

Friends of Warren County Park District (FWCPD) was created to support programs and activities associated with the Warren County Park District. The FWCPD group encourages volunteerism and raises funds to further the growth of the Park District, as well as maintains relationships with other Warren County organizations. These purposes comprise our mission.

NEW OFFICERS: We started 2021 with some leadership changes and an update to our by-laws. Dianna Kenneally was elected President, with a new Vice President position being filled by Dave Nuscher. Clint Day continues as Treasurer and Patricia Decker as Secretary. We continue to be supported by the steering committee: Kathy Schroeder, Judy Bay, Cindy Glorius, Jim Prickett, Bill Lindauer, and David Woehr. The by-laws update allows more flexible meeting schedules and virtual meetings (our default during COVID-19). Speaking of COVID-19, many of our programs/meetings ran virtually again this year. The good news is this allowed us to continue to build up excellent video content at our website www.fwcpdoh.com. We were happy to restart in-person programming and meetings this summer. This year we added some new *exclusive events for members only!* Here is a quick run-down of the highlights this year...

EXPLORE OUR PARKS!



FWCPDOH.COM

FEBRUARY: Naturalist Shannon Pennington continued with her virtual nature programming and added content to our website including videos featuring the **Great Backyard Bird Count** and Bill Lindauer on winter tree identification. In February she kicked off a monthly **E-Newsletter** (more than 800 subscribers) which included **Species Spotlights** written by many of our own Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalists (OCVN's). FWCPD also purchased **new banners** to hang at the parks and advertise our website with a scannable QR code.

MARCH: More **online programming**, including content from Shannon's **Miami University Institute for Learning in Retirement** class, was uploaded to our website and YouTube Channel www.tinyurl.com/WCPDYouTube. **Project Wingspan** awarded us with native seedlings and seeds for the **Solar Pollinator Habitat**.

APRIL: Sonder Brewing hosted a fund-raising evening for FWCPD which raised \$435. In April (and May) we had several **Native Planting Days** at Armco Park, led by our dear Friend and amazing gardener Cindy Glorius, to install plant donations from Project Wingspan and Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District (WCSWCD). Thank you to all the Friends and volunteers who came out to plant and water!





MAY: We offered the first of our new members' exclusive events – a private hike to a **Heron Rookery** lead by Jim Prickett. We counted more than 85 nests this year despite some big windstorms. Thanks to the private homeowner that allowed us to see these amazing birds.

JUNE: We were excited to re-start **Tech-Free Tuesdays**. This year Naturalist Shannon, joined by a host of OCVN's and adult and teen volunteers, shared games, animal encounters, and crafts with more than 900

participants. Special thanks to Bill Schroeder of Little Miami Conservancy, Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) interns, and Ohio Division of Wildlife Officer Jason Keller and K9 Scout who participated in an amazing fishing and bug collecting day.



JULY: We co-hosted a **Project Wild Workshop** with WCSWCD Educator Melissa Proffitt at Armco Park to train 20 local educators on integrating outdoor nature activities into science curriculum. We also hosted the **Stroll for Kindness** at the Armco Park Playscape with the Violence Free Coalition of Warren County (VFCWC) and author Carol McCloud. VFCWC donated funding to help build **Storybook Strolls** at Armco, Landen-Deerfield, and Hisey Parks to provide families with safe outdoor activities. Thanks so much to Roy Lutz from the VFCWC for sharing their COVID-19 grant funding with the Park District.



SEPTEMBER: In the category of “better late than never,” we started our **Concerts in the Park** this month at Landen-Deerfield Park. Patrons enjoyed the sounds of New Brew, Abe’s Lincoln, and The Happy Hour Band along with animal encounters, fishing demonstrations, rock decorating, board breaking, and munching on delicious pizza. Thank you to Shannon, Bill Schroeder with Little Miami Conservancy, Premier Martial Arts, and Marco’s Pizza.

OCTOBER: Hisey Fall Fest was a huge success this year – Kudos to Jim Prickett, Bill Lindauer and the whole team! Along with our normal pumpkin picking, nature chats, farm demonstrations, and hayrides, we were joined by WCSWCD’s Water Education Trailer, Warren County Master Gardeners, Civil War Re-enactors, 4-H pony cart rides and animal demonstrations, and Thomas Ireland Smith Farms. The day was gorgeous,



and attendance was so high that we ran out of pumpkins for the first time ever! The OCVN-narrated hayrides were so popular (over 300 riders) that next year we may need to add a second wagon!

In October, we also had our second *members' exclusive event* – a visit to **North Pohl Alpaca Farm** to learn about and play with alpacas. FWCPD members John and Sharon Pohlman generously offered to host us at their farm and provided some very interesting information about raising alpacas. It was so much fun – Thank you!



NOVEMBER: Our November meeting was the last of the year. Thanks to your generous support, in addition to funding all these amazing events and projects, we were able to donate \$1,000 to the WCPD for **new trees and landscaping**.

IN MEMORY: This year we lost two wonderful “Friends” who contributed so much to both our parks and our organization. Our sympathy and prayers go out to their families – we will all miss them very much! **Carol Soehner** was an OCVN and very active in our Nature Education Programs. We will be placing a memorial bench in her honor next year on the Hisey Park overlook trail – a spot dearly loved by Carol. Additional memorial fund donations in her memory will be donated to our **FWCPD Nature Education Programs**. **Fred Bay** was an OCVN, a Warren County Park Board Commissioner, and a founding member of the Warren County Astronomical Society. A memorial service for Fred was conducted at Hisey Fall Fest including a rededication of the observatory as the **Fred Bay Warren County Observatory**, an engraved memorial plaque, and benches dedicated to Fred and his wife Judy. Additional memorial funds in his memory will be donated to our **FWCPD OCVN Scholarship Fund**.

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP: We thank you for enabling us to support the programs and purchase trees to be planted in various parks. We are enclosing our membership application envelope with this letter and hope that you will continue to support the Warren County Park District with your membership and your participation. Alternatively, you can save a stamp and join online with options to pay via check, PayPal, or credit card at www.fwcpdoh.com, or you can use the QR code. Your **\$15 annual membership** fee and donations help fund:

- Trees & Landscaping
- Nature Education Programs
- Fred Bay Observatory (WC Astronomical Society)
- Concerts in the Park

VOLUNTEER! We can't do all this without your help! We are looking for volunteers to help with:

- Attending FWCPD meetings, becoming a board member
- Assisting with Nature Programs for children and adults
- Gardening, planting, landscaping (Adopt-a-Park)
- Setting up and helping with Hisey Fall Festival, Youth Fishing Derby, Concerts in the Park

Simply include your desire to volunteer with a notation on your membership information or email diannackenneally@gmail.com



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Organization Name: Friends of Warren County Park District Organization Number: UU763

To learn more about our organization, please visit
www.fwcpdoh.com or <http://www.co.warren.oh.us/parks>
Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/FriendsWCPD

2021 NATURE PROGRAMS RECAP

With wide open spaces and fresh air, our parks and outdoor activities continued to be a much-needed, safe, and healthy respite from the rest of life this past year. We stayed focused primarily on virtual and independent learning options during the first part of 2021 and moved towards in-person programming again in late June.

One of my favorite parts about this job is forming **partnerships with other local resources**, and this year was no different. We collaborated with Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District (WCSWCD) and students from Clearcreek Elementary School, Butler Tech, Warren County Career Center, and Project Lead the Way, with each group adding a new and unique aspect to the project, to add **25 bat houses** to several WCPD properties. We also partnered with Mason Public Library, WC Children Services, Violence Free Coalition of WC, Ohio Naturally, Little Miami Conservancy, area high school students, Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalists, 4-H of Warren County, and Wildlife Officer Jason Keller and K9 Scout to provide outdoor enrichment for over 900 community members through our **Tech-Free Tuesday summer programs**.

Our **registered program animals** met with hundreds of children and adults this year, both virtually and in-person, helping the public learn about native reptiles. We also launched our second annual **iNaturalist summer BioBlitz**, encouraging members of the public to participate in a county-wide citizen science project; 393 observers and 522 identifiers documented 1,145 unique species in Warren County! With a focus on native plants, numerous volunteers helped plant and water **pollinator-friendly plants** at Landen-Deerfield and Armco Parks.

Once again, we challenged children to spend time outdoors this summer with our fifth annual **#WCPD100HoursOutside** program. A record-breaking 77 children completed the challenge this year and were rewarded with prizes donated by Blooms and Berries, Wild Birds Unlimited of West Chester, Loveland Canoe and Kayak, Girls Scouts of Southwest Ohio, Home Depot of Lebanon, Ohio Division of Wildlife, WC Soil and Water Conservation District, and more!

Our programs continue to grow and expand, and I find myself needing more and more help. Looking ahead to 2022, I hope to offer the **Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist training program** through our parks in an effort to help build our volunteer base. If you have any interest in learning more, please reach out; I'm sure we can find something that fits your schedule and strengths!

Thank you for your continued support of the Friends of Warren County Park District and, by extension, our community nature programs. Best wishes for a happy, healthy 2022! ~Naturalist Shannon



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