



FRIENDS OF WARREN COUNTY PARK DISTRICT 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Friends of Warren County Park District is a non-profit 501c3 charitable organization formed to support the Warren County Park District. The mission of this group is to improve, promote, and preserve the Warren County Park District and to engage the community through education and experiences.

2023 LEADERSHIP: Dianna Kenneally, President; Dave Nuscher, Vice President; Kathie Bowers, Treasurer; Jim Prickett, Secretary. Steering committee: Shannon Pennington, Kathy Schroeder, Judy Bay, Cindy Glorius, April Hamlin, David Milender, Leslie Dye, Bill Lindauer, and David Woehr.



MEMBERSHIP: Current paid membership is 74 including 27 NEW members. Our next membership drive kicks off in December. We are raising basic membership contributions from \$15 to \$20 and family membership from \$25 to \$30 (our first increase in 16 years).

TREASURY REPORT (Estimated End of Year Results): Our 2023 income was \$8,587 with expenses of \$10,531. This imbalance was the result of making our 2022 tree donation (\$2,500) to Warren County Park District in early 2023. We estimate we will end the year with a cash balance of around \$25,000. Major donations/grants were received from White Tails Unlimited (\$3,500), ODNR (\$500), Bass Pro Shops (\$500), and B&B Carry Out (\$500). This year we transitioned to a grant awarding process for park projects. Grants distributed include Cops and Bobbers (\$2,905.11), Pollinator Garden Maintenance (\$1,305), and Summer Nature Programs (\$1,700).



ADMINISTRATION UPDATES: This year we spent significant efforts getting our legal and administrative systems updated. We purchased liability insurance (now required by WCPD), updated our registration with the State of Ohio, and drafted a new child protection policy. In addition, we are collaborating with the Warren County Park District to implement a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formalize our partnership. We will be voting on this contract with the parks at our January 2024 meeting.



PARK CHAMPION AWARDS: Please join us in congratulating this year's Park Champion Awardees: **Judy Bay, Kathy Schroeder, and Jim Prickett.** This recognizes member volunteers for long-term service as well as advocacy for the parks, our community, and nature education. Judy and Kathy are the founders of the Friends of Warren County Park District – none of our great events and activities would have been possible without their vision and efforts. Jim Prickett is “Mr. Hisey Fall Fest” – he has been the chairperson and major force behind this wonderful community event for over 16 years. Recipients received a custom embroidered ball cap and their names were added to a perpetual plaque on display at Hisey Park. Read the full story at:

<https://warrencountypost.com/g/waynesville-oh/n/220522/warren-county-parks-recognize-outstanding-volunteers>

To learn more about FWCPD Go to www.fwcpdoh.com or follow us on Facebook.

STRATEGIC PLAN: This year we created our first annual budget and Strategic Plan. As part of this effort, we have updated our Mission Statement and identified 4 key areas we want to focus on: Communication, Continuity, Visitor Experience, and Nature & Outdoor Programs. We have created subcommittees to research each area and create priorities for our future projects and funding. For more information, please see our website <https://fwcpdoh.com/>.



WELCOME NEW WARREN COUNTY PARK DISTRICT CEO, MATT LATHAM: Matt Latham started May 22 in his new position to oversee the Park district’s next phase of growth. Matt comes to the Park District with 23 years of combined experience serving in the private, public, and non-profit sectors, including more than 10 years in parks and recreation.



TinyURL.com/FWCPD2024

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP: Thank you for enabling us to support programs in our 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 annual memberships and donations help fund:

*** Trees & Landscaping * Pollinator Habitat * Nature programs * Hisey Fall Fest * and more...**

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



KROGER REWARDS: To sign up for Kroger Rewards, visit www.kroger.com/i/community/community-rewards

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



WARREN COUNTY POST & FWCPD TEAM UP TO CREATE WCPD PARK CALENDAR: Thanks to the teamwork of Beth Callahan at Warren County Post, FWCPD Nature Photographer Dave Woehr, and students at the Warren County Career Center, a new FWCPD wall calendar is in the works! It will be available for a small donation and as a benefit for Benefactor Level members while supplies last. Look for details on our website in 2024. www.fwcpdoh.com

SPONSORS & PARTNERS – Please patronize and thank our sponsors and partners: OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, WHITETAILED UNLIMITED CAESAR CREEK CHAPTER, CABELA’S/BASS PRO SHOPS, G3 CHURCH, HAMILTON BAIT & TACKLE, B&B CARRYOUT & DINER, NEWPORT AQUARIUM’S WAVE FOUNDATION, SAFE ON MAIN, WARREN COUNTY POST, LCNB NATIONAL BANK, WAYNE TOWNSHIP, SCARLET BARN ANTIQUES, WAYNESVILLE AMERICAN LEGION POST 615 WOMEN’S AUXILIARY, GROCERYLAND, PRICKETTS BARBERSHOP, WARREN COUNTY SHERIFF, ODNR DIVISION OF WILDLIFE, WARREN COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT, LITTLE MIAMI CONSERVANCY, FRANKLIN CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT, WARREN COUNTY ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY, NORTH POHL FARMS, WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED, WARREN COUNTY OSU EXTENSION, RAPTOR, INC., HORSEFEATHERS FARM, TRIPLE A PRO SERVICES, SAFE ON MAIN, BLOOMS & BERRIES, LOVELAND PADDLESPOrts, DAYTON DRAGONS, WARREN COUNTY POST.

Thanks again to all our supporters and volunteers for making 2023 an outstanding year!



Shannon Pennington
WCPD Naturalist

2023 Warren County Park District Naturalist Report

Thanks to the FWCPD for supporting these activities through your contributions and volunteering!

Great Backyard Bird Count: 56 people enjoyed our programming and open house this year at the GBBC at Armco Park. Our friends at RAPTOR, Inc. provided a “Beaks and Talons” event with ambassador animals and installed a Great Horned Owl nesting box in the woods near the Jones Pavilion. FWCPD provided funding for the raptor program as well as refreshments for attendees.

Cops & Bobbers: This year we kicked off summer on June 3 at Armco Park. 164 children and their parents and guardians participated in the event which included a fishing derby, nature hikes, crafts, archery, kayak demos, bounce house, and free lunch. Numerous volunteers from local police departments, fire stations, WC Soil and Water Conservation District, Little Miami Conservancy, and the Ohio Division of Wildlife helped make this day a special event. Funding from FWCPD allowed us to provide really nice prizes (like a new fishing pole or tackle box) for every child who participated!



Solar-Pollinator Habitat: The rule of thumb for native perennial gardens is, “The first year they sleep, the second year they creep, the third year they leap!” 2023 was year three for the pollinator planting at Armco Park and WOW things look great, thanks to the FWCPD. Their support has allowed us to keep on top of the invasive plants so the native plants can grow strong and healthy. If you’ve not checked out this area, I encourage you to do so. Thanks to the successive blooming of flowers (a specially selected seed mix paid for by FWCPD) you can visit multiple times a year and get a unique experience each time.

Ambassador Animals: Our registered ODNR program reptiles (two box turtles, a musk turtle, and a gray rat snake) met with 1,241 community members this year! Their care is sponsored by FWCPD.

100-Hours-Outside: We had a record-setting number of children complete the challenge to spend at least 100 hours outside this summer. 159 kids, three times as many as in years past, earned prizes this year! FWCPD helped solicit donations from local businesses and provided additional items to continue encouraging the kids to spend time outdoors.





Tech-Free Tuesdays: This continues to be our most popular summer activity. This year 1,045 community members participated! One of the most popular days was when FWCPD sponsored RAPTOR, Inc. to provide bird demonstrations. All of the arts and crafts supplies were also provided by Friends!

Hisey Fall Fest: Fall Fest was another rousing success this year. It featured Civil War reenactors, a 4H petting zoo, North Pohl Farms alpacas, pumpkin decorating, and tours of the Hisey Farmhouse. We had so many attendees, this year we needed two full-to-the-brim hayride wagons all day. Our reptile ambassadors and taxidermy collection helped educate visitors about local wildlife. Thanks again to Jim Prickett, Dave Nuscher, and Bill Lindauer for planting the “punkins” for all the kids.



Coming in 2024: Our nature programs continue to be a highlight of the Park District, and they are growing more every year. In 2024 we hope to introduce additional children’s programming as well as opportunities to explore Armco Lake in kayaks! Follow us on social media or subscribe to the Friends newsletter for updates!

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 2024!

~Naturalist Shannon Pennington