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Richfield HERITAGE PRESERVE

NOVEMBER eNEWSLETTER

Alex Philip
PHOTOGRAPHY

A Message from Your Park Director David Green

November is the month traditionally known for reflection and gratitude. For me, having now been in my role as RHP's Park Director for a full year, I have spent time reflecting on my time here observing, learning, getting things done and moving forward. I am beyond grateful for our amazing volunteer base, active park partners, a governing and working board, and a supportive community. I am feeling a sense of accomplishment on several fronts, including:

◆ The LODGE:

Much has been done to bring The LODGE up to standards expected by potential renters. The occupancy was increased to 225. The kitchen appliances were evaluated for current use and safety. Many were over 50 years old and not worth repairing due to inefficiencies and cost, therefore were removed. The space has been cleaned up and will be painted.

◆ Bluebird Monitoring Program

This year marked the first year RHP has designated a group to be trained to monitor the existing Bluebird Boxes installed at RHP.

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RHP FOCUSES

On Strategic Plan in 2022

As Richfield Heritage Preserve (RHP) enters its eighth year of operation, it is time to focus on developing a Strategic Plan. Strategic planning is a useful tool in guiding day-to-day decisions as well as evaluating progress and changing approaches when moving forward. It not only outlines who we are and where we are going, but it also prioritizes goals and objectives. It guides the fundraising process. Ultimately, a strategic plan is a roadmap that all parties involved can pick up and use. It can add tremendous value to any organization, business, or public entity.

Much has transpired since 2014 when the community of Richfield voted to pass a bond issue and a levy to purchase and manage what is now known as RHP. Numerous grants, accolades, and progress have garnered the support, enthusiasm, and excitement from the community and park visitors. Strong support from our friends group, Friends of Crowell Hilaka, in addition to park partner groups, volunteers, and the Richfield Joint Recreation District (RJRD) Board have driven improvements and projects forward.

Early on, the RJRD board was tasked not only with governance but also with the day to day operations. Leadership came from

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THE LODGE

At Richfield Heritage Preserve

The Lodge is a unique, rustic venue nestled among a majestic, pristine, and mature forest on Richfield Heritage Preserve's 336 acre property. The Lodge's simple, understated exterior is in complete contrast to its grand interior. Inside a two-story vaulted ceiling is complemented by curved trusses, and beautiful knotty pine is featured throughout. The handsome stone fireplace anchors the room, creating a focal point that adds a rustic warmth to the large, open 40' x 90' main space. Two open air, covered patios expand the space and allow for more flexibility of use and flow of entertainment. The back patio was recently expanded with sandstone pavers, opening the space to the sky above.

The Lodge is a short walk to a beautiful eight-acre lake and two historic homes

for unique special photo opps. Richfield Heritage Preserve is home to Kirby's Mill & the Crowell Hilaka Historic District, both of which are listed on the National Registry of Historical Places.

The Lodge accommodates both informal and quaint gatherings as well as larger, elegant weddings and events. From a couple exchanging vows by the Upper Lake or under the trees to a 50-year wedding anniversary celebrated near the charming fireplace, The Lodge offers many beautiful options for different types of celebrations. It's an ideal site for seminars, business functions, parties, showers, weddings, and fundraisers

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KIRBY'S MILL
Restoration Update



NPS GRANT
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EMPLOYMENT
Opportunities



WINTER WONDERS
Trails and Trivia



OVIATT HOUSE
Wreath FUNdraiser



RESTORATION
Work Begins

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RICHFIELD
Joint Recreation District



A Message from Your Park Director David Green

JOIN RHP'S EMAIL LIST

November is the month traditionally known for reflection and gratitude. For me, having now been in my role as RHP's Park Director for a full year, I have spent time reflecting on my time here observing, learning, getting things done and moving forward. I am beyond grateful for our amazing volunteer base, active park partners, a governing and working board, and a supportive community. I am feeling a sense of accomplishment on several fronts, including:

🍃 The LODGE

Much has been done to bring The LODGE up to standards expected by renters. The occupancy was comfortably increased to 225. The kitchen appliances were evaluated for current use and safety. Many of these industrial grade machines were removed; they were over 50 years old and too inefficient and costly to repair. The kitchen has been deep cleaned and will be painted.

🍃 Bluebird Monitoring Program

This year marked the first year RHP has designated a group to be trained and to monitor the existing Bluebird Boxes installed at RHP.

🍃 Relationship Building

I have spent the year getting to know RHP's backstory and all of the groups invested in the park. Among them are influential park supporters in the community, groups outside of the Richfield area including corporate, civic and philanthropic groups, as well as our park partners. Conversations brought insight which will direct us moving forward.

🍃 National Park Service Grant

Picking up where the pandemic stalled us in 2020, meaningful conversations and thoughtful evaluations of our trails are taking place and will culminate next year. We are off to a good start!

🍃 RHP eNewsletter

Offering the park's first official newsletter has been very helpful in educating and informing the

public about our achievements and challenges. We chose an eNews format to save printing and mailing costs. It is our plan to move to a bi-monthly eNewsletter and a bi-annual print version in 2022.

The year has also come with its challenges, including:

🍃 Managing park operations, rentals and programs with covid protocols in mind while monitoring the Governor's mandates and CDC recommendations.

🍃 Communicating the importance of and laying the groundwork for a unified Strategic Plan to guide our priorities and key initiatives including fund-raising.

🍃 Understanding the complexities of the many different park relationships and how to manage them best in moving forward.

🍃 Trying to accomplish goals on many fronts with only a part-time administrative assistant and a part-time groundskeeper, and no other full or part-time staff. I rely greatly on volunteers who fill what should be full-time positions such as the volunteer coordinator, social media manager, eNewsletter editor, maintenance technician, website manager, and park security.

All-in-all it has been an incredibly informative year as I have learned all that transpired since the park opened in 2014 to when I was brought on in 2020 as the RHP's first park director. I am committed to moving us forward with a focus on land stewardship, community access and enjoyment, and positioning ourselves as a unique asset and refuge for all to enjoy for decades to come!

David Green



RHP FOCUSES ON Strategic Plan in 2022

As Richfield Heritage Preserve (RHP) enters its eighth year of operation, it is time to focus on developing a Strategic Plan. Strategic planning is a useful tool in guiding daily decisions as well as evaluating progress and changing approaches when moving forward. It not only outlines who we are and where we are going, but it also prioritizes goals and objectives. It also guides the fundraising process. Ultimately, a strategic plan is a roadmap that all parties involved can pick up and use. It can add tremendous value to any organization, business, or public entity.

Much has transpired since 2014 when the community of Richfield voted to pass a bond issue and a levy to purchase and manage what is now known as RHP. Numerous grants, accolades, and a great deal of progress have garnered the support, enthusiasm, and excitement from the community and park visitors. Strong support from our friends group, Friends of Crowell Hilaka, in addition to park partner groups, volunteers, and the Richfield Joint Recreation District (RJRD) Board have driven improvements and projects forward.

Early on, the RJRD board was tasked not only with governance but also with the day to day operations. Leadership came from many sources and partner groups, as well as individuals, who stepped up to assist wherever they could.

A year ago this month the RJRD brought on its first full-time park director, David Green. The day to day operations now fall to him,

allowing the volunteer board members to return to their main role of evaluating, making recommendations, approving decisions, guiding the park's finances, and other assistance beyond traditional board roles.

A Master Plan was developed in 2017 that focused on assessing the grounds, the water wells, the dams, bridges, the wastewater treatment plant, and buildings. Several different scenarios were also presented to the public on how to manage this 336 acre property with so much historical significance. However, the overall piece missing from this plan is a unified vision outlining long-term goals and achievable objectives.

In 2022, Green, along with the RJRD Board, will begin the strategic planning process by creating a mission and vision for the park that will support the RJRD. Once determined, the strategic plan will set broad, attainable goals and objectives leading the park to its vision over the next 3 to 5 years. An example of one broad and attainable goal may be to identify, prioritize, and improve the park's amenities in terms of their accessibility, from trails and campsites to shelters and facilities such as The Lodge.

Ultimately, a small group will be tasked with defining the mission, vision, values, goals and objectives of the strategic plan. Public input will be sought throughout this process. Once the Board approves the plan and the plan is in place, the Preserve will be positioned for success in serving the community.



THE LODGE At Richfield Heritage Preserve

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exchanging vows by the Upper Lake or under the trees to a 50-year wedding anniversary celebrated near the charming fireplace, The Lodge offers many beautiful options for different types of celebrations. It's an ideal site for seminars, business functions, parties, showers, and fundraisers

- Seating for up to 225
- Use from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m.
- Ample parking
- Updated Wifi
- Access to the park's trails and surroundings for enjoyment & photo opportunities

And much more!

The Lodge is located at Richfield Heritage Preserve on State Route 176 in Richfield. Richfield is located just 15 minutes north of Akron and 20 minutes south of Cleveland with convenient freeway access from the Ohio Turnpike I-80, interstates 77, 271 and 71, and state routes 176 and 303.



Emily Renee Photography

Check out our discounted rates for both non-profit organizations and Richfield residents. For more information on rental pricing and availability, contact our event consultant, Shari Green at thelodge@rjrd.org.



Emily Renee Photography



Emily Renee Photography



Emily Renee Photography



KIRBY'S MILL Restoration Update

The Friends of Crowell Hilaka (FoCH) for Richfield Heritage Preserve spent the summer successfully raising funds to restore the millwheel of Kirby's Mill. Work began

with the dismantling of the millwheel and sending it to Kirby's master millwright Ben Hassett in Kentucky this past August. The removal of the mill wheel provided a clear and unimpeded look at the mill's wheel pit, a rectangular, concrete basin located underneath the wheel that catches water falling from the wheel buckets (see vintage photo). When working properly,

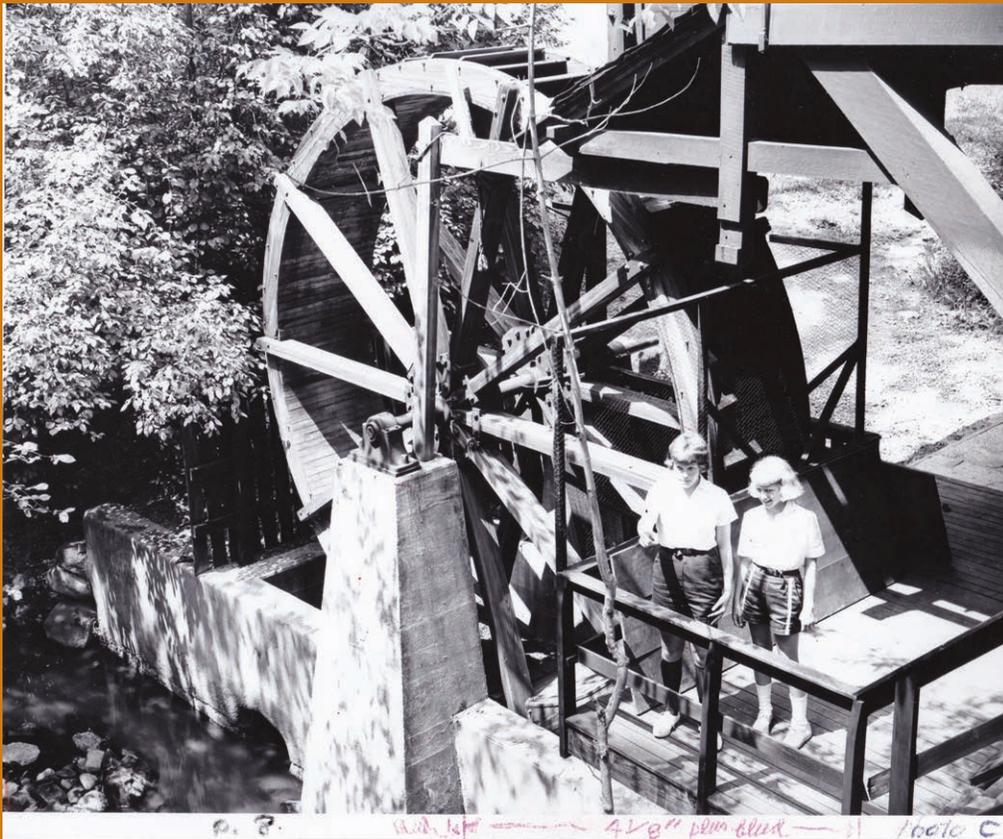
water is directed out through an arched opening into the creek below.

With this view it is now evident that over the last 99 years, the wheel pit developed some

cracks that will only get wider with time. The project engineer identified several areas needing repair. FoCH engaged Northstar Contracting, also currently working on the

dam restoration project, to do the work. However, when Northstar began drilling, they determined that the concrete walls were in much worse shape than expected. Additional test drilling sites through the concrete, made in consultation with the engineer, showed that the walls cannot be salvaged and will need to be completely rebuilt.

Unfortunately, FoCH's resources are being stretched to fund the now enlarged scope of the project. The group acknowledges that the original timetable for completion of this specific project phase may take longer than expected.



A creekside view of the Kirby's Mill waterwheel shows the south wheel support pier, the rectangular wheel pit, and the arched outflow opening. Two Girl Scouts enjoy a moment of contemplation on the observation deck. (1969 photo from the Girl Scouts of Northeast Ohio archives)



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE Grant Update

This past Spring, Richfield Heritage Preserve was awarded an extension to be part of the National Park Service's - Rivers, Trails Conservation Assistance Program for FY21 which runs through April 2022. The goal of this grant is to receive technical assistance from the NPS on RHP's community engagement, programming, and trail improvement. Trails will be the first item to be assessed followed by programming.

This summer and early fall, the trails team (consisting of representatives from Friends of Crowell Hilaka for Richfield Heritage Preserve, Ohio Horseman Council, Buckeye Trail Association, Western Reserve Land Conservancy, Baldwin Wallace, and RJRD trustees, along with RHP's Park Director, RHP Volunteer Coordinator, a community representative, a trails expert, and Andrea Irland with the NPS) has met three times over the past two months. Initially, the group looked at existing brochures, trails maps, and identified trail users. They then went out in groups of 2 - 3 to assigned trails to assess the following: trail users, trail conditions (such as asphalt, stone, dirt, mulch), accessibility, existing signage, confusing intersections, as well as maintenance needs and safety concerns.

The NPS Trails Team is planning on meeting two more times to complete the trail assessment. The end result will be to create a master trails plan for short and long-term planning by the end of the year. These plans will provide direction for fundraising.

This NPS grant was originally applied for and accepted to be completed in 2020 but was postponed due to Covid-19. Later next year, a group will be selected to discuss and look at programming opportunities. There will be upcoming community working sessions

where all will be invited to participate and offer feedback.

PROGRAMMING ASSESSMENT In 2022

In addition to the NPS Trails Assessment Team, RHP Park Director David Green is assembling another team of professionals to assess RHP's programming on the property - past, present, and future. The goal is to gather parties that have a vested interest to identify past successes as well as new programming ideas and staffing concerns including areas needing improvement.

One tool that we will utilize in this goal is conducting an Interpretive Plan which is a strategic document intended to guide an organization or a park in how they tell the story of a space and define the over-

all interpretation and education goals of a park.

Once the trails and programming assessments are completed, the findings will be presented to the public for input. Both trails and programming will be listed as objectives within the overall strategic plan of the preserve. These areas can then be taken into consideration for areas needing fundraising if deemed a priority over other needs.



Discover your Outdoor Experience at

Richfield HERITAGE PRESERVE

WE'RE HIRING!

Administrative Coordinator and Naturalists Wanted

ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR

The Richfield Joint Recreation District has an immediate opening for an Administrative Coordinator. This part-time, year-round position provides office management and administrative support services to the RJRD Board of Trustees and Park Director of Richfield Heritage Preserve.

[ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR](#)

NATURALISTS

You've heard them called naturalists, rangers, interpreters, or outdoor educators. Their task is to turn the ordinary into extraordinary. To bring excitement to something common. From plants, animals or history, it's their goal to ignite a spark in someone to want to know more. It's all about making connections to the outdoors.

We are looking for educators to tell the stories about the preserve's history and rich flora and fauna. Is that YOU or someone you know?!

Get involved and share what YOU know with others at Richfield Heritage Preserve. We are excited about what you can offer and what our park guest can learn from what you know.

[NATURALIST POSITION](#)

[NATURALIST INTERNSHIP](#)



WINTER WONDERS 2021 Weekend Events Throught December

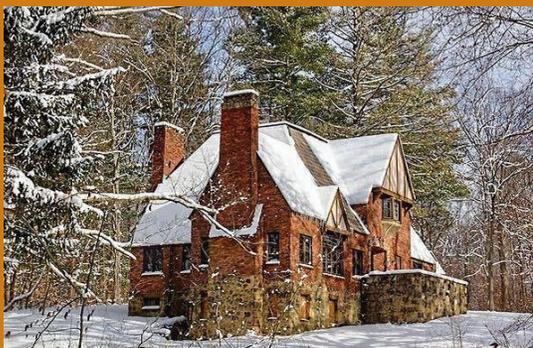
The Friends of Crowell Hilaka (FoCH) will hold four Winter Wonders mini events this year from 11am to 4pm in The LODGE. Visitors can enjoy a toasty fire, savor hot chocolate and chocolate chip cookies, and purchase FoCH merchandise---including the new Kirby's Mill mug. Artist Garlen Oviatt's annual Richfield Heritage Preserve-themed ornament will also be available. And there will be nature crafts for the kids---to either make at the event or take home to work on.

Saturday, December 4th
Sunny the Reindeer Horse will be on hand from 12-2 p.m. for photo ops with the younger visitors (or even the young at heart).

Saturday, December 11th
Father Christmas and a few of his top elves will be traveling some of the trails on horseback---greeting park visitors and handing out candy canes.

Sunday, December 19th
Miss Diane from the Richfield Branch Library will be sharing stories fireside in The Lodge at 1:30 p.m., 2:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. There will also be a storybook walk (based on "Tracks in the Snow") that day.

Sunday, December 26.
Relax and warm up by the fire, and enjoy the refreshments as well as camaraderie.



TRAILS & TRIVIA

Self-Guided Hikes

This year's Trails & Trivia Self-Guided hikes will take place from November 27-December 26th and offer some fascinating park trivia questions. Special signs will be placed at various locations in the park which will include a QR code that can be scanned to access the map as well. Hikers who successfully complete all trails will be recognized with a special participation gift.

Maps, along with the trivia questions and instructions, will be available online at friendsofcrowellhilaka.org.

SELFIES

Selfies can be taken along the way next to evergreen trees

that have been festively decorated by local businesses as well as by partners and friends of RHP. Share your photos on Facebook and Instagram with the hashtag #TrailsAndTrivia2021.

For more information about the Winter Wonders mini events or the Trails and Trivia self-guided hikes, contact Karen at kls1650@roadrunner.com or refer to FoCH's website friendsofcrowellhilaka.org.

FRIENDS OF CROWELL HILAKA FOR RICHFIELD HERITAGE PRESERVE 4374 BROADVIEW ROAD, RICHFIELD, OH 44286

WINTER WONDERS

#TRAILS AND TRIVIA

SELF-GUIDED HIKES

Join us for the 2nd annual holiday season self-guided nature hikes along (5) trails, plus one BONUS trail. Answer intriguing trivia questions about the park and nature along the way. Visit us online for details.

STARTING November 27 THRU December 26 dawn - dusk

Richfield HERITAGE PRESERVE

F I Instagram T

FRIENDSOFCROWELLHILAKA.ORG

Friends of Crowell Hilaka is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization promoting Richfield Heritage Preserve. Follow us on social media. friendsofcrowellhilaka.org

Richfield HERITAGE PRESERVE

Friends of Crowell Hilaka for RICHFIELD HERITAGE PRESERVE



OVIATT HOUSE Work Begins

Demolition work is underway at the Oviatt farmhouse! Volunteers began on the second floor in early October by tearing out old carpeting along with non-original walls, fixtures, and old plumbing pipe. Materials that may be reused in the future were saved. With the second-floor opened up and the original floor plan revealed, plans for restoring the interior can take place.

On the first floor, volunteers stripped old plaster from the inside of the non-original side entrance, revealing the original exterior siding as well as the location of a hidden door opening - an exciting find!!

WREATH FUNDRAISER

To help aid the restoration project, Oviatt House Inc. (OHI) is partnering with Three Rivers Wreath and Plant Co. to offer hand-crafted, specially decorated wreaths, centerpieces and garlands made with fresh

evergreens picked daily and cold stored to preserve freshness. All wreaths are double-faced (built on both sides of the ring), with real balsam fir greens. This fund-raising program offers 11 different items directly shipped anywhere within the contiguous U.S. Shoppers may choose from up to four shipping weeks between mid-November through early December.

For more information on this program and how to support OHI, please visit www.threerivers-fundraising.com and enter the OHI group code C6X6CC to begin

your holiday shopping. Proceeds from this sale go toward the restoration of the historic Oviatt House in Richfield Heritage Preserve.

Donations to www.oviatthouse1836.com are also being accepted to aid the restoration efforts. One hundred percent of the money collected goes towards OHI's efforts to preserve and restore this historic landmark.

