

Richfield HERITAGE PRESERVE

OCTOBER eNEWSLETTER

Photo courtesy of Susan Czaplicki

A Message from Your Park Director David Green

It's that time of year . . .

September days are getting noticeably shorter. The sun is rising later and we awaken to cooler air each morning. We are seeing the departure of the Canada Goose and the arrival of the dark-eyed junco as the migration ritual begins. Monarch butterflies are beginning to start their journey to central Mexico. Wild turkey are enjoying the acorns that are falling to the ground from our oaks. Squirrels are busier than ever collecting pinecone, hickory and acorns for their winter cache.

Along with the wildlife transitions at the Preserve it is equally exciting to see what the trees have in store as the leaves begin their spectacular performance. Weather conditions over the summer can be indicators of fall color, such as when the leaves might begin to change color, when their color will peak, or how long it all lasts. In general, a wet growing season followed by an autumn with lots of sunny days, dry weather, and cold, frostless nights will produce the most vibrant palette of fall colors. With one of the rainiest springs and summers in Northeast Ohio in

THE LODGE

A Community Gathering Space & Rustic Rental in a Scenic Setting
In the Loop

Richfield Heritage Preserve is becoming a hub for community activity and events. Treats on The Trail, Clambakes, Winter Wonders, Snowbird Festivals, and Kirby Day (to name a few) all have one thing in common: they've taken place inside of or on the grounds just outside of The LODGE (formerly known as Gund Hall). As the nucleus of these much loved occasions, The LODGE is fast becoming an ideal location for celebrating and making memories.

The 60+ year old building sat largely unused for a decade prior to the Richfield community acquiring it in 2014. It was in good condition but needed some special attention and a lot of TLC. In addition to many waves of volunteers cleaning it up inside and out over the years (windows,



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NEW BLUEBIRD PROGRAM Successes & Ways to Grow

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LAND STEWARDSHIP Team Works to Improve Park

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RENT THE LODGE
Rustic Charm in Picturesque Setting



UPPPER LAKE DAM
Rehabilitaion Project



NEW YEAR,
NEW TREATS!



Safety Forces
CLAM BAKE



5 GREAT REASONS
to Volunteer



OVIATT HOUSE
FUNdraising to Aid Restoration



A Message from Your Park Director David Green

JOIN RHP'S EMAIL LIST

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During the summer months, the green pigment, chlorophyll, found in leaves, masks the other pigments of reds, yellows or browns. In the Fall, the combination of warm sunny days along with cool nights, causes sugars to get trapped in the leaves producing vibrant reds, as seen especially in maple and gum trees along with the poison ivy plant. Typically, oaks, some maple and aspen will treat us with yellows, oranges and browns. Sur-

prisingly, scientists aren't entirely sure why trees bother to produce a new pigment while otherwise trying to save their precious resources for the winter ahead. Some suggest that the bright red color could deter insect pests from feeding on leaves, or that red attracts birds that feed on (and spread) the trees' fruit. All we know is it is spectacular and nature knows best and we are thankful for it.

Autumn is an amazing, transformative time for nature and is a favorite time for park visitors to enjoy the outdoors without the heat and insects. Hikes are different, the forest and fields are different, and the lake is different. It is the season for change, letting go, preserving while we instinctively seek familiar comforts such as evenings around the fire, sweaters, hot cider and seasonal traditions.

We are eager to welcome the public to our annual October event after a year's hiatus. We are calling this pared down, Covid-mindful event, Treats on The Trail, and will be held Sunday October 24th. We will still have our family-friendly approach outdoors on the trails with collecting candy but without the crafts and activities.

I hope you'll make plans to visit RHP this month as nature prepares us for the months to come. Whether it's your first fall season in The Preserve like mine, or you've been visiting for years, each year is unique in of itself and always a sight to behold!

David Green



THE LODGE

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they've taken place inside of or on the grounds just outside of The LODGE (formerly known as Gund Hall). As the nucleus of these much loved occasions, The LODGE is fast becoming an ideal location for celebrating and making memories.

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Richfield community acquiring it in 2014. It was in good condition but needed some special attention and a lot of TLC. In addition to many waves of volunteers cleaning it up inside and out over the years (windows, gutters, hearth, walls, floors), the following major and cosmetic improvements have also taken place to bring the building to its greatly improved current state. They include:

- Renovated ADA compliant restrooms
- Painted the exterior
- Restored the well supplying water to the building
- Painted the exterior doors with new door sweeps
- New interior and outdoor sconce lighting
- Repaired the floor heating in the main hall
- Cleared out the 50-year-old appliances from kitchen
- Painted ceilings of outdoor porch roofs

The Richfield Joint Recreation District (RJR) Board understands the importance of being competitive and acknowledges additional investments such as air-conditioning and landscaping/hardscaping for curb

appeal will go a long way to attracting renters. They have also agreed there is a need to create a private space around The LODGE since the venue is located in a public park setting.

For years, the Board identified the importance of creating a revenue stream for the park and the most logical asset for this is The LODGE. Although it has been rented out since 2017 for weddings, events and meetings, there has not been a formal business plan outlining goals and objectives.

This past March, Park Director David Green started conversations with Jeff Ramsey who worked for over 30 years at the Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization. The two were introduced by former RJRD board member Meg Slifcak. One of the projects that was spearheaded under Ramsey's leadership was the \$30 million capital campaign for the Gordon Square Arts District.

Following their discussions, Ramsey offered his expertise by conducting a Business Plan for The LODGE, identifying a market study, as well as an operations plan with cost estimates, a maintenance plan

and options for fundraising. The LODGE qualified for a grant from the Helen Brown Foundation for this process.

The next three months, Ramsey researched the market, reviewed past studies, talked with board and community members, and met with caterers and contractors. He presented his proposed Business Plan to the

RJR board at its September meeting. Among his recommendations are the following findings:

▫ It is recommended to enter an agreement with an exclusive caterer (over a preferred list of caterers) to not only provide food for those renting The LODGE but to also serve as liaison between renters and the park director. This is seen as advantageous as the park has only one full-time employee, a seasonal groundskeeper and a part-time administrative coordinator. Time and resources make this an attractive solution.

▫ Another recommendation is to hire an event coordinator to handle showings, respond to questions, help with details, and be available before, during and after all events held at The LODGE. Partially in the works already, the RJRD Board entered into an interim 4-month contract with event consultant Shari Green to serve in this capacity as a test run.

"If we are wanting the Lodge to be successful and to be a revenue stream for the preserve, there needs to be a person dedicat-

ed to just that," states RJRD Trustee, Sandy Apidone who through her professional contacts found Shari Green.

The idea is to not only have The LODGE become self-sustaining, but a profit-making asset.

"Our capacity of 225, newly renovated restrooms, indoor and outdoor spaces, as well as the close proximity to the Upper Lake for photos and recreation makes The LODGE unique in the Northeast Ohio venue market," states park director David Green. "We are excited to capitalize on these features moving forward as we head into the 2022 rental season."

Currently, word of mouth is the most cost-effective marketing tool. If you know of anyone needing an event venue or is interested in renting The LODGE, please share our link with them for more information at: <https://www.richfieldheritagepreserve.com/reserve-the-lodge.html>



NEW BLUEBIRD PROGRAM Successes & Ways to Grow

NOTES on THE RHP BLUEBIRD TRAIL First Nesting Season Results

This year, Richfield Heritage Preserve began a Bluebird Monitoring Program. RHP Park Director David Green, RHP Volunteer Coordinator Susan Czaplicki, and RHP Bluebird Trail Coordinator Joe Blanda met online with 10 RHP Volunteers in February for bluebird monitor training. They have spent the past seven months monitoring 17 bluebird boxes at the park.

The group headed out in March utilizing a bluebird monitoring app called NestWatch led by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology for research as well as the Ohio Bluebird Society. NestWatch is a nationwide monitoring program designed to track the status and trends in the reproductive biology of birds, including when nesting occurs, the number of eggs laid, how many eggs hatch, and how many hatchlings survive. The database is used to study the current condition of breeding bird populations and how they may be changing over time as a result of climate change, habitat degradation and loss, expansion of urban areas, and the introduction of non-native plants and animals.

It may take as many as six years to establish a thriving bluebird trail, and, according to experts, we are off to a good start. Naturally, the success of any bluebird trail program relies heavily on their constant monitoring from early March through the end of September. It takes time, experience, knowledge, and someone to oversee the program. See the table below for some of the numbers the Bluebird monitors recorded on NestWatch.

Our nesting potential for bluebirds is evident, but competition by predators and invasive species such as the house sparrow was impactful to the detriment of the bluebird. Plans for next year to improve our success rate includes relocating several of the boxes for the 2022 season.

There are many challenges Bluebirds face in their nesting pursuits. Here are some of the observations logged by our monitors that verify the detrimental signs of competition for bluebirds by house sparrows:



- Another large house sparrow nest was removed
- Very messy stick nest removed and one egg destroyed. Sparrow, assuming.
- 3 babies found but none survived. One unhatched egg remains in nest. No parent present.
- Many feathers found at base of box. The tree swallow nest was completely covered by a sparrow's stick nest. Nest was emptied and cleaned. Upon approach of box, wren flew off nest. Box was checked and while observing

from a distance, a sparrow came and perched on the box. Mama wren was definitely voicing her dislike from a distance. Had 5 eggs that never hatched.

▪Returned today to find babies did not survive. Nest looks undisturbed. I think the "winter" weather this past Sunday took its toll. Saw the male and female enter/exit the box several times today. They were very active. Hopefully another attempt.

▪More wasps. Removed wasps and their nests.

▪Chickadee nest and 1 cowbird egg. Hatched but predator got it.

Try, try again is the bluebird's mantra, and so too shall our Bluebird Monitoring team. With hopeful signs of bluebird presence at the park, next year's group of bluebird monitors will build upon the knowledge gained from our inaugural monitoring season's data.

Anyone interested in volunteering with the 2022 bluebird monitoring program may contact us at volunteer-info@rjrd.org

2021 Results

17
nesting sites

22
nesting attempts

52
total eggs

29
total hatched

7
total fledglings



LAND STEWARDSHIP

RHP Invasive Species Management Team Works to Improve Park

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These trained volunteers, from Friends of Crowell-Hilaka for Richfield Heritage Preserve, help improve the identified high quality natural areas of our park. Over the years, alien interlopers have invaded the park: glossy buckthorn, garlic mustard, dame's rocket, bush honeysuckle, barberry, and more. Native plants that nourish birds and pollinators are crowded out by these

non-native species.

The RHP Invasive Species Management Team of the Friends group partners with the Ohio Invasive Plant Council (OIPC) and Ohio Natural Areas and Preserves Association (ONAPA) to train volunteers in methods of controlling invasive

plants and monitoring their efforts.

This year, the team received refresher training from OIPC president and ONAPA Vice

President, Jennifer Windus, in cooperation with RHP Park Director David Green. Working with preserve volunteers and on

their own, members removed over 120 pounds of garlic mustard and Dame's rocket this season. The team also removed purple loosestrife near the Lower Lake, wisteria behind Kirby House and barberry along the Buckeye Trail.

Following the RHP Invasive Species Management Plan adopted by the Richfield Joint Recreation District board, the team's efforts are paying off. After

five years of pulling Japanese knotweed choking the rock garden below Kirby House, the crew spotted Carolina allspice, a native spring wildflower, for the first time. Also, the garlic mustard "harvest" decreased significantly this spring because it's no longer growing in areas it once covered.

The Friends group is always looking for volunteers for our projects and events that support the park. If you are interested in helping the Invasive Species Management Team and for more information, visit friendsofcrowellhilaka.org/volunteer



COMMUNITY SERVICE Five Great Reasons to Volunteer

One thing that has never gone out of style is being civic minded. Giving our time and talents without expecting anything in return is timeless altruism.

Today, many schools put this idea into practice by requiring students to have a certain amount of community service or volunteer hours to graduate. It is well documented that volunteerism not only presents great opportunities for teenagers to prepare for the future, but it boosts their social skills, and their awareness of local organizations and social issues while improving their communities. It is an invaluable experience for young adults beyond high school as they head out into the world.

A few of the top benefits of community service are:

Gaining New Skills
Training provides important building blocks for future success.

Adding to the Resume
Resumes that are not limited to employment and computer skills show a willingness to be a part of something bigger and not solely for personal gain which is always an admirable quality.

Giving Time
One of the most selfless acts anyone can do is donate their time and talents. Busy, active individuals who still make time to volunteer on evenings or weekends show outstanding character and resolve to make a difference.

Showing Responsibility
Just like going to a job, committing to a volunteer position shows responsibility and shows initiative and a desire to build upon it.

Earning Credits
For many high schoolers, a specific number of community volunteer work hours are now required before a student is eligible for graduation. Volunteer opportunities can now even translate to high school or college credits.

Overall, it is difficult to say who gets more from Community Service. It's definitely a win-win for everyone!

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT community service and volunteer opportunities at Richfield Heritage Preserve, please reach out to our RHP Volunteer Coordinator at volunteer-info@rjrd.org

“Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in.”

– Author Unknown



Richfield Police, Fire & Dispatch

4th Annual

Saturday, Oct 9th, 2021



Clam Bake



Safety Forces Clam Bake

Hosted by F.O.P. Lodge #66 & I.A.F.F 4410



Raffle Baskets, Hayrides, Music, & Outdoor Games

Doors Open @ 3:00pm
Dinner Served @ 4:00pm
The Lodge @
Richfield Heritage Preserve
4374 Broadview Rd
Richfield, OH 44286

\$40/Chicken - \$45/Steak Bake:
1-doZ Clams, Corn, Sweet Potato,
Chowder, & 2 Drink Tix
\$25 Chicken or \$30 Steak no
Clams
\$15/Extra Doz. Clams
\$7.50 for Kids Meal
(Hamburger/Hot Dog & Chips)

Name: _____

of Bakes w/Chicken: _____ # of Bakes w/Steak: _____

of Chicken (no clams): _____ # of Steak (no clams): _____

of Extra Clams: _____ # of Children: _____

Return, filled out, with a check made payable to: Richfield FOP #66, no later than October 1st.

Deliver to: Richfield Fire Dept. 4450 W. Streetsboro Rd., Richfield, OH 44286

Any questions, please call: Kevin Urban, Tony Katzakis, Kyle Janis @ 3306599400