

Monthly Newsletter

A note from the RJRD Board

All of us here at Richfield Heritage Preserve are looking forward to a great new year! We have a new park director (since August of last year), and he has many great ideas for the park in the new year. Please join him on January 14th for Java with Johnny.

We've gotten many things accomplished since the park's inception in 2014. We repaired our two dams which allow us to keep our two lakes operative. The lakes are beautiful features for the park, and we plan to increase our water related activities offerings. We have an impressive water and sewer management project up and running. This year we are turning our attention to trails and road improvements.

The Lodge has been very well received by the community. Bookings continue to increase. Look for changes all around the park, including improved signage. Please come out and enjoy all that Richfield Heritage Preserve has to offer! See you in 2023!

- Anita Gantner, RJRD Board Chair

Upcoming Events

Saturday, Jan. 14 - Java with Johnny; 9 a.m., The Lodge at RHP

Come enjoy coffee and great conversation with our park director John Piepsny! Bring a mug and any questions.

Sunday, Jan. 22 - Snowbird Festival; 1-4 p.m., The Lodge at RHP

Zoo animals, sled dogs, story time, kids' crafts and games, and more!

Free Richfield communities appreciation event sponsored by Village of Richfield, Richfield Township, and Richfield Joint Recreation District

Saturday, Feb. 18 - Sweetheart Dance; 5-8 p.m., The Lodge at RHP

Children, plan to bring your parent, grandparent, or other special adult to enjoy this Valentine celebration! \$25/couple; \$10 each additional child. Registration opens Jan. 4, 2023.

From our Park Director

I am very excited for the many changes that we are going to introduce to the Richfield Heritage Preserve this year! We are starting the new year off with a new look to our newsletter. We wanted to make sure that everyone has our information on a monthly basis and provide a simpler format to our readers, and we think we have accomplished that with this first January edition. In the year of 2023, we will be offering many more programs than we have had in the past, including a summer camp for your kids, a Sweetheart Dance, a music festival, camping and much, much more. I am asking everyone: if you have a hobby that you would love to share and teach to others, and you would like to make a few dollars along the way, please contact me. We are in need of your expertise!



On Saturday, January 14th, I will host a "Java with Johnny" event at the Lodge at 9am. I will be answering any questions that anyone may have, or we can just share a cup of coffee and enjoy the morning talking about the park. Coffee will be provided; just bring your favorite mug! January may be cold, but the park is still alive with magic! Until next month, I hope to see you out on the trail!

- John Piepsny, Park Director

Name that Newsletter!

The RHP newsletter is undergoing a transformation. The new format will be shorter but will be distributed monthly to help keep you up to date on park happenings.

Now is your chance! We are looking for a catchy, memorable name for the revised newsletter. If you have a suggestion, please submit it to office@rjrd.org by **February 22**. Submissions will be reviewed by the park director, with credit given to the winner.

RJRD or RHP: What's the difference?

Sometimes acronyms can be confusing! RJRD stands for Richfield Joint Recreation District, the park district created in 2014 when Village of Richfield and Richfield Township voters approved the purchase of the former Camp Crowell-Hilaka. RJRD is governed by a seven-member board of trustees: three appointed by Village Council, three appointed by Township Trustees, and the seventh appointed by the RJRD board itself. On its website rjrd.org you can find information about the board, upcoming meetings and past proceedings, employment opportunities, and the ongoing strategic plan.

RHP is Richfield Heritage Preserve, the park operated by RJRD and currently the only property within the park district. The RJRD board governs the park and establishes rules and policies for RHP. The website for information about the park is richfieldheritagepreserve.com.

Richfield Heritage Preserve is open dawn to dusk, free of charge, every day of the year. Shelters can be reserved in advance for a fee but are otherwise available for free on a first-come basis. Please visit and enjoy your park!

See your photo in print!

We are looking for beautiful or interesting photos of Richfield Heritage Preserve to be featured as the background for future newsletters. If you have a photo to submit, please email it to office@rjrd.org. Include your name and the area where your photo was taken, plus the date if you know it.

If your photo is chosen, you will receive credit in that issue of the newsletter. We want to see what *you* see in your park!



This month's photo was contributed by Anita Gantner, chairperson of the Richfield Joint Recreation District Board of Trustees.

Oviatt House Inc.

What an exciting year in store for Oviatt House! First on the Oviatt House Inc (OHI) agenda is to secure the State of Ohio Capital Grant of \$50,000. With the aid of the grant, the dedicated help of our many volunteers, and the generous hearts of donors, OHI hopes to complete the house restoration in 2023. As our Construction Committee remains in full swing, OHI will be forming additional committees dedicated to fundraising, events, and museum planning. Our Fall Festival was a success and will definitely be repeated! Stay tuned for more information about future events and Open Houses. Make sure to bring your NPS Passport when you visit! Please email oviathouse1836@gmail.com if you are interested in joining a committee. Thank you to all our supporters!

- Judy Bowman, president, Oviatt House Inc.

Friends of Richfield Heritage Preserve

In their continued effort to support Richfield Heritage Preserve, the Friends hosted their annual "Winter Wonders" event on December 3 in The Lodge at RHP, which was splendidly decorated in a tribute to the 100th anniversary of Kirby's Mill being celebrated in 2022. The weather cooperated and not only was it very well attended, but it was a financial triumph as well---bringing in a net profit of a little over \$7,500! Delectable homemade Christmas cookies were sold by the pound at the "Winter Wonders Bakery".

Horse-drawn carriage rides, with Miss Linda and Bingo, were hugely popular as were photo ops with Sunny the Reindeer Horse. Miss Diane, from the Richfield Branch Library, shared holiday stories by the fireside and gave away books to her enthralled audience. The Friends couldn't have pulled this event off without the help of all the adult and Revere High School student volunteers or the financial support of its event sponsors---who contributed a total of \$2,425---and tree sponsors---who not only donated a total of \$600, but also festively decorated special evergreen trees placed throughout RHP for the holiday season. The Friends' "Winter Wonders" event was truly a holiday season success and brought much joy to those who attended!

In addition to their fundraising efforts, the Friends are committed to supporting the RJRD by assisting with stabilization of the historic structures. The Department of Interior defines stabilization as keeping the homes dry, free of pests, and structurally sound. Moisture is a major concern when preserving historic structures. Over the years, the erosion has filled the existing swales, allowing water to sit against the foundation walls. The wood sills and floor joists had started to rot due to the moisture. Last year, new swales were dug to redirect ground water around and away from North House. This year, Friends have stabilized the floor of North House by installing drop beams under the healthy floor joists, lifting the floor as needed, removing the damaged sill and rim joists, and cutting back the damaged floor joists. New pressure treated sill and rim joists were installed over neoprene sill sealer and new joists sistered onto the existing joists. Thanks to our generous donors, the materials were at no cost to the taxpayers. And, because the work was completed by volunteer contractors, the work was completed at a fraction of the price. The floor is structurally sound and ready for restoration!

On the south side, Garfield Hall porch was starting to sag. A dip in the roof was retaining water and accelerating the deterioration. The rafters were replaced as needed and new rafter ties added to ensure the roof would not fall again. New plywood sheathing and rolled roofing was installed. In addition to the new porch roof, the doors and windows were better sealed to ensure pests do not make Garfield Hall their new home over the winter. We are grateful for the opportunity to assure these structures have an opportunity for restoration in the future!

- Corey Ringle, president, Friends of RHP

Volunteer Update

Happy New Year! For the past several years, RJRD volunteers played an essential role in the success of the park. This year, volunteers will continue their important role to support and maintain the park.

Volunteers work under the direction of the RHP Park Director, RJRD Park Operations Chair, and RHP Volunteer Coordinator to undertake a variety of roles. Projects this year will include getting structures ready for programs and events, as well as trail improvements, maintenance, and signage. Volunteers are also vital to the success of the park's programs and events.

Protecting the park's high-quality natural resources and wildlife remains a priority at the park. RJRD volunteers and park staff continue to maintain and repair the perimeter fence which is essential for deer population control and security. RHP Bluebird Monitor volunteers will begin their 3rd year monitoring the bluebird population at the park. We also look forward to working with the community to plant pollinator plants at the park.

Several of the park's volunteers work behind the scenes managing the park's social media, websites, and marketing, while other volunteers assist with grant applications.

We are incredibly grateful for the wonderful volunteers and groups who made a difference at RHP, and we look forward to the exciting impact volunteers will have in 2023!

Please contact the RHP Volunteer Coordinator at volunteer-info@rjrd.org or 330-318-2597 if you are interested in learning how *you* can get involved and make a difference!

- Susan Czaplicki, Volunteer Coordinator

