

The Voice of the Turtle



Friends of MetroParks of Butler County

Friends of MetroParks of Butler County Monthly Newsletter
February, 2015

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Happy Groundhog Day

**From the Friends of MetroParks of Butler
County**

**Please join us in 2015 to help enjoy and
improve MetroParks.**

Letter from the President

By Roger Koch

January 20, 2015

Hello Friends.

On previous occasions I've discussed which months were my favorite throughout the year. Guess which month is my least favorite. It begins with J and is not one of the summer months. I just need to be patient and give it time, February will be here soon. I've already noticed that the days are getting longer, we've already added about 30 minutes of daylight since the solstice, and my wife has reminded me several times over the last few days that she has heard a few select birds singing spring songs.

Where Carol and I live in Reily Township must be magnet for interesting wildlife. Last week for instance a Red-tailed Hawk landed on the top rail our neighbor's post and rail fence, which is outside our kitchen window, and consumed a rabbit he had just captured. The hawk didn't leave its perch until it had its fill, and there was nothing left when he was finished, except a few leftover items on the ground.

Then on the way to church early Sunday morning Carol and I noticed a large bird perched on top of a utility pole. The closer we got it became obvious that this bird had ear tufts atop its head. As we neared the pole and slowed the car it swooped down, grabbed something from between the harvested corn stalks in the field, and flew towards a tree in the middle of the field. The bird book we have at the house narrowed it down to one of two owls, either a Screech Owl or a Great Horned Owl. It was too small to be a Screech Owl.

This morning as I was traveling north on SR 732 to get my morning coffee, I noticed a dog like silhouette crossing the highway in front of me. It was taking its time so I almost came to a complete stop and then

realized that it was not a dog, but a coyote. I wasn't mistaken because once you've seen a coyote, you can't mistake them for a dog. This mature adult trotted across the road, leaped across the road ditch and moved about 10 yards into the field and stopped. Then it turned its head to look at me for a few seconds and continued on into the woods ahead. By this time I had my car at a complete stop, with window down, and wishing that I had my camera.

Another extremely interesting creature, albeit it is one I haven't seen in a while, is the Spotted Salamander. We have them here in SW Ohio and soon they will be migrating. Migrating? I was completely unaware of this phenomenon until someone recently described it to me. Apparently, in the spring, when the temperature begins to rise these small amphibians make a rapid migration towards their annual breeding ponds, aka vernal ponds. Sometimes in just one night, hundreds of the salamanders make the trip to their pond for mating.



One of several vernal ponds located at Upper Indian Creek MetroPark

MetroParks has organized a program for those interested in watching the up-coming Salamander migration. This program is only for those individuals who have pre-registered to attend. MetroParks staff will notify those who are pre- registered when

the migration is about to begin and these individuals will then assemble at Indian Creek MetroPark at 6500 Springfield Road, Oxford, Ohio 45056 (Upper Indian Creek). It is free. You can pre-register at www.YourMetroParks.net, 513-867-5835.

The Friends Of MetroParks has several board member positions open. If you are interested in serving, contact Matt Stitzel, Nominating Committee Chair.

Roger Koch

Volunteers Connect!

by Christy Trammell

With the help of staff, volunteers and community program partners, the 2015 calendar is filling up with for exciting year of MetroParks programs and special events, concentrating on conservation, education and recreation. There is something for everyone! Check the website www.yourmetroparks.net and program guides frequently for updates in the coming year.

Conservation programs at MetroParks run the gamut of service days for habitat improvement and invasive species control, to programs about bird banding and nest-box monitoring. Join a service day, river clean-up or take part in a Citizen Scientist Program. Don't miss out on programs that include guided naturalist hikes, salamander migration, or the big week of birding (May 9 – 19)! New this year: Forest Run MetroPark Welcome Center Feeder Watch Program! Many of the programs are suitable for individuals, families and youth groups.

In addition to school field trips, MetroParks and community partners offers a wide variety of educational programming. Topic range from history and Butler County's rich cultural heritage to photography, survival techniques, gardening, geology, astronomy, quilts, natural history topics and mountain

music. Explore the bi-monthly program guide and find something for you and your family. Programming staff at MetroParks appreciate your feedback and ideas! If you would like to see a specific program or event please send your ideas to Program Manager Lynette Dean ldean@yourmetroparks.net

Recreational programs include geo-caching, orienteering, biking, Easter egg hunts and costumed dog parades. Connect to health and well-being by joining the Walk Cub this summer at Rentschler Forest MetroPark. Connect to fun by attending fall hayrides at Forest Run Timberman Ridge. Or attend one of the upcoming special events- the Crazy Cardboard Regatta at Voice of America MetroPark in July, Mud Mania at Rentschler Forest MetroPark (August) and Horse Daze (new date: September 12) at Sebald Park. New this year: the MetroParks Mojo Running Triathlon! If you want to participate, join the training program- or just come out on June 21 to cheer on the running, swimming and biking. And don't miss the Hump Day Concert Series every Wed. evening at 7 pm, May 27- July 22 at Voice of America MetroPark.

Looking for other ways to connect to MetroParks? Consider volunteering! Present or support a program, come out for a special event, pull weeds or adopt a trail! Visit the volunteer page of the MetroParks to explore volunteer opportunities and events. Get involved with The Friends of MetroParks of Butler County or train to become a docent for the Friends of Chisholm. New this year: Forest Run Welcome Center Volunteer-keep the bird feeders full, pass out information and welcome park customers.

Connect to MetroParks Programs and Special Events in 2015!

Salamander Adventure



Still time to register for this event, Please DO! Registration is full so you must sign up for the waiting list, but MetroParks plans to send out multiple groups when the salamanders start to migrate!

<http://reservations.yourmetroparks.net/programs/679/>

In the spring, on a warm, wet evening salamanders at Indian Creek begin to move. It happens sometime between the last week of January and the end of March. Sign up for this unique opportunity. Watch migrating salamanders and learn more about this species. Pre-registration required. You will be contacted by email regarding the exact date and time.

1/31/15-3/31/15 6:30-8:30 pm
Indian Creek MetroPark: Indian Creek - Mayer Picnic Shelter
6500 Springfield Road
Oxford, OH 45056

February 2015 Volunteer Connect

The month is short, but long on volunteer opportunities! Call the MetroParks office 513-867-5954 or email ctrammell@yourmetroparks.net for more information.

- **Forest Run Welcome Center Volunteer (NEW!)**

- Volunteers Needed: 4 or more!
- Date & Time: a couple hours each week
- Location: Forest Run MetroPark, Welcome Center (1976 Timberman Road, Hamilton OH 45013)
- Description: Fill the birdfeeders, greet guests & park share information. Training provided.
- **Winter Adventure Camp**
 - Volunteers Needed: 4
 - Date & Time: February 16, 2015 @ 10:00 Am – 12:00 PM
 - Location: Voice of America MetroPark (7850 VOA Park Dr., West Chester OH 45069)
 - Description: Assist with winter outdoor fun, in the snow (or not)! Help with registration, snacks, campfire and active outdoor games.
- **Conservation Connection Workshop (Citizen Science Project)**
 - Volunteers Needed: Many
 - Date & Time: February 21, 2015 @ 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM
 - Location: Forest Run MetroPark (1976 Timberman Road, Hamilton, OH 45013)
 - Description: Attend free workshop and learn how you or your organization can best connect to conservation programs and initiatives in the parks. Training provided.
- **Walk on the Wild Side WOWS Hike**
 - Volunteers Needed: 1

- Date & Time: February 28, 2015 @ 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
- Location: Rentschler Forest MetroPark (5701 Reigart Road, Fairfield Twp, OH 45011)
- Description: Assist with registrations and bring up the rear as part of this monthly hiking series at various park sites throughout the year.
- **Stepping Forward: Service Day**
 - Volunteers Needed: Many
 - Date & Time: February 28, 2015 @ 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
 - Location: Rentschler Forest MetroPark (5701 Reigart Road, Fairfield Twp, OH 45011)
 - Description: Trail improvements, habitat improvement, broad landscaping needs, and possible indoor projects maintenance. Tools and snacks provided.
- **Conductor Training (Support “Escape on the Underground Railroad” Program)!**
 - Volunteers Needed: Many
 - Date & Time: February 28, 2015 @ 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM
 - Location: YMCA Camp Campbell Gard (4803 Augspurgen Road, Hamilton, OH 45011)
 - Description: Connect to history – become a leader for the Underground Railroad experience! Volunteer

training to help with the exciting “Escape on the Underground Railroad” to be held March 14th.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM KROGER - WITH YOUR HELP

Now you can support Friends financially whenever you shop at Krogers. After registering your Kroger Plus card in their Community Rewards Program and linking it to FOMPBC, Kroger will donate a percentage of your purchase to Friends. Just use your Plus card every time you shop at Krogers. That's it! There is no cost to you. Collectively this can be worth hundreds of dollars a year to support Friends programming.

Here's directions from Kroger on how to register your Kroger Plus card and tie it to FOMPBC. Note: this needs to be done annually.

- Register online at www.krogercommunityrewards.com
- Be sure to have your Kroger Plus card handy and register your card with your organization after you sign up.
- If a member does not yet have a Kroger Plus card, please let them know that they are available at the customer service desk at any Kroger.
- Click on Sign In/Register
- Most participants are new online customers, so they must click on SIGN UP TODAY in the ‘New Customer?’ box.
- Sign up for a Kroger Rewards Account by entering zip code, clicking on favorite store, entering your email address and creating a password, agreeing to the terms and conditions

- You will then get a message to check your email inbox and click on the link within the body of the email.
- Click on My Account and use your email address and password to proceed to the next step.
- Click on Edit Kroger Community Rewards information and input your Kroger Plus card number.
- Update or confirm your information.
- Enter NPO number (15599) or name of organization (Friends of MetroParks of Butler County), select organization from list and click on confirm.
- To verify you are enrolled correctly, you will see your organization's name on the right side of your information page.
- REMEMBER, purchases will not count for your group until after your member(s) register their card(s).
- Do you use your phone number at the register? Call 800-576-4377, select option 4 to get your Kroger Plus card number.
- Members must swipe their registered Kroger Plus card or use the phone number that is related to their registered Kroger Plus card when shopping for each purchase to count.

Winter Is For The Birds

by Lara Askill, Program Coordinator,
MetroParks of Butler County

One of the earliest memories of my childhood is feeding the birds visiting my backyard during winter. I can still hear Mom chopping up corn in the blender from the grain elevator just up the road. I can smell the peanut butter left on my fingers after spreading it on pine cone feeders. I can feel the cold of my face pressed against the window as I try to get a better look at a bright red Northern Cardinal against the snow back drop. Of course, within seconds,

the view is fogged due to my breath on the window pane. I hear the squeaking sound as my hand wipes across the glass. Who would have thought writing a bit about birds in winter would allow for childhood reminiscing.

Winter is a life and death struggle for the birds that stay in their territory when the mercury dips below freezing. Many of the birds in our area have evolved to migrate to warmer climates; like some of our human friends that are referred to as "snow-birds" in the locations where they winter. However, some of our resident birds stay here all year. It is these birds in particular that are the subject of this article, because in the wild, you either survive or perish; there are no other choices.



So with that said, how do our resident birds maintain their body temperature when the snowflakes are falling? They have evolved several strategies to survive; otherwise they would become extinct. The most obvious is to grow more downy feathers. Some birds and other animals seek shelter during inclement weather ranging from tree cavities, rocky crevices, evergreen bushes and brush piles. Others, such as the Northern Bobwhite will huddle together to share warmth. Ever watch a Black-Capped Chickadee puff its feathers up and tuck its head and feet underneath? The air is trapped between the feathers and acts as a

thermal blanket to keep it warm. This same bird will lower its body temperature and shiver to help conserve energy at night, too.



Humans do not need to gain weight to survive the winter, even though several of us do because of the plentiful holiday meals. However, birds do have to add fat to their bodies. This fat layer acts as an insulator and an energy source. This winter season, consider taking time out of your busy schedule and observe the birds eating at the feeders all day long. Beefing up their fat resources during the day to help them survive through the cold frosty nights.

Additionally, give our “feathery friends” a helping hand by filling your bird feeders often, providing water baths and supplying a brush pile shelter in your yard. At the end of this season it is MetroParks hope that your reward be some cherished memories to share with family and friends, too.

Critter Corner:

Even Herons Have Bad Hair Days



Look carefully at the head feathers in the two pictures. As you can tell, there was a strong breeze out of the west (right side of the pictures). While our Ohio blue herons were worried about minor problems like cold, snow, and frozen streams, this Alabama bird was afraid that the ladies would notice his wind-blown locks. Why bother to grow breeding plumage when you're at the mercy of spring zephyrs? It goes without saying that it's a good thing that the bird didn't take a photo of your editor, since my fur was also wind-blown. (On several occasions, I had to run down the beach to retrieve my shadow, which had blown loose!)

**Winter Tree ID Workshop/Hike Jan
24, 2015 Forest Run MetroPark
Welcome Center**



Matt Stenger from Taking Root delivers the workshop on Winter Tree ID at the Forest Run Welcome Center



Practical in the field application of the techniques that were learned



Bark Scaling on large ash tree from Emerald Ash Borer infestation. Too late for the tree, lost, but good food source for the local woodpeckers.



Sugar maple tree with neat row of drilled holes by a yellow-bellied sapsucker, sap from tree was dripping and tasted very sweet!

Friends of Chrisholm Anniversary

The Friends of Chrisholm will be celebrating their 20th Anniversary in June with a special event on Saturday, June 13, at the Chrisholm Historic Farmstead. Save the date. All are welcome. Details about the day, including a lunch, will be announced soon. Reservations will be necessary.



One of the new and special efforts the Friends of Chrisholm has initiated to celebrate their 20th year is an Endowment with the Hamilton Community Foundation. The purpose of this Endowment is to provide for the future financial security of the organization. "We realize the need to plan for what will happen at the Chrisholm Historic Farmstead over the next 200 years and beyond," commented Rhonda Smith, President. "We want to insure that the mission of the Friends of Chrisholm continues and future generations will have the opportunity to learn more about early agriculture in Ohio and the contribution of the Amish Mennonite community to our region."

You may make a gift to the Chrisholm Endowment by sending a check to the Hamilton Community Foundation, 319 North Third Street, Hamilton, OH 45011. Note that your donation is for the Chrisholm fund. All gifts are tax-deductable. Be a part of this grand effort now, and plan to celebrate with us in June!

Anne Jantzen

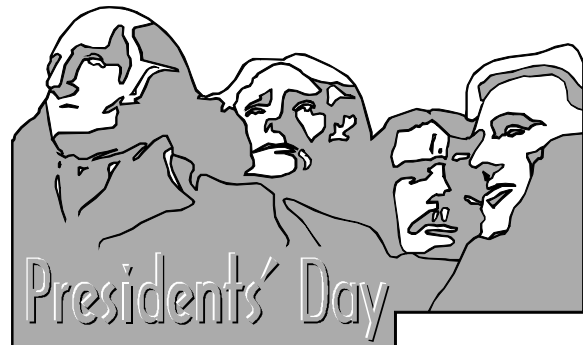
Friends of Chrisholm
January 20, 2015

FoMPBC Board Members

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Richard Bergstrom | Ed Creighton |
| Chuck Holliday | Abby Ison |
| Roger Koch | Chris Osborne |
| Amy Cameron | Matt Stitzel |
| Bill Walker | 6 Vacancies |



Happy Groundhog Day



CONSERVATION CONNECTION

Workshops for interested volunteers
Learn about Citizen Science &
Conservation Projects.



WHERE:

Forest Run MetroPark
Timberman Ridge Area - Welcome Center
1976 Timberman Road, Hamilton, OH 45013

PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES: Nest Box Monitoring •
Monarch Watch • Stream Team • Great Backyard
Bird Count • Feeder Watch • Christmas Bird Count •
Taking Root & more!

REGISTRATION: www.YourMetroParks.net
Walk-ins welcome!

metroparks

OF BUTLER COUNTY
www.YourMetroParks.net
513.867.5835

Sat. Feb. 21, 2015
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM
**Conservation
Connection Workshop**
Potluck

Sun. Mar. 8, 2015
4:00 PM - 5:00 PM
**Nest Box Monitoring
Workshop**
Bring a snack to share

Sun. Sep. 13, 2015
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM
**Citizen Science Project
Updates**
Potluck

Sun. Nov. 1, 2015
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM
**Feeder Watch &
Bird Count Training**
Bring a snack to share



**BRING A DISH OR
SNACK TO SHARE**

Motor Vehicle Permit required at MetroPark locations. Free to Butler Co. residents, Non Residents: 5/Daily; \$10/annually