Studio. In addition, this event would not be possible without the dedicated volunteers who braved snow, ice, rain and wind, freely giving of their time to help this event materialize. We are sincerely grateful to each one.

Thank you for joining the Knox County Park District and the Millwood Church of Christ in support of the 2022 Food For the Hungry drive. Working together we can make a difference!

(Photo courtesy of Cody Wright)

Wolf Run Park Storybook Trail

Have you heard? The Storybook Trail at Wolf Run Regional Park has a new book title: The Little Forest Keepers by Mary Lundquist. This title will be featured through April.

The Little Forest Keepers is a winter wonderland of a picture book about being kind to friends and strangers alike. Learn about Ash and Pudd and how they take care of everyone in the woods, from their furry and feathered friends to the shivering trees. But then one day, a strange new creature appears in the forest. Could it be a new friend?

Visit the trail and take a selfie, use the #parkdistrictstorybook23 and share your photo.

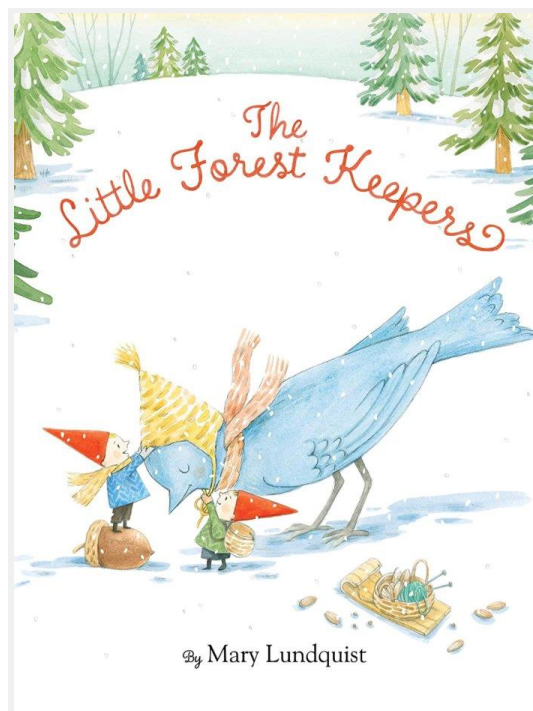
The new book starting in April will be Raindrops to Rainbow by John Micklos Jr. and Charlene Chua.

Raindrops are falling outside, but there's still a world of color to experience! Delightful rhymes and brilliant illustrations detail how a gloomy, rainy day might not actually be so gloomy after all when you get to spend time with Mom, Brown Bear, and the colors around you. And when a "beaming rainbow, bold and bright" cuts through the sky, everyone gets to experience the joy of all the colors that can only come after the rain.



This title is also a Dolly Parton Imagination Library book. Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program mails children a free book each month from birth until they are 5-years old. These high-quality books are chosen by experts in publishing and education, and are based on the child's age. The books from the Dolly Parton Imagination Library strive to showcase diversity and help build self-confidence. For more information visit:

[Dolly Parton's Imagination Library | USA, UK, IE, CA, AU](#)



2023 Knox County Park District Internship

The Knox County Park District is now taking applications for their summer internship. Qualified applicants must be currently enrolled in college or university majoring in Natural Resources, Environmental Sciences, Wildlife Management, Biology or closely related field. Experience in ecosystem management, wildlife management and interpretive programming is preferred. A strong desire to work outside in most weather conditions and a willingness to perform strenuous physical labor is required. Must be able to work independently or as a team. For further details contact Lori Totman at loritotman@co.knox.oh.us or visit our website at knoxcountyparks.org

Volunteer Groups Active within the Park District

Volunteers are the foundation of keeping our parks and trails maintained for others to enjoy. We have several groups that are active from educational to recreational realms. If you are interested in any of the following work groups, please complete our volunteer form <https://forms.gle/sKyyzujbq4aaB3jJ9>

- Bluebird Trail Monitoring at Various Parks

Camp Canopy Taking Youth Registrations

Do you know a student who enjoys outdoor camps? Camp Canopy, is a week-long Forestry and Wildlife camp held at Camp Muskingum in Carroll County. This year's camp will be June 11-16. The camp is open to students who have completed the 8th grade to those who just recently graduated high school. Camp Canopy campers engage in hiking to creek monitoring to surveying wildlife and forestry. Do you know someone who enjoys being outside and fits that description?

- Butterfly Transect Trail Monitoring at Honey Run Highlands Park
- Disc Golf Course Revitalization Efforts at Thayer Ridge Park
- Friends of the Woods (Invasive Plant Removals and Restoration)
- Ohio Horseman's Council, Knox County Chapter Trail Maintenance at Thayer Ridge Park

Local scholarships are available, contact the Knox County Soil & Water Conservation District at 740-393-6724. Deadline for scholarship applications is May 8, 2023. At the state level you may contact the Ohio Forestry Association for additional scholarship information [888-388-7337](tel:888-388-7337).

Thank You, Katie Hux!

After more than 31 years as a dedicated government employee, our very own Administrative Assistant, Katie Hux, will be entering upon a well-earned retirement.

Katie began her profession at the Wayne County Soil & Water Conservation District, but the remainder of her 3+ decade career was spent with the Knox County Soil and Water Conservation District, the Knox County OSU Extension Office and for her grand finale she has, during the last 6 years, benefited the Knox County Park District.

The mastermind behind many of the Knox County Park District events and activities, Katie has also been instrumental in faithfully communicating with the public through Facebook and Instagram, all the while performing well her other manifold duties. Her passion for the parks and the important role they play in our community is evident in all she does.

Katie was the mastermind behind some of the Park Districts most successful programs and events- Pumpkins in the Park, Barktoberfest, Virtual Fishing Tournaments, Fairy Garden Trail and the ever-popular Geo Trails.



As you Visit the Parks/Trails, Stop and Sign the Guestbook

Upon your visits to our parks, trails or river accesses, have you ever stopped to view our kiosks? The kiosks have useful information such as fun facts, park rules, source of contacts, social media platforms and now a GUEST BOOK! Yes, we have created a means to hear from our park guests. Whether you are a regular park visitor or from out of town, we want to know where you visited and what you enjoyed and where you call home.

Do you Know the Difference Between City and County Parks?

Many people have a misconception of County Parks and City Parks and think of us



Disc Golf Course Revitalization at Thayer Ridge Park

Disc golf is a growing sport that has exploded in popularity over the last decade. It borrows many rules and terms from traditional golf, but players throw plastic discs to metal baskets. In Knox County, a group of local disc golf enthusiasts and volunteers are making improvements to the course at Thayer Ridge Park. This course was originally installed in 2010 with a grant from the local Rotary and Rotary International.

Recently, Rotary and Rotary International awarded another grant to further improvements to the course. The goal is to continue to provide a welcoming and fun experience for new players in the area, while enhancing the course to allow an interesting challenge for those with some playing experience. To accomplish this, the 9-hole layout will be partially redesigned to incorporate the adjacent woods, increase the width of the fairways on the open (non-wooded) holes, and

In keeping with her passion and enthusiasm, one of Katie's next ventures includes opening a trailside store in Centerburg where she will offer many items to meet the needs of those utilizing the Heart of Ohio Trail, part of the Ohio To Erie Trail/Great American Rail-Trail in Knox County.

To say that her remarkable creativity and kind, gentle spirit will be greatly missed is a vast understatement, however, we thank her for her valued service and wish her all the very best in her retirement, as well as, in the next unfolding chapters of her life!

Welcome Darcie Litton

In consideration of the upcoming retirement of Katie Hux, the Park District recently hired Darcie Litton as the new Administrative Assistant. Darcie brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to this administrative position. Darcie grew up in Knox County and has resided here during the past 22 years. Welcome aboard, Darcie!

as one, however, we are two separate entities.

As people begin to gather and hold events, please note that the Knox County Park District is not the contact for reserving shelter houses in the Mount Vernon City Parks. Knox County Park District shelters are offered to the public on a first come, first served basis.

We field many phone calls for these shelter house inquires. Please keep in mind that the Knox County Park District manages properties outside the corporation limit of Mount Vernon. Mount Vernon City Parks manages the parks within the city limits which include: Riverside, Memorial, Hiawatha, Ariel-Foundation, Arch Avenue, Riverview, Dan Emmett, and Shellmar parks. If you need to reserve a shelter house or have questions regarding these parks please call Mount Vernon City Parks at (740) 393-9501 or email mtvparks@mountvernon.org

add an additional set of tees for a different skill level.

Phase 1 of the project, which involved moving the current baskets, clearing brush, and determining the layout for the new baskets, is now complete. We encourage families with an interest in disc golf to play the course and provide feedback regarding the placement of the new baskets. For a map of the proposed course, please visit our website at: knoxcountyparks.org, click on : "Activities" and choose "Thayer Ridge Disc Golf Map." The feedback form may be found there as well.

Future plans are being made for a Disc Golf outing upon completion of the course.

The volunteer work group typically meets on Saturday mornings at Thayer Ridge Disc Golf Course. If you are interested in participating, please contact Perry Leatherman at [304-825-5466](tel:304-825-5466) for more details.

Noteworthy News in the Parks and along the Trails

Join Knox County Park District at these Exciting Upcoming Community Events!

Come join the Park District at the **15th Pheasants Forever Youth Day** to be held at Campbell's Farm & Sportsman's Club, located at 22430 Coshocton Ave. Howard 43028 on Saturday, April 8 from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. This event is for youth 3-17 years of age and must be accompanied by a parent/guardian. All the necessary equipment for the youth day is supplied. Events and activities may include: fishing, 4-H shooting sports (archery, rifle and shotgun shooting), building/making birdhouses and feeders, panning for gold,

Knox County Park District 2023 Construction Projects

We encourage you to look at your most recent real property tax statement that was due to the Knox County Treasurer's Office February 17. Look at the section on the statement that shows how much of your real property taxes are paid to the Knox County Park District. The list has approximately 20 entities listed and Park District is at the tail end of the list. Have you ever wondered where those real property tax dollars go that are paid to the Park District? Here is just a short list of some of the planned projects for 2023.

tomahawk throwing and much more! Come check out the new Knox County Soil and Water Conservation District mobile educational trailer! It will make its official debut at Youth Day.

Come join the Park District at the **Brown Family Environmental Center's (BFEC) Earth Day Celebration** at the BFEC on Saturday, April 22 from noon until 4 p.m. The focus for the Park District will be "trails" in conjunction with Rails To Trails Conservancy "Celebrate Trails Day" on Earth Day this year. The BFEC is literally a stone's throw from the Kokosing Gap Trail, one section of the Ohio To Erie Trail/Great American Rail-Trail in Knox County. Learn about Knox County's multi-model trails, cycling safety and activities.

On Saturday, May 6, the **Black Fork Gravel Grinders** will hold their annual event in the Brinkhaven/Mohican area. Cyclists travel from all over the eastern part of the United States (MI, IN, KY, WV, VA, PA, NY and OH) to take part in the event. They expect over 500 cyclists to descend upon east central Ohio on this date. According to their website "this must do gravel road race and ride spans some of the most scenic, grueling and diverse gravel roads in Ohio." The Black Fork Gravel Grinders mission is "to cultivate an awareness and passion for gravel road riding, challenge riders of all abilities and backgrounds, and do this by staging an epic cycling event." There will be three route lengths offered: a 23, 30-mile ride, and a 54-mile race loop. The Mohican Valley Trail, Bridge of Dreams location is scheduled to be an aid station hosted by the Central Ohio Mountain Bike Organization's Bike Patrol for the cyclists. Most cyclists utilizing the aid station will come to this location between the hours of 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

Ohio Department of Natural Resources Free Fishing Weekend

On June 17 and 18, 2023 all Ohio residents are invited to experience Ohio's fantastic public fishing opportunities without purchasing a license. Whether you prefer angling in a lake or stream, pack a picnic and enjoy the weekend with family and friends. All size and bag limits apply during these two days.

Ohio to Erie Trailapalooza 2023 Save the Date!

Join us on June 24, 2023 from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. for a celebration of the 35 miles of the Ohio to Erie Trail/Great American Rail-Trail that meander through Knox County. The event will be complete with music, food trucks, and loads of fun for all

Tree removals: Park District recently hired Mohican Tree Service to remove a very large, standing, dead cottonwood at the Riley Chapel Road river access.

Park District also recently contracted with Burch Tree Service to grind the 20+ invasive callery pear stumps lining the driveway and remove several standing dead or dying black locust and box elder trees at Brinkhaven Park. Clean up also included removing downed trees from the edges of the wooded areas, as well as, tree removal from a small pine grove. Stay tuned for more improvements that are planned for Brinkhaven Park in the future!

Trail Projects: Many local trail utilizers are familiar with the failed asphalt in the Mount Liberty area on the Heart of Ohio Trail. For several years now there have been signs posted about the uneven pavement. The source of the problem appears to be tree roots. Park District has contracted with Hill's Blacktop and Concrete, Sunbury OH to repair the blacktop in this area. It will require removing and replacing the asphalt, the base will be checked and compacted if needed. The hope will be to get this project underway in April.

Park District contracted with Asphalt Systems Ohio Inc. to seal a portion of the Heart of Ohio Trail from Graham Road to Pittsburgh Avenue in Mount Vernon. ASI utilizes a bio-based product made from soybeans for their asphalt trail sealing. This is an environmentally friendly method of sealing asphalt. This project is scheduled to begin late April/early May.

For both projects, please expect trail closures during the active construction/trail sealing. Park District will post closures on our Facebook page and contractors will post on-site signage.

Park/Trail Projects: Grassbaugh's LLC recently completed a driveway/parking lot improvement project at the Honey Run Highlands parking lot on Hazel Dell Road. The project included replacing two failed culverts and placing 6" pipe and three catch basins to handle surface runoff. This project will address the severe erosional issues to the driveway. Grassbaugh's are on-line to complete an additional project at the Honey Run Waterfall parking lot directly across from the Highlands lot where a failed culvert will be replaced. Both projects were necessary and will be extremely beneficial as park patrons for the Honey Run Waterfall Park are asked to park in the Honey Run Highlands parking lot and cross the road. The Honey Run Waterfall parking lot is reserved for handicapped parking only with the 2021 installation of the concrete pad, walkway and

ages. Further details will be announced as they become available on our Website and Facebook page. Looking forward to seeing you there!

deck. Grassbaugh's will also be improving and expanding the Greer landing parking lot located on the Mohican State Scenic River, this season.



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Knox County Park District

117 E High Street, Room 253
Mount Vernon, OH 43050

740-392-7275