

Discover your Outdoor Experience at

# Richfield HERITAGE PRESERVE

APRIL eNEWSLETTER

Photo by Susan Cz

## A Message from Your Park Director David Green

A few weeks ago, while walking along the lower lake trail, I was excited to see skunk cabbage peeking out of the frozen ground. This plant has the ability to produce heat which melts the surrounding ground allowing it to emerge before all other plants. As warmer temperatures have arrived, the preserve's ravines and streams bring an array of wildflowers. Look ahead for our scheduled wildflower walks as well as virtual walks showcasing all the preserve has to offer.



April is also widely known as the time to THANK and recognize all the many wonderful people who invest their time volunteering in their communities. For 30 years, April has been known as National Volunteer Month and since 1974 National Volunteer Week has been in observance every year. In my recent tenure as park director, I am continually impressed and humbled by the vast number of volunteers, their investment of time and their dedication for the Richfield Heritage Preserve. I've seen the incredible impact our volunteers have made in such a relatively short timespan. Moving forward, I am even more excited to see where their enthusiasm and drive will take us next. Learn more about the impact our volunteers have made over time in this month's feature ...

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## Build It... They Will Come Volunteers Flock to RHP

"Build it and they will come . . . "

We've heard that saying before many times from a well-known movie. This sentiment resonates in Richfield, Ohio, where the community came together to purchase a shuttered Girl Scout camp in 2014. The idea was to save the impressive 336-acre property from development and share it as a public park for all to enjoy.

And come they did! Since that time, visitors have arrived in droves. Outdoor enthusiasts, nature photographers, biologists, walkers with their dogs,



yoga groups, families with picnic baskets and fishing poles all came. And then some!

There's just one hitch – the park started out with just a volunteer board and not a single park employee. How do you run a

public park starting from nothing? The answer is clear . . . VOLUNTEERS . . . like-minded people willing to volunteer and invest their personal time, talent and hard work. They have flocked to our park and have done everything imaginable from raking and cleaning up, to scraping and painting, to demoing old, dilapidated sheds ...

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## LIKE-MINDED GROUPS Serve As Park Partners & Affiliates

In just a little over seven years, Richfield Heritage Preserve has amassed quite a supportive team of Park partners and affiliates. These are like-minded groups with an interest in enjoying and preserving nature. They help create outdoor experiences for others by utilizing their skills and influence for the betterment of our park guests. We have been so fortunate that these relationships have been forged so early in our short existence which says so much about our park as an asset of the Richfield community, North-east Ohio and beyond.

Those wanting to be a partner of Richfield Heritage Preserve must enter into a memorandum of understanding, or MOU, with the Richfield Joint Recreation District. The RJRD makes decisions for and oversees the operation of Richfield Heritage Preserve. The MOU spells out the basis of the mutual relationship including how the group may utilize the park, what activities they may create or participate in, and the approval and reporting process, among other things that will take place over a mutually agreed upon time-frame...

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Hike the Preserve with the Park Director



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HASHTAG Challenge



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JOIN RHP'S EMAIL LIST

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Also contributing to the betterment of RHP are our partner groups. Our relationships are mutually beneficial as these groups utilize the park for their activities and in return donate their time, resources and sometimes funds to support ongoing projects to improve visitor safety and experience. Read more in our story that gives you a behind-the-scenes view of the value of these groups.

In recent eNewsletter issues we offer "5 Q's in 5 Minutes" surveys that ask for your opinions and feedback. The data we gain from these surveys will help us respond to the feedback and create better experiences for everyone. The results of last month's survey are featured in what we are calling Survey Says! THANK YOU in advance for taking 5 minutes to participate in the change you want to see by completing this monthly survey.

Be sure to check out the many things going on this month at RHP, including: our photo contest which is now in its second year; my NEW monthly hikes, as well as upcoming programs and things to look forward to at our park as Spring is now in full swing.

Hope to see you soon!

*David Green*



## Build It... They will Come

### VOLUNTEERS FLOCK TO RHP

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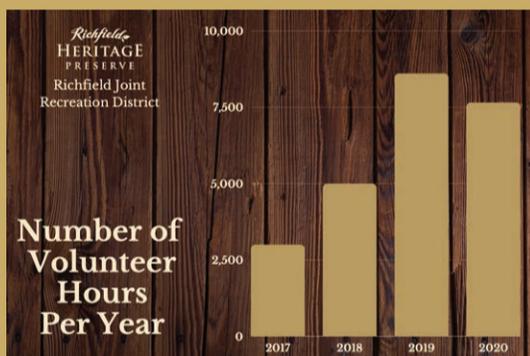
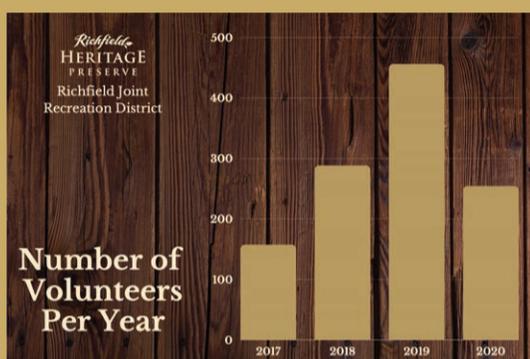
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In addition to those tangible and intrinsic good deeds done by so many, they have literally added thousands of dollars worth of value every year. Since 2017,

Richfield Heritage Preserve volunteers have logged more than 24,000 hours of time at the park.

To give you an idea of that impact financially, we use the standard set forth by the Independent Sector which places a dollar amount on the value of one volunteer hour. Just do the math. Since 2017, volunteers invested over \$627,000 of their valuable time at our park. No small chunk of change!



Behind the scenes coordinating volunteer efforts for more than 4 years is RHP Volunteer Coordinator Susan Czaplicki, a veteran volunteer herself with 15 years of experience working with and recruiting volunteers, and program and event experience. According to Susan, RHP volunteers are dedicated, hard-working stewards of the park who are willing to tackle any project and work in any type of weather year-round. After Governor DeWine opened up Ohio last May, volunteers began requesting opportunities to once again work at the park, agreeing to do so smartly in small groups socially distanced with PPE, abiding by the safety guidelines set forth by Governor DeWine and the Ohio Department of Health.

“I am astounded with our volunteer base and the sheer number of people drawn to Richfield Heritage Preserve,” Susan admits. “Like so many of my fellow volunteers, I am happy to have an opportunity to make a difference at the park. It’s an experience I truly appreciate and enjoy.”

### TRY OUT YOUR WINGS!

Join Our Flock!

Anyone wanting to become a volunteer at Richfield Heritage Preserve, please contact us by email at: [volunteer-info@rjrd.org](mailto:volunteer-info@rjrd.org)



## LIKE MINDED GROUPS

### Serve as Park Partners and Affiliates

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Our partner groups are:

- Baldwin Wallace University
- Buckeye Trail Association
- Cuyahoga Valley Career Center
- Friends of Crowell Hilaka
- Ohio Horseman's Council
- Ohio Operating Engineers
- Spif's Garden Care Group



Ohio Operating Engineers

Park affiliates are groups of individuals who also utilize the park for the purpose of volunteering, providing classes, offering services, advice and expertise, as well as donating back to the park. Over the years we have developed several strong relationships with these entrepreneurial people and professional groups.

Our affiliate groups are:

- CraveNature Cleveland
- Fast Girls Running Company
- Midwest Native Skills
- One Tree Love
- Richfield Chamber of Commerce
- Richfield Fire Department
- Richfield Town Trust

CLICK on the names of our friends and affiliates listed above to visit their websites to learn more about each group.



Fast Girls Running



BWU



MW Native



FoCH



Buckeye trail



Ohio Horsemen's Council



Spif's Garden



CVCC



One Tree Love



Crave Nature



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## SPRING #HASHTAG CHALLENGE

When you're visiting Richfield Heritage Preserve, we hope you'll participate in our Spring Hashtag Challenge. Weekly, we will offer up a challenge for all you Instagram aficionados. Be sure to use the Hashtag for each challenge so we can see your creativity and share it with all our Park fans!

### PLUS

New season, new seasonal hashtag. Be sure to always use our permanent RHP hashtag #DiscoverYourOutdoorExperienceAtRHP along with the new seasonal #RHPSpringSalutations. 'Tis the season to celebrate and revel in all the changes that come with the longer days and warmer temps!

#RHPSpringSalutations



Photo courtesy of Susan Cz

#DiscoverYourOutdoorExperienceAtRHP

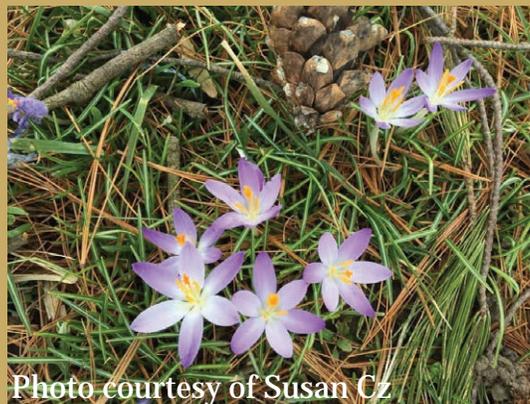


Photo courtesy of Susan Cz



Igor Oliyarnik Photography



## SURVEY SAYS!

### RESULTS FROM THE RHP MERCHANDISE SURVEY

Five questions, five minutes . . . That's all it took for the nearly 100 people to participate in our Richfield Heritage Preserve Merchandise online survey. The questions posed give us some insight into whether or not park supporters and guests would be interested in purchasing or receiving RHP branded merchandise. Those responding could also provide their own answer if the choices given in the survey did not apply to them.

Here is how the responses break down:

#### **1) Would you be interested in purchasing Richfield Heritage Preserve branded merchandise?**

•79% said YES!

The additional comments given on this question were heartwarming!

- “Yes! Finally!”
- “So excited to know there will be RHP merchandise.”
- “When will these be available?”

#### **2) Would you be interested in receiving Richfield Heritage Preserve branded merchandise as a gift, prize or incentive?**

- Even slightly more people, 82%, said they would be interested in our merchandise as a gift, prize or incentive.
- More than one person said this is a “great idea!”

#### **3) Which of these Richfield Heritage Preserve branded items would you be interested in purchasing or receiving? Check all that apply**

- It's no surprise that the clothing items ranked highest from a variety of sweatshirt and t-shirt options, followed by all of the beverage bottles and mugs, and votes for everything in-between. Not one item on the list was without a YES vote.
- Additional ideas were offered up by the respondents, which are being considered as well. Stay tuned!

#### **4) Would you like to purchase or receive a 2022 Richfield Heritage Preserve Calendar featuring professional and amateur photographs taken throughout the preserve?**

- Slightly more than half of the people surveyed said “YES”.

#### **5) Would you like to purchase or receive professional framed or unframed photographs of the beautiful scenery at Richfield**

- Slightly less than half of the responses said “YES” and of those who responded one said that RHP is a great place to have professional family photos taken.

Armed with this data we know the interest that park friends and guests are very much interested in RHP Branded merchandise. We will keep everyone posted in the coming months how we are proceeding with this information.

THANK YOU to ALL who participated!

