

Discover your Outdoor Experience at

Richfield HERITAGE PRESERVE

JULY/AUGUST eNEWSLETTER

Photograph taken by
David Glick
MadisonDave Photography



A Message from Anita Gantner

*Richfield Heritage Preserve
Joint Recreation District Board Chairperson*

Another summer is upon us, and our park is in full bloom. With summer we return to many popular activities – our bridle trails have reopened, the Upper Lake is available once again for fishing and non-motorized boating, and Story Hour is back at The Lodge. I invite you to review the full programming schedule on our website - come visit us for a hike or guided tour in what is one of the most beautiful times of year at Richfield Heritage Preserve!

[READ MORE](#)

THEY'RE BACK!

Warmer Temps Bring Volunteers to Richfield Heritage Preserve

Richfield Heritage Preserve volunteers and guest groups are turning up in impressive numbers to Richfield Heritage Preserve. Once temps became more seasonal, volunteer numbers spiked which translates to progress.

Among the projects completed include: improvements to The Lodge, preparing for last month's Ribbon Cutting and Open House event, painting picnic tables, beautifying the Oviatt entrance, preparing for weddings, maintaining gardens and pathways, and painting structures and latrines.

[READ MORE](#)

New Program: Kirby's Mill Docents

By Lynn S. Richardson, Friends of RHP

"Welcome to Kirby's Mill."

That's the typical, cheerful greeting that RHP visitors will hear from the mill docents every Sunday between the hours of 2-5 p.m. now through October.

[READ MORE](#)



THE LODGE



OVIATT HOUSE
Updates



HISTORIC
Renovations



HORSE TRAILS &
NON-MOTORIZED
BOATING



KIRBY DAY



EVENTS

4374 Broadview Road, Richfield, Ohio | (330) 888-0511 | richfieldheritagepreserve.com

Email Us or Subscribe



RICHFIELD
Joint Recreation District

A Message from Anita Gantner

Richfield Heritage Preserve Joint Recreation District Board Chairperson

Another summer is upon us, and our park is in full bloom. With summer we return to many popular activities – our bridle trails have reopened, the Upper Lake is available once again for fishing and non-motorized boating, and Story Hour is back at The Lodge. I invite you to review the full programming schedule on our website - come visit us for a hike or guided tour in what is one of the most beautiful times of year at Richfield Heritage Preserve!

This summer we also celebrate several landmark achievements at RHP. In May, the Dam Restoration Project was completed and the Lower Lake refilled, restoring one of the park's most beautiful features. For the first time, air conditioning was installed at The LODGE, making it an even more attractive venue for events, which is a vital revenue stream for future park funding. Also, the Friends of Richfield Heritage Preserve continue to make progress with the restoration of Kirby's Mill, and this summer we expect to see the wheel reinstalled and fully functional.

At our Open House event on Sunday, June 12th we celebrated these achievements with many of our volunteers, as well as community residents, board members and elected officials with a ribbon cutting ceremony. It was a beautiful day with the sun shining across the lake and water streaming over the newly restored dam. We thank all of you who attended.

It is also an important period with regards to the park's long-term future. With the departure of RHP's Park Director David Green, we are looking for a new director. In May the board voted to merge the Park Director's position with that of Richfield Village.



The budgetary savings can be applied to fund additional support positions, such as a full-time maintenance person. The new Director would likely assume duties in August, and will be based in the park office.

Finally, this summer sees the beginning of the final phase of our strategic planning process, facilitated in partnership with Cleveland Metroparks. The strategic plan will restate the vision and mission for Richfield Heritage Preserve and guide its development over the next five to ten years. Central to the plan is what to do with the many buildings, a result of this property's long and rich history. Many of the structures can potentially be put to good use, including revenue-generating use. However, preserving and then maintaining them requires funding, in several cases not insignificant amounts. We would like to hear your perspective on the park's future, including the buildings, and to that end have posted a survey on our website. I urge you, especially Richfield community residents whose tax dollars fund our operations, to review the survey and submit a response. RHP is truly your park, and we need you to weigh in on its future.

I look forward to hearing from you and seeing you at RHP this summer.

THEY'RE BACK!

Warmer Temps Bring Volunteers to Richfield Heritage Preserve

Richfield Heritage Preserve volunteers and guest groups are turning up in impressive numbers to Richfield Heritage Preserve. Once temps became more seasonal, volunteer numbers spiked which translates to progress.

The projects completed include: improvements to The Lodge, preparing for last month's Ribbon Cutting and Open House event, painting picnic tables, beautifying the Oviatt entrance, preparing for weddings, maintaining gardens and pathways, and painting structures and latrines.

RHP Volunteer Coordinator Susan Czaplicki has been busy planning, coordinating, and overseeing numerous volunteer projects, among them are:

- Members of The University of Akron's Phi Delta Theta Fraternity assisted with perimeter fence repairs.
- Ernst & Young employees partnered with Cuyahoga County Soil and Water to plant 250 fasciae and live stakes at the High Lea creek to deter further erosion.
- Kent State University's Flashes Give Back alumnae and Boy Scout Troop 801 partnered with RHP volunteers, and Buckeye Trail representative Pat Hayes to improve several sections of the Buckeye Trail. Redwood Living staff completed the trail improvements, and cleaned the Park Office as well as the old classroom.
- Burns & McDonnell employees returned to the park a fourth time to partner with RHP Volunteers and Chris Moore to improve drainage on a section of the Story Book Forest Trail.
- Hudson High School Service-Learning students painted 15 picnic tables.
- Richfield Cub Pack 3387 helped prepare Amity for the Ribbon Cutting/Open House event, and Boy Scout Troop 526 cleared vegetation at the Oviatt entrance.
- Mars Electric held its first corporate volunteer day at the park. Their accomplishments include painting the Summer Barn, Summer Barn latrine and nearby structure, as well as removing the wire from wooden fencing.



- Girl Scout Troop 71176 planted butterfly-friendly plants in the garden near the Park Office, and Pruett family and friends held their annual Spif's Garden workday.
- RHP volunteers were also instrumental in making much-needed improvements to The Lodge. Dave Kalal undertook a variety of projects, including remodeling the bridal suite and restroom, installing an indoor chandelier and outdoor lighting, assembling firewood holders and a loveseat, removing old heaters, installing new kitchen doors, and drywalling and painting sections of the kitchen area. Bob Matusek built an indoor bar for The Lodge using reclaimed wood from the park.

If you are interested in learning how you can make a difference and get involved at the park, please contact the RHP Volunteer Coordinator at volunteer-info@rjrd.org

New Program: Kirby's Mill Docents

By Lynn S. Richardson, Friends of RHP

“Welcome to Kirby's Mill.”

That's the typical, cheerful greeting that RHP visitors will hear from the mill docents every Sunday between the hours of 2-5 p.m. now through October.

A “docent” is a volunteer guide, usually at a museum or art gallery. The seed of the Kirby's Mill docent program sprouted years ago when Friends of RHP were working in the garden outside of Kirby House. The garden is just below Kirby House in clear view of the mill. Hikers would often see the Friends at work in the weeds and stop to ask questions. The Friends would happily put down their trowels to talk to the visitors. It was so much fun to tell the stories about Kirby, electricity, old grist mills, and the new Richfield Heritage Preserve. This happened more often than not, and we began to realize that we should organize a service---a regular time when one of the Friends could be available to answer questions about the mill. We chose Sunday afternoons because we thought that's when we'd have the most volunteer availability. Response to the program was enthusiastic and 20 volunteers signed up to be trained.



The first docent to pioneer the program was Hugh Groth--a retired engineer, Boy Scout volunteer, woodcarver, and canoe enthusiast. If a passerby wasn't particularly interested in the science or history of the mill, striking up a conversation with Hugh on anything at all would be an uplifting experience. On the first Sunday in May, he sat out by the mill. Conditions were not ideal. We had planned on storing a few docent supplies in the mill basement, but it was still full of equipment from Phase II of the dam repair so we couldn't use it. More construction equipment was scattered un-picturesquely throughout the mill meadow below the dam. Hugh was undeterred. He brought his own camp chair, a shade umbrella, and a sense of humor. His report at the end of that trial run: “Not many people came, but I would mark it as a success. The few that came seemed to enjoy the information and all seemed to feel they learned something. All of them are entranced by the park, of course”.

A docent does not provide a classroom-style lecture. They are just friendly folks ready to tell a story or two, but letting the visitors direct the conversation.

At the time of this writing, we are waiting for the mill's water wheel to be reinstalled. When it is, the need for trained mill docents may be greater. If you are interested, please contact Lynndragonwing@gmail.com.



Richfield
HERITAGE
P R E S E R V E

THE LODGE

THANK YOU TO OUR REGISTRY DONORS

Friends of RHP

Anita Gantner

Shari Green

Janet Jankura

Kara LeVan

Oviatt House Inc.

Sue Ann Philipppbar

Mary M. Ryan

Karen Smik

Denise and Jeff Stoppenhagen

Karen Walker

Polly Wheeler



**Also, a big thank you to Sandy Apidone,
Susan Czaplicki, Jeff Deluca, Dave Kalal and
Bob Matusek for their tireless work at and for
The Lodge.**



OVIATT HOUSE UPDATES

Oviatt House Inc. (OHI) received the most exciting news . . .

\$50,000 of the state capital budget will be going toward Oviatt House renovations!
Representative Bill Roemer and Senator Kristina Roegner worked together to secure this funding.

Lessons in Restoration

Most of our volunteers are not experienced in construction and working on the house is an opportunity to learn new skills. In addition to our “regulars”, we had several new volunteers join us. One of them was Claire Palopoli, Revere High School 2022 graduate, who spent a day at the house learning from Ken Bowman the finesse it takes to remove plaster and lath. Claire has been shadowing the Friends president, Corey Ringle in anticipation of pursuing her degree in Architecture.

Our goal is to take the house back as close to what it looked like in 1836, with modern amenities of electricity and heat. Although some of the walls on the first floor are over 100 years old, they were removed so the house can reflect the original floorplan. As drywall and plaster are removed, the original wall placement is determined through examination of the mortices in the ceiling beams. The first floor appears to have been one large room in the front of the house, and three smaller rooms in the back of the house.

It is a fun challenge to not only figure out walls, but also door placements. By examining the patterns on the studs left by lath, some of the original door openings can be determined. Some of the studs were reused when walls were moved and we can figure out their original location through the lath patterns. Just as previous owners did, we will reuse as much original material as we can. Original upstairs door trim was left in an attic. By matching up the nail holes on the trim and studs, we are able to replace the trim in its original location. It is a very complicated puzzle!

The floors on the second floor are original, but show repairs where the original winder staircase was removed. On the first floor, the original floor underlies a newer (but still old!) wood floor. Examination of the original floorboards from the basement reveals that not all of the floor is the same. Why? Was a large hearth removed?

Were the floors damaged and replaced? Do we remove the newer floor, which is in good condition, and restore the original floor? If the newer floor is removed, the first staircase step will be out of alignment and the steps would have to be rebuilt, and the original floor may be in bad shape. To remove, or not to remove, that is the question! This is just one of many decisions we are facing.

We welcome you to join us in this exciting renovation project and learn along with us.



UNIQUE HERITAGE & HISTORY

Historic Restorations on Display at Community Open House

By Clive Fetzer, Friends of RHP

The heritage and identity of every city, every township, every village is not based on the number of houses the community has or the number of commercial businesses it supports---rather it arises from the community's own long and slowly evolving history. It is the rich heritage and history of every community that make it distinct from all other communities across America.

This unique heritage was apparent during the June 2022 Open House at Richfield Heritage Preserve, hosted by the Richfield Joint Recreation District and its partner groups. During this event, the residents of Richfield were able to attend the ribbon cutting ceremony which marked the completion of the final phase to restore the dam on the Lower Lake (historically known as Lake Jinelle). This event also provided Richfield residents the opportunity to view the historic structures of the park and better understand their historical significance.

The RJRD -- along with its partners -- has been actively involved with restoring the historic structures and helping to preserve the heritage of the Richfield community.

The Friends' Historic Homes Stabilization Task Force volunteers are working hard behind the scenes to ensure the integrity of their foundations and support structures. Historically accurate slate shingle repair has been done on both homes, and the ongoing stabilization of these treasured homes continues.

In preparation for the Open House, volunteer Gary LaGuardia assisted many other volunteers with patching and prepping as well as painting the walls at North House to repair the vandalism done in 2016. Numerous windows were restored at Kirby House by volunteer Bob Matussek who worked with Pat Norris, Clive Fetzer, Pieter Vandermeer and others on this effort. Additionally, the exterior steps of Kirby HOUse were rebuilt and the ceiling was patched thanks to Ken Bowman from a 2015 roof leak which damaged it. Although the new roof was installed several years ago, the friends wanted to have the ceiling repaired to show no evidence of the earlier issues. Work was also done to stabilize the steps at Amity house.

On display for the Open House:

Kirby's Mill is the historically significant hydroelectric mill of inventor James Kirby, located by the Lower Lake Dam, and has been the primary restoration project of the Friends of Richfield Heritage Preserve for several years. Through fundraising efforts and the generous donations of supporters, the Friends have restored a sizable portion of the mill at no cost to the residents, saving hundreds of thousands of dollars for taxpayers. In 2021 and 2022, the Friends contracted to have the 100-year-old



mill wheel pit and mounting piers rebuilt as the concrete had completely deteriorated. As this was being done, the Friends also worked with nationally recognized millwright Ben Hasset to reconstruct the mill wheel. Using seasoned white oak wood and the refurbished original metal hardware, the millwright has completed this project and is now ready to transport the water wheel from his Kentucky workshop back to Richfield for reinstallation on the mill.

Oviatt House, which is the original Oviatt family's farmhouse, is currently being restored to its original state by the Oviatt House Inc. group. The work is being entirely done through fundraising and the generosity of donors, and at no cost to the Richfield residents. It is the oldest historic structure on the property, dating back prior to the American Civil War. The Oviatt family has connections to the first settlers in the Richfield area, abolitionist John Brown and the Underground Railroad network.

The LODGE has been the focus of many transformative improvements being made by the RJRD. What was once the main dining hall for the Girl Scouts of Camp Hilaka is now a hand-somely updated and fashionable rental facility for gatherings of all kinds including weddings and corporate fundraisers, meetings and more. The LODGE is an asset that is now an important revenue stream for the park, providing funds for its own ongoing restoration as well as for other projects in the park.

The identity of a community is drawn from its history and heritage. At Richfield Heritage Preserve, that heritage is being restored and preserved for future generations of Richfield residents as well as for those who come to see what Richfield has to offer.

NOTE:

Richfield Heritage Preserve was designated by the National Park Service as the Camp Crowell Hilaka Historic District and is listed on its National Register of Historic Places since 2020 making RHP an important part of the Richfield community's history for which it can be proud.

Bridle Trails & Non-Motorized Boating

Non Motorized Boating Rules

<https://www.richfieldheritagepreserve.com/watercraft-rules-and-regulation.html>

Bridle Trails

<https://www.richfieldheritagepreserve.com/equestrian-trail-rules-and-regulations-at-richfield-heritage-preserve.html>



KIRBY DAY

Saturday, August 20

12 - 4:00 p.m.

Oviatt Road Entrance to Richfield Heritage Preserve



The Friends of Richfield Heritage Preserve are celebrating Kirby Day! Get ready for an afternoon of festivity featuring kids' crafts and games, as well as fascinating STEM-related and fun marble activities. Grilled hot dogs, chips and beverages will be offered for a donation. Friends' keepsakes and marble memorabilia will be available for purchase. Held rain or shine. While this event is free and open to the public, attendees are asked to RSVP. Please use this link below and help us know how many will be attending.

RSVP via Eventbrite by clicking below:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/kirby-day-celebration-tickets-341982036477>.

For more information, go to friendsofrhp.org

EVENTS

YOGA HIKE

Saturday, July 2nd
9-10:30am

All levels hike stopping for yoga poses and breath practice on the trails. Wear appropriate footwear and bring a mat. \$10 per class. Proceeds to Richfield Heritage Preserve. Contact (216) 952-6508 Cash, check or Venmo Kim Sowinski

STORY HOUR

Thursday, July 11th
11-12:00pm
&
Thursday, July 21st
11-12:30pm

Join the fun for an outdoor story hour with Miss Diane at the Richfield Heritage Preserve. Come along and enjoy an hour of stories, rhymes, music, movement, and more. Each session we will explore a different nature theme.

NOTE: This program will take place on the lawn outside of the Lodge; available seating is limited so bring a blanket. Please keep in mind that this program is held outdoors so dress accordingly, sunscreen, bug spray, water bottle, and closed-toe shoes are recommended. In the event of inclement weather, this event will be moved to the Lodge. Pack a picnic lunch and plan to stay and explore the park with friends.

FITNESS in THE FOREST

Saturday, July 9th
9-10:30am
&
Saturday, July 23rd
9-10:30am

Outdoor fitness class on the trails, incorporating conditioning and cardio using braided tubing (provided) and mats (bring your own). Limit 10 per class. Age 14 and up. Appropriate footwear and clothing for hiking surfaces. \$10 per class, donated to RJRD to preserve and maintain RHP. Contact (216) 952-6508 or <https://www.cravenaturecleveland.com/>

YOGA HIKE

Sunday, July 10th
9:30-11:30am

OneTreeLove invites you to take a hike and practice yoga outdoor in the fresh air. Enjoy some Vitamin N and nature therapy connecting with self, others, and nature. Yoga pose, breathing, and mindfulness practices will be done throughout the hike.

Guide: Laura Tecca

TO REGISTER:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/hike-yogadventure-sunday-series-tickets-277266761347>

STAND-UP PADDLE BOARD:

Playful Paddle

Sunday, July 10th
10-11:30am

Get on your blue-green mind! Feel the calming effect of the water (blue mind) and energetic effect of standing on water surrounded by trees (green mind).

Learn or relearn the basics of Standup Paddleboarding (SUP) and SUP Yoga on a calm in-land lake surrounded by trees with Lisa Meranti of OneTreeLove. This SUP YogAdventure will include instructions on safety, board anatomy, paddle basics, and SUPyoga.

Level/Ages: This SUP yogAdventure is open to ages 10+ (youth must have guardian supervision). All participants must be able to swim and perform essential skills listed below. 15% of fee will go to Richfield Heritage Preserve; discount for Richfield residents.

STAND-UP PADDLE BOARD

Sunday, July 17th
8:30-10:30am

Get on your blue-green mind! Feel the calming effect of the water (blue mind) and energetic effect of standing on water surrounded by trees (green mind).

Learn or relearn the basics of Standup Paddleboarding (SUP) and SUP Yoga on a calm in-land lake surrounded by trees with

Lisa Meranti of OneTreeLove. This SUP yogAdventure will include instructions on safety, board anatomy, paddle basics, and SUPyoga.

Level/Ages: This SUP yogAdventure is open to ages 10+ (youth must have guardian supervision). All participants must be able to swim and perform essential skills listed below. Give back: 15% of fee will go to Richfield Heritage Preserve; discount for Richfield residents.



Corey Ringle



ARCHAEOLOGY HIKE

Sunday, July 17
2:00-4:00 p.m.

The Friends of Richfield Heritage Preserve are holding an Archaeology Hike on Sunday, July 17, from 2:00-4:00 p.m. which will begin at The Lodge. Led by Dr. Phil Wanyerka---a Senior College Lecturer in the Department of Criminology, Anthropology & Sociology at Cleveland State University---it will focus on the park's rich ancient Native American past. Held rain or shine, it's free and open to the public.

Attendees are asked to RSVP via Eventbrite at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/archaeology-hike-tickets-331932347587>.

Dress for the weather, wear hiking boots, bring a water bottle and bug repellent. For additional information and event updates, go to friendsofrhp.org.

KIRBY DAY

Saturday, August 20
12 - 4:00 p.m.

The Friends of Richfield Heritage Preserve are celebrating Kirby Day on Saturday, August 20, from 12-4 p.m. Parking will be by the Summer Barn located at 4225 Oviatt Road. This afternoon of festivity will feature kids' crafts and games as well as fascinating STEM-related and fun marble activities. Grilled hot dogs, chips and beverages will be offered for a donation. Friends' keepsakes and marble memorabilia will be available for purchase. The event will be held rain or shine. While it is free and open to the public, attendees are asked to RSVP via Eventbrite through this link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/kirby-day-celebration-tickets-341982036477>. For more information, go to friendsofrhp.org.

“RHP ARCHITECTURE: BRING THE OUTDOORS IN” HIKE

Sunday, August 21
2 - 4:00 p.m.

Friends of Richfield Heritage Preserve (Friends) are sponsoring an “RHP Architecture: Bring the Outdoors In” hike on Sunday, August 21, from 2-4 p.m. It will be led by Corey Ringle, AIA registered architect with RDL Architects as well as the Friends President.

While the event is free and open to the public, attendees are asked to RSVP via Eventbrite through this link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/rhp-architecture-bring-the-outdoors-in-tickets-346837719957>.

Participants should park in the RHP's main lot and meet in front of The Lodge. They should dress for the weather, wear hiking boots, bring a water bottle, and use bug repellent. For additional information and event updates, please visit Friend's website at friendsofrhp.org.

For MORE events in August, go to:

<https://www.richfieldheritagepreserve.com/upcoming-events.html>