

The Voice of the Turtle



Friends of MetroParks of Butler County

Friends of MetroParks of Butler County Monthly Newsletter

February, 2021

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February Board Meeting Friends of MetroParks of Butler County

Because Covid has still not left the building, we will not have an in-person Board of Directors meeting on Wednesday, 2/10. I am working with Craig Wiseman to choose software for teleconferencing. If possible, we will try to schedule an online conference for this Wednesday at 7 pm.

Stay healthy!



Letter from the President

Phil the groundhog has decreed that we will have to endure another six weeks of winter. That's ok, since I didn't have plans to go anywhere anyway. I am always a little suspicious about Punxsutawney Phil's accuracy because with all those TV lights he is likely to see his shadow even at midnight during a blizzard.

I got my first Covid vaccine last week courtesy of the Butler County Health Department. They have set up shop at the county fairgrounds. I had completed the online questionnaire for myself and my wife. They soon called Alice to set up an appointment. Word to the wise, don't bother showing up if you have had another vaccine within two weeks of your appointment. Fill out the form attached to the email before you get to the fairground. My appointment was for 10:20 am. I arrived 10 minutes early and moved right to the head of the line (I told you to fill out your form before getting there!) There are two lines, each holding 4 or 5 vehicles, for the vaccinations. After each line has been dosed, that group advances to a holding area for a 15-minute wait to check for possible adverse reactions. I was finished by 10:35. Good job Butler County Health department!!

The weather is finally doing it's best to seem like winter. Since I still haven't had to shovel snow I don't mind if the thermometer drops to single or low double digits. It's easier to shovel cold than it is to shovel snow.

There is still plenty of time to visit our parks. See you there. Be sure to get your vaccinations as soon as possible so that we can return to our parks and once again participate in group activities! I hope to see you soon.

Bill Walker

Backyard Bird Feeders

Winter is a wonderful time to view wildlife as the missing foliage in the forest provides much greater visibility than during the growing season. Along with transparent forests, winter brings those cold,

breezy conditions that often convinces some of us to stay off the trails and in the comfort of our warm homes instead. It is difficult to view wildlife if we aren't out in the parks taking our hikes and walking through the forests and fields. What about the wildlife in your own backyard? If you want to do some wildlife viewing from the comfort of your own home during the cold winter months, consider installing some bird feeders!

Not all birds fly to warmer climates for the winter. Many birds stay here and brave the elements. Birds have fewer food sources in the winter as insects are fewer in number and plants are not producing seeds and berries. Most birds will get by just fine on left over seeds and fruits produced throughout the spring and summer, but they will not turn their beaks up at a feeder full of seeds or suet cakes! This provides you with the perfect opportunity to do some birding without even leaving your home.



Feeder Location and Maintenance

Choose wisely where you put your feeders. Feeders should be placed somewhere that gives birds cover – think near shrubs or trees. Feeders placed in a wide open area leave birds susceptible to predators. If placed too close to branches, fences, or poles you may create easy access for unwanted critters such as squirrels or racoons. If squirrels become a problem, you can consider one of the many remedies to deter squirrels including baffles and weight activated feeders. Your location would ideally be viewable from a window of your home. If placed too close to

windows, some birds may collide with the hard-to-see glass. You can even place decals visible to birds on your windows to prevent collisions, if needed.

Don't forget water! A heated bird bath near your feeder area can provide birds with an alternative to other, often frozen water sources throughout the winter. It is important to clean both bird baths and feeders regularly to prevent spread of disease and to prevent mold from forming in the feeders.

Scrubbing with soap and water is usually enough but you could use a low bleach concentration or an even safer cleaning product such as white vinegar. Make sure feeders are dry before refilling them with seed.

So Many Options and Opportunities

Some feeders and food will attract different types of birds. In general, black oil sunflower seed will attract a variety of birds including chickadees, cardinals, blue jays, finches and titmice. Suet will surely attract woodpeckers. With so many different types of feeders and feed you can spend all winter experimenting. Perhaps you will even get involved in citizen science by participating in the Great Backyard Bird Count or FeederWatch program, both hosted by The Cornell Lab.

Don't let the gloomy winter keep you from learning and enjoying nature. Fill the feeders, and they will come.

Love is in the air during February or is it?

Lara Askill, Ag Ed Farm Manager

When one stops and thinks about the month of February, what comes to mind? Snowflakes and chocolate? Even though it is bitter cold outside there is a lot going on beneath the snow, in the wood piles and up in the trees. Many of our wildlife do more than cuddle to keep warm in the dead of winter. A large percentage of our native mammals have been in "love" for several weeks now. Gestation periods are advantageous because it benefits a species to give birth and raise their young when there is plenty of available food in the spring.

It is a smelly time of year for Eastern striped skunks. If a female is not receptive to a male's advances, she will spray. Many porches and sheds are a stinky reminder of this love affair gone awry.

Our only North American marsupial, the Opossum, not only breeds during winter, but in spring and sometimes fall, too. The female has a very short gestation period (12-13 days) and therefore the young are born at an early stage of development. Each newborn is the size of a honeybee and only weighs 0.000056 ounces.

It's not just the month of love for mammals, even the birds get in the action, too.

Have you seen the cartwheel courtship rituals between the American Bald Eagles around Butler County? An interested pair of eagles will fly up high, lock talons and then get into a cartwheel spin as they fall toward the ground, breaking apart at the last minute. We recently witnessed a few pairs carrying large and small branches to nest sites in preparation of egg laying.



Observing an American woodcock wooing his lady friend is one of my favorite February pastimes. You can't stop yourself from smiling when you watch the antics this male species does for love. First he has to migrate and find suitable habitat to set up territory. This will be along an edge of a young woodland bordering a meadow. It is hard to think of food when love is in the air, but a snack of earthworms will suffice thanks to the flexible tip of their very long bill's upper mandible. At dusk, you can listen for the males nasal PEENT call, while he turns in a tight circle to help broadcast to any nearby females. Then he suddenly launches himself high into the air while his wings make a distinctive chittering sound. After reaching 200-350 feet, he tumbles back to the earth while chirping at a high pitch all the way down. If that doesn't work, his wobbly dance moves on two feet will surely cause the girls to become smitten.

And you thought everyone just sleeps through winter?



Spring is on the way.

I know that the temperature tonight is below zero and approaching single digits. If our flower beds are any indication, spring is closer than Punxsutawney Phil would have you believe. Daffodils have already sent up shoots 3" high. Stay safe, stay socially distant, and remain patient. It is not too soon to start reading seed catalogs or to order travel brochures. Although we are not yet out

of the tunnel, we are at least in far enough to reasonably hope that the spot of light in the distance is the end of the tunnel instead of the headlight of an oncoming train.



Like our Facebook Page for updates on:

- Upcoming members events & meetings
- Volunteering with MPX
- MPX programming



Volunteer News



February 2021

January Volunteers



Trail Maintenance Stewards at Elk Creek MetroPark – Meadow Ridge area



Feeder Fill Monitor at Forest Run MetroPark – Timberman Ridge area

****Keep sending in your pictures! We love to see them...and share them!****

February Birthday Corner!

Mark McGoron	2/4	Conant Smith	2/22
Ava Palma	2/5	Robin Koby	2/24
Kathy Wiegand	2/6	Bill Lange	2/25
Crystal Ford-Bingle	2/10	Bailey Cronin	2/26
Mary Lawson	2/21	Luke Gibson	2/27
Thomas Collins	2/22	Robert Riggs	2/28



Don't Forget!

- Have you moved? Let us know your new address so your Volunteer profile can be updated.
- Would you like to be in the spotlight? Let us know and maybe YOU can be in a future newsletter!

Did You Know?

- MetroParks will receive \$400,000 from the State Capital budget for improvements at Forest Run MetroPark – Timberman Ridge area.
- Grant funded construction slated to begin in 2021:
 - Great Miami River Trail extension at Rentschler Forest – Timberhill area
 - Work on Miami to Miami extension
 - Bridge at Elk Creek MetroPark - Sebald

Contact Us

Give us a call or visit us on the web for more information about service opportunities.

MetroParks Of Butler County
2051 Timberman Road
Hamilton OH 45013
513.867.5835
www.YourMetroParks.net

Or email Amy Pellman at apellman@YourMetroParks.net

“Help one another. There’s no time like the present, and no present like the time.” – James Durst



Rentschler Forest MetroPark – Reigart Road area. Photos by Kelly Cowan



Elk Creek MetroPark – Meadow Ridge area. Photos by Joelle House

MetroPark Volunteer Spotlight



Mark & Therese McGoron – Trail Maintenance Stewards

How long have you lived or worked in Butler County?

Mark and Therese moved to the Wynds of Liberty neighborhood in Liberty Township in 1998.

Tell me a little about your family:

Mark grew up in Deer Park, Ohio, and Therese is from the west side of Cincinnati. We met in 1980 while working in the same department at GE in Evendale. We have three children – Katie, Marianne, and David – and three granddaughters.

Do you have any hobbies?

Mark enjoys playing basketball and running. He's a wizard at home repair and remodeling and enjoys refinishing antique furniture.

Therese gets great pleasure from spending time with the kids and grandkids. She loves to work in the yard, read books, and do stitching and embroidery.

What do you like to do for fun or is there a fun fact about yourself you would like to share?

We love to visit state and national parks, and usually take one long vacation each year sightseeing and hiking. Since retirement and COVID, we have focused our walks in the neighborhood and at MetroParks.

What do you love most about volunteering for MetroParks?

We have been volunteering here for a few months (editor's note: 8 to be exact). Our goal is to visit each MetroPark area and hike all of the trails. I have a favorite trail – but it's a secret! We often have it all to ourselves. It's great to see how beautifully maintained and clean the parks are. This park system is a wonderful asset to Butler County. (We agree!!)

Ongoing Service Opportunities

Feeder Fill Monitor

**** NEW OPPORTUNITY****

When: Saturday or Sunday; during park hours 8:00 am – dusk

Where: Forest Run MetroPark – Timberman Ridge area, Welcome Center

What: This opportunity is for the birds. Literally! Become a Feeder Fill Monitor and help keep our birds happy and full. Monitors fill up to eight (8) feeders in a central location at the Welcome Center and clean the bird bath on a weekly basis. Volunteers in this position will need to successfully complete a background check prior to starting the position. If interested, contact Amy Pellman apellman@YourMetroParks.net.

Campground Host

****NEW OPPORTUNITY****

When: Mid-April through mid-October

Where: Governor Bebb MetroPark – Dry Fork Campground

What: Like to camp and help others? We are looking for some friendly faces who like to camp and have their own equipment to setup camp at the Dry Fork Campground-on us! The Campground host will greet other campers, answer questions, and periodically check the restroom facilities. In return, camping fees would be waived. Training and background check required. If interested, please contact Amy Pellman at apellman@YourMetroParks.net.

Farm Caretaker

****NEW OPPORTUNITY****

When: Flexible;

Where: Chrisholm MetroPark – Historic Farmstead. 2070 Woodsdale Rd. Trenton, OH 45067

What: Chickens, bunnies and goats; Oh My! Assist staff with daily animal care on the farm. Our critters need to be fed and watered daily! Assist staff with general cleaning/maintenance or other tasks at the Farm to keep our furry friends happy. This position requires availability for a flexible and intermittent work schedule. Candidate must have ability to work in all outside weather conditions; wet and/or humid conditions, extreme cold (below 32 F degrees) and extreme heat (above 90 F degrees).

Trail Maintenance Steward

When: Flexible; during park hours 8:00 am - dusk

Where: Assigned hiking trails within MetroParks

What: Trail Ambassador Stewards hike marked trails in an assigned MetroPark at least 4 hours a month. Stewards report any maintenance and safety concerns to MetroParks staff and pick up any trash. Contact Amy Pellman apellman@YourMetroParks.net for more information.

Long-term Survey Project

When: flexible

Where: Governor Bebb MetroPark, Voice of America MetroPark, Forest Run MetroPark & Rentschler Forest MetroPark

What: We are looking for volunteers to assist staff by collecting data. Counting passengers in vehicles will help us see how many people visit the parks. This information will help guide us where we need to focus our efforts. Timing can be flexible in 1-2 hour increments. We will provide equipment and training. If interested contact Amy Pellman at apellman@YourMetroParks.net.

Group Service Projects

When: Flexible

Where: Various

What: MetroParks always has a variety of projects for groups to complete! If you have a youth group, church group, student group, or business group that is interested in scheduling a private service day, contact Amy Pellman apellman@YourMetroParks.net for more information. To comply with the current regulations surrounding groups, the maximum allowed attendees is 9. A complete listing of the requirements can be shared upon request.

Photography Opportunity

Are you an amateur/professional/hobbyist photographer? Do you like to take pictures of people, places and special events? We are looking for high resolution photos with a dpi of 300 or more. If interested, please contact Amy Pellman at apellman@YourMetroParks.net.

Friends of Chrisholm Founder's Garden Donations

2020 marks the 25th anniversary of the founding of Friends of Chrisholm. Recently, two of the original founders and key contributors to its success over their years of service, Carl Jantzen and Doris L. Page passed away. The families of both Carl and Doris have designated the Friends of Chrisholm as a charitable organization for in memory donations. The board of the Friends of Chrisholm, partnering with MetroParks of Butler County, would like to use the proceeds from those donations toward funding a Pollinator Garden at the Chrisholm site in honor of all its original Founders. Planning efforts are underway. If you would like to make a donation to the Friends of Chrisholm to honor Carl, Doris, and its Founders and help make this installation a great addition to the Chrisholm MetroPark, you may donate on line at www.chrisholmhistoricfarmstead.org or send your donation to:

Friends of Chrisholm
P.O. Box 234
Trenton, OH 45067



2051 Timberman Road, Hamilton, OH 45013
 513-867-5835, fax 513-867-5954
www.yourmetroparks.net

Monthly Volunteer Time Sheet

(Please Print or Type)

Group/Individual Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone/E-mail: _____

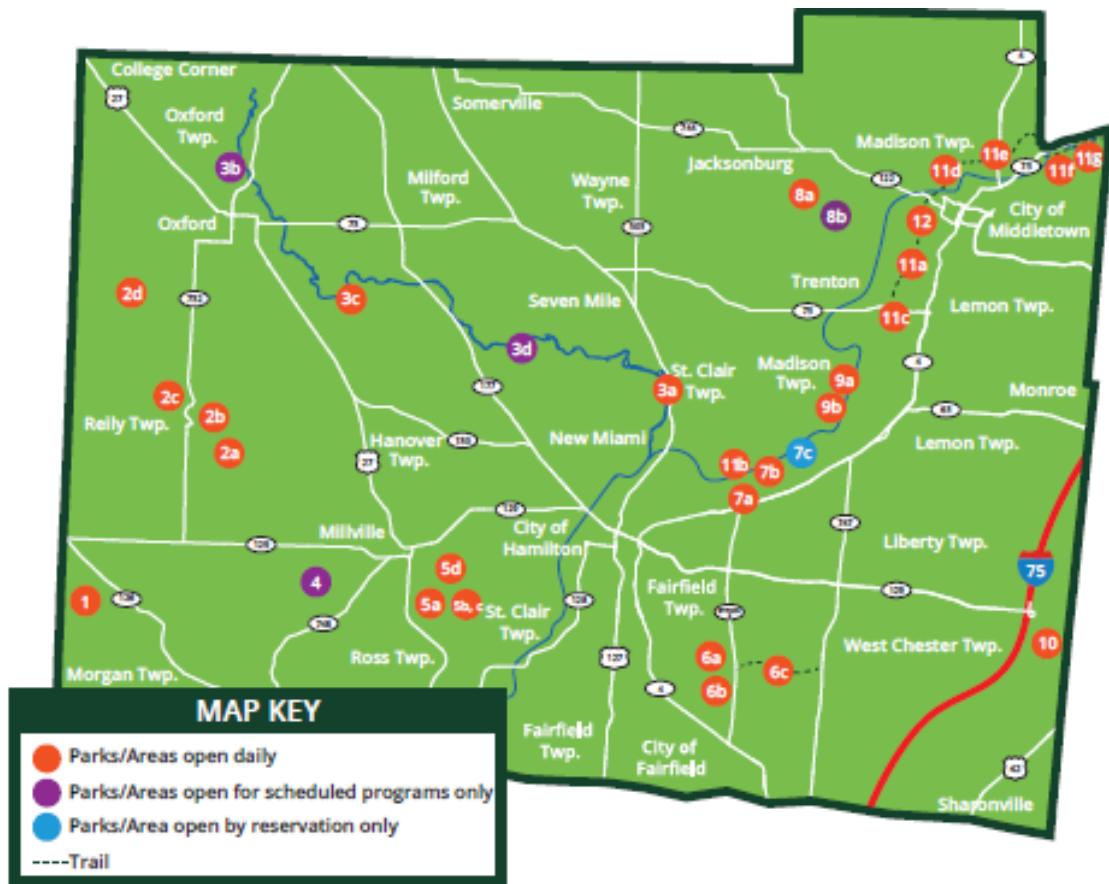
Month and Year: _____

Date	Location of Project or Event	Description of Work Being Performed	Time Worked
Total:			

Please sign below and turn in your form at the end of each month to a supervising staff member or the Administrative Office.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

I recognize there are certain risks of injury as a result of my (or my child's) participation in this volunteer activity. I agree to assume the full risk of any injuries, damages, or loss which I (or my child may) sustain as a result of participating in any and all of the activities connected with or associated with this program, or products provided, including allergic reactions to foods consumed. I agree to waive and relinquish all claims I may have, as a result of my (or my child's) participation in this program, against MetroParks of Butler County and their agents, employees, and volunteers and against any co-sponsors of the program. I understand that neither MetroParks of Butler County, its staff, nor its volunteers assume responsibility for accident or injury to participants during this activity. MetroParks of Butler County Staff photographers may document the programs and events. MetroParks of Butler County reserves the right to use photographs of participants taken for the purposes of advertising and promoting its programs. I agree to these conditions.



1. GOVERNOR BEBB METROPARK

1979 Bebb Park Lane Okeana OH 45053
Bebb Natural Area
 Dry Fork Campground
 Pioneer Village

2. INDIAN CREEK METROPARK

2A. Bunker Hill Cemetery
 5351 Reily-Millville Road Oxford OH 45056
2b. Oxford Road Area
 1899 Oxford-Reily Road (SR 732)
 Oxford OH 45056
2C. Springfield Road Area
 6500 Springfield Road Oxford OH 45056
2D. Pioneer Church
 3000 Indian Creek Road Oxford OH 45056

3. FOUR MILE CREEK METROPARK

3A. Antenen Preserve
 2385 Treiber Road Hamilton OH 45011
3B. Mill Race Area
 5911 Morning Sun Road Oxford OH 45056
3C. Sycamore Bluffs Area
 3742 Lane: Mills Road Hamilton OH 45011
3D. Davidson Woods Area
 1200 HogUe Road Hamilton OH 45013

4. SALAMANDER RUN PRESERVE

4821 Layhigh Road Hamilton OH 45013

5. Forest Run MetroPark

5A. Engle House - Little Dry Run - Administrative Office
 2051 Timberman Road Hamilton OH 45013
5B. Welcome Center
 1976 Timberman Road Hamilton OH 45013
5C. Timberman Ridge
 1976 Timberman Road Hamilton OH 45013
5D. Wildlife Preserve Area
 1810 New London Road Hamilton OH 45013

6. GILMORE METROPARK

6A. Gilmore Road Area
 7950 Gilmore Road Hamilton OH 45015
6B. Bilstein Boulevard Area
 8500 Bilstein Boulevard Hamilton OH 45015
6C. Port Union Trail Area

7. RENTSCHLER FOREST METROPARK

7A. Riegart Road Area
 5701 Riegart Road Fairfield Township OH 45011
7B. Line Hill Mound Area
 3620 Hamilton-Middletown Road Fairfield Township OH 45011
7C. Timberhill Area
 3976 Hamilton-Middletown Road Fairfield Township OH 45011

8. Elk Creek MetroPark

8A. Sebald Park Area
 5580 Elk Creek Road Middletown OH 45042
8B. Meadow Ridge Area
 5101 Circle Parkway Middletown OH 45042

9. Chrisholm MetroPark

9A. Chrisholm Historic Farmstead
 2070 Woodsdale Road Trenton OH 45067
9B. Woodsdale Regional Park
 1917 Woodsdale Road Trenton OH 45067

10. Voice of America MetroPark

7850 VOA Park Drive West Chester OH 45069
Athletic Complex
Ronald Reagan Lodge
Natural Areas & Chill Hill Sledding Hill
Wiggly Field Dog Park
Wheelhouse Outdoor Area

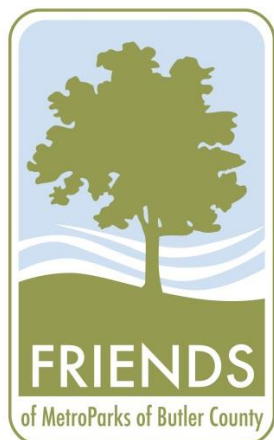
11. Great Miami River Trail

11A. North Section
 50 Oxford State Road Middletown OH 45044
11B. South Section
 5701 Riegart Road Fairfield Township OH 45011
11C. Parking Areas
 50 Oxford State Road, Middletown OH 45044
 26 North. Carmody Boulevard, Middletown OH 45044
 2399 North Carmody Boulevard, Middletown OH 45042
 3801 North Verity Parkway, Middletown OH 45042
 4401 North Verity Parkway, Middletown OH 45042

12. Bicentennial Commons

Carmody Boulevard at Central Avenue

Friends of MetroParks of Butler County



Our Mission	To improve and preserve the parks for future generations, to educate and inform the public about the unique qualities of each MetroPark, and to encourage individuals and groups to participate in volunteer programs
Member Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitations to Member-only events • Opportunity to apply for funding to support MetroParks programs and projects • Attend Annual Meeting and have a voice in Friends activities and direction
Who Are We?	<p><i>Private citizens who have come together to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsor programs & activities, promoting the use of MetroParks for conservation, education and recreation • Encourage volunteerism toward support of MetroParks of Butler County • Identify and implement improvements to the park • Assist in raising funds, securing donations, and obtaining grants monies to further MetroParks' mission

Yes, I/We want to be a member of Friends of MetroParks of Butler County!

Detach the form below and Mail it with your check to the address below

Become a Friend!

Simply fill in this form, detach and mail it with your check. Made payable to:

Friends of MetroParks of Butler County
PO Box 691
Hamilton, OH 45012

Pick an Annual Membership

- Individual - \$10
- Family - \$15
- Group/Business - \$100
- Donation - \$ _____

Name(s)/Contact _____ Date _____
 Name(s)/Contact _____ Date _____
 Group or Business Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Home/Business Phone _____ Cell Phone _____
 Email (required to receive newsletter) _____