

Richfield HERITAGE PRESERVE

SEPTEMBER eNEWSLETTER

Photo courtesy of Igor Oliyarnik

A Message from Your Park Director David Green

As we prepare to say farewell to summer we know Fall's awe-inspiring colors will be a tremendous consolation. This year has been a series of firsts for me, as I have now experienced the winter, spring and summer seasons at Richfield Heritage Preserve. I anticipate that I will be utterly amazed by the park's transformation as the leaves change with the arrival of Fall. I've seen pictures but I know taking in the sights, sounds and smells will be a feast for all of us who love spending time at The Preserve.

This month we want to focus on updating you about many ongoing projects and initiatives throughout the park. Keeping YOU in The Loop is important and by providing these progress updates we hope everyone will see that time and patience will pay big dividends for everyone.

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KEEPING YOU In the Loop

We are close to entering our eighth year of operation as a public park. Over the years we have seen a growing number of visitors annually, and have grown, changed and improved during that time. Communicating with our vast and varied visitor base has its challenges. There are a number of ongoing projects that we want to provide you with updates and keep you in the loop!



Sandy Norris

KIRBY WHEEL RESTORATION & FUNDRAISING UPDATE

Contributions have been flowing like an electric current into the "One is Good, Two is Better" Matching Challenge - so much so that the

goal of \$40,000 for the water wheel was reached three weeks ahead of schedule. Donations have come from all over the United States; from California and Florida to Maine, as well as the northeast Ohio region. Many of the contributors are camp

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STUDYING BATS Of the Preserve



Kirby's Mill is Richfield Heritage Preserve's iconic, most recognizable structure. It was built in 1922 by the prolific inventor James B. Kirby to generate electricity for his home and workshop in Richfield. Kirby's design may have been partly nostalgic and based on the picturesque, water-powered mills used from ancient times up through the 19th century. However, he added his own innovative twists that made the mill work efficiently using only a small stream of... water. Kirby's Mill is an example of creative engineering and energy production and was added to

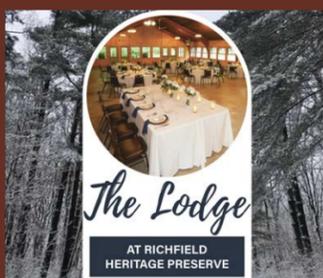
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GET YOUR
RHP
CAR DECAL!



KIRBY DAY
Sept. 19 from 1-5



REDUCED RATES
Through 2021



THANKS
for the
Collaboration



MONARCH
TAGGING
Sept. 11 from 9-12



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Group or Individual

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Richfield HERITAGE PRESERVE



A Message from Your Park Director David Green

JOIN RHP'S EMAIL LIST

As we prepare to say farewell to summer we know Fall's awe-inspiring colors will be a tremendous consolation. This year has been a series of firsts for me, as I have now experienced the winter, spring and summer seasons at Richfield Heritage Preserve. I anticipate that I will be utterly amazed by the park's transformation as the leaves change with the arrival of Fall. I've seen pictures but I know taking in the sights, sounds and smells will be a feast for all of us who love spending time at The Preserve.

This month we want to focus on updating you about many ongoing projects and initiatives throughout the park. Keeping YOU in The Loop is important and by providing these progress updates we hope everyone will see that time and patience will pay big dividends for everyone.

Please check out our stories in this issue to learn where we are on the second phase of the Lower Lake dam restoration, as well as the reconstruction of Kirby's Mill. These two projects, though separate, are part of a greater whole that once completed will achieve one of our greatest goals - saving the lake and feeding water to our historic Kirby's Mill and getting the mill wheel turning again.

In this issue, we will also keep you in "the loop" on the progress we are making with the National Park Service grant focusing on evaluating our park's many trails. We will also update you on several initiatives, studies and programs that have taken place throughout the park to ensure that our special ecosystem is healthy and thriving.

There are so many moving parts and facets to running a park. It's incredible the number of people working behind the scenes to keep RHP moving forward.

I want to acknowledge our tremendous RHP Volunteer base, our park partners as well as others throughout the community and county for getting involved, supporting our plans and efforts, and always showing up in a BIG way! It's truly amazing how the love for this 336 acre property can bring so many people together for a common goal to maintain and safeguard Richfield Heritage Preserve for many years to come.

Thank you!

David Green



RICHFIELD
Joint Recreation District

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In the Loop

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KIRBY WHEEL RESTORATION & FUND-RAISING UPDATE

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Kirby's uniquely designed central axle is now in Kentucky at the workshop of master millwright Ben Hassett. New ball bearings will be inserted into the races. The axle will be re-bored to smooth out imperfections. Wheel rims, spokes, and buckets are being crafted using the old wheel parts as templates. The work is expected to take 5-7 weeks.

The top priority for the mill now is to repair cracks in the concrete wheel basin and support posts. If it can be done now while the wheel is away, the work can be done much more economically.

The Friends are continuing to reach out to supporters for this work as well as looking ahead to the restoration of the swinging bridge, structural elements on the mill house and deck, improved access, and programming.

Donations can be made by sending a check to: Friends of Crowell Hilaka /100 Wandle Ave. / Bedford, OH 44146. Or online [HERE](#).

DAM PHASE II

After a short delay, rehabilitation of the two dams found at the preserve is scheduled to begin this month. Work will be focusing on the Lower Lake's concrete spillway along with the foundation of the mill house, and the upper lake dam concrete spillway. Although it may not be evident, work has been taking place behind the scenes. A special concrete mix was blended and set for a 30 day and 60 day strength tests. Along the curing process, the mix had to be tested before it could be applied under the existing spillway. The work is time consuming and tedious but necessary to ensure its success. In addition, a new slide gate to open and close the lower lake valve, is being custom fabricated out of state. As with so many other supply chain and raw material challenges, this important piece is still waiting to be completed.

Once the upper lake dam work has been completed, work will then commence at the lower lake. By this time, the cement mix will have been approved and the slide gate will be on site. Work to be conducted on the lower lake, include:

- Mass concrete fill of the demolished spillway
- Surficial concrete repairs along the spillway and mill house; and
- Cast in place buttress walls at the mill house.

Work will tentatively begin at the Upper Lake dam, beginning in September and will include:

- Mass concrete placement under the existing spillway
- Drilling and grouting along the spillway apron
- Surficial concrete repairs to the spillway, and
- Erosion control, dewatering, and other appurtenant items are also required for the completion of the project.

NPS GRANT UPDATE

This past Spring, Richfield Heritage Preserve was awarded an extension of being a part of the National Park Service's - Rivers, Trails, - Conservation, Assistance Program for FY21 which runs through April 2022. This grant

was originally applied for and accepted to be completed in 2020, however, due to Covid-19, was postponed. The goal of this grant is to receive technical assistance from the NPS on RHP community engagement, programming and trail improvement. Trails will be the first item to be assessed followed by programming. A small team of about 12 professionals have been assembled to discuss trail topics such as, identifying the existing trail system, current or new user groups, issues, maintenance, signage, and mapping. Later in the 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.

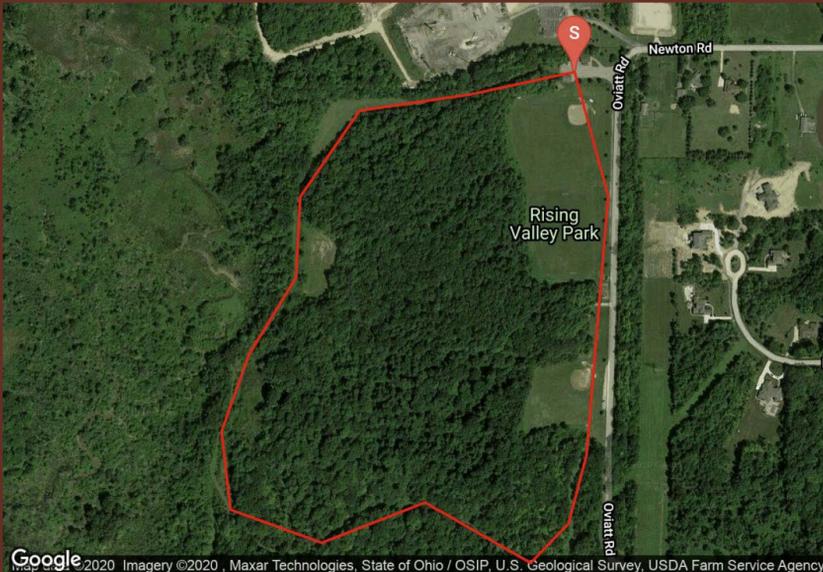


RISING VALLEY

In May of this year, Richfield Township proposed a possible transfer of Rising Valley Park to the Richfield Joint Recreation District. The annual cost to maintain the property is about \$20,000 and there was discussion that the Township could pay RJRD about \$10,000 annually for five years if the board agreed to assume ownership. The board chose to pass on this offer due to long-term funding

and lack of staff. Currently RJRD, employs a full-time Park Director and a seasonal Park Maintenance Technician to maintain and operate the Richfield Heritage Preserve, a 336 acre parcel. At this time, adding Rising Valley, along with maintaining its ballfields, the mowing and patrol, would have provided challenges.

Rising Valley was part of more than 225 acres the U.S. government gave to Hinckley and Richfield townships in 1977 to use for parks and recreation. The property had been used as a tank proving ground during World War II. In 2005, the two communities terminated their cooperative agreement, and Hinckley gave its 183 acres to the Cleveland Metroparks, which also owns Hinckley Reservation. Richfield Township retained ownership of about 45 acres that remain Rising Valley Park.



Conversations are now taking place between Richfield Township and Cleveland MetroParks to assume ownership of Rising Valley.

OVIATT HOUSE INC.

(OHI) Oviatt House Incorporated (OHI) entered into an agreement with Richfield Joint Recreation District (RJRD) on August 2, 2022, to restore and preserve the historic Oviatt House located at Richfield Heritage Preserve. Built in 1836 and owned by Mason Oviatt and his wife Fanny, the house is one of the oldest homes in Richfield, and has ties to the Underground Railroad and American abolitionist John Brown.



Phase I includes removing the exterior chimney and restoring it to the center of the house. Oviatt House is located on property at Richfield Heritage Preserve at 3771 Oviatt

In September, Phase I of the planned restoration begins and is estimated to take 12 to 24 months to complete. In addition to securing necessary

permits and electrical service, Phase I includes installing a new roof, preserving the original siding along with restoring the original chimney and window placement. As restoration begins, time will tell if the rumored hiding place or "closet" in the basement really exists.

The Oviatt family was very important in the early development of Richfield. Their farm and thriving sheep business enticed other businesses, including blacksmiths, and harness and tannery shops. Many of the homes and barns erected in the 1840s were built using lumber milled at the Oviatt sawmill.

Oviatt House was recently added to the National Park Service's National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom program thanks to the instrumental work of the Richfield Historical Society. Other listings in this program "honor, preserve, and promote the history of resistance to enslavement through escape and flight."

OHI was incorporated in March 2021 and is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Donations are being accepted to aid the restoration efforts at www.oviatthouse1836.com. One hundred percent of the money collected goes towards OHI's efforts to preserve and restore this historic landmark.

BATS @ THE PARK Bat Survey with Summit MetroParks

This summer, Richfield Heritage Preserve Park Director David Green approached local bat biologist Jason Whittle about conducting a bat acoustic study at RHP. Whittle, a resident of Richfield and Summit Metroparks employee, was eager for the opportunity.

On July 9th, Whittle deployed two acoustic detectors, one near Cook's Cabin and the other near the Upper Lake's Boat House. A week later, he relocated one detector upstream of the Upper Lake near the beaver dam and a second near where the old Girl Scout swimming pool was once located. After analyzing the data, he confirmed the active presence of the following bat species: hoary bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*), eastern red bat (*Lasiurus borealis*), big brown bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*), and silver-haired bat (*Lasiurus noctivagans*). There were a few other interesting species detected, however, net misting is the only way to confirm their presence.

Naturally, confirming these species led Whittle to enlist the help of two of his colleagues, Mike Johnson and Marlo Perdicas, who along with Whittle have been studying bats in and around Ohio for over 20 years. Their study methods include acoustic monitoring, mist net and harp trap capture, radio-telemetry, caving and hibernacula studies, as well as rappelling and climbing for winter assessments.

With the appropriate approvals, the trio offered a program called "BATS of The Preserve" on August 27th. They would allow all who attended a view into how they conduct their research. Registration filled up, confirming the undeniable interest to learn more about bats.

The evening of the event attracted approximately 12 children and 18 adults in addition to the bat biologists and park director David Green. Heavy rain earlier in the day and a

high heat index created an uncomfortably hot and humid evening. This combination of weather conditions saturated the air, creating a heavy and visible mist. Mist proves to be less than an ideal condition for foraging bats, as the fog interferes with their echolocation.



Netting was set up near The LODGE, and the biologists were able to catch one healthy, adult big brown bat before the fog rolled in. The bat was determined to be a generally healthy, non-reproductive

adult male and weighed approximately 16 grams .

According to Whittle, "Monitoring and conserving bat species is very important. I am especially happy for the chance to give RHP patrons the opportunity to see bats up close... especially the kids, because kids teach their parents as much as the other way around."



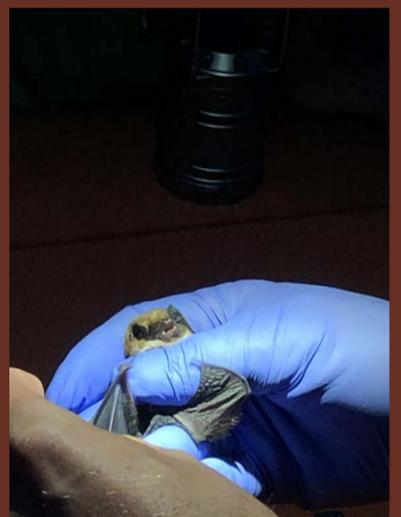
Despite only banding one bat, the group was enthused by their up close view of the bat

they observed. They also had fun catching their own bugs around The LODGE and attracting moths with their flashlights glowing through a sheet hung nearby.



"Knowing what bat species are present at the preserve is useful information to have when making decisions with land management," says RHP Park Director David Green. "We are grateful to have volunteers that are willing to share their professional experiences to make the preserve a better place."

Many thanks to the group of bat biologists who are interested in helping us determine the size and health of the bat population at Richfield Heritage Preserve. We look forward to welcoming them back next summer to capture a larger suite of species.



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HERITAGE
P R E S E R V E

MONARCH TAGGING AT RHP

September 11

10am-noon

This fall millions of monarch butterflies will embark on a spectacular journey from the United States and Canada to their overwintering sites in southern Mexico. To understand which butterflies have the best likelihood of arriving safely in Mexico, scientists and citizens tag individual butterflies from around North America and monitor their arrival at their Mexican overwintering sites.

Join Dr. Andrew Merwin (Baldwin Wallace University) and Dr. Meredith Steck (Case

Western Reserve University) at Richfield Heritage Preserve on Saturday, September 11th from 10 AM to noon to help tag one or more of these courageous creatures on their way to warmer climates!

We will set up a tagging station and provide nets, tags, and data sheets at The LODGE for anyone interested in becoming a citizen scientist! Arrive at 10am to walk down from the parking lot with the group or drop in any time during the two-hour session.



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PRESERVE

KIRBY DAY

Sunday, September 19

1pm-5pm

Join the Friends of Crowell Hilaka (FoCH), in partnership with the Richfield & The American Toy Marble Museum, in celebrating Kirby Day and 'Kirby's Marble-ous Mill' on Sunday, September 19, 2021, 1-5 p.m., at Richfield Heritage Preserve. This afternoon of FREE intergenerational fun starts at The LODGE and will include "no-touch" treasure hunts to earn

free marbles, a marble run in the park's Tupelo Grove and Fairy Garden, and an opportunity to learn the game of marbles from Michael Cohill of the American Toy Marble Museum. FoCH keepsakes and marble memorabilia will be available for purchase to benefit the restoration of Kirby's Mill. The event will be held rain or shine.



RICHFIELD
Joint Recreation District

THANK YOU

We want to extend a very heartfelt THANK YOU to the following businesses and groups who have led park organized programs, and assisted and participated in events during the summer months at Richfield Heritage Preserve.

THE LODGE OPEN HOUSE

- 🌿 A Taste of Excellence Catering
- 🌿 Augie's Catering
- 🌿 Company Car & Limousine
- 🌿 DJ Smoov
- 🌿 Floral-Countryside
- 🌿 Human Artist Photography
- 🌿 KB Events and Designs
- 🌿 Lasting Impression Event Rental
- 🌿 Olesia's Taverne of Richfield Catering
- 🌿 Video Memories

STORY HOUR

- 🌿 The Richfield Library
- 🌿 Kona Ice
- 🌿 Henry's Creamery

PROGRAMS at RHP

- 🌿 One Tree Love
- 🌿 Crave Nature Cleveland
- 🌿 Midwest Native Skills
- 🌿 Fast Girls Running
- 🌿 Richfield Historical Society
- 🌿 Geocaching 101

RHP: A CENTURY in THE MAKING

- 🌿 Richfield Library
- 🌿 Kona Ice
- 🌿 Baldwin Wallace University (BWU)
- 🌿 Case Western Reserve University
- 🌿 Medina County Park District
- 🌿 Friends of Crowell Hilaka for Richfield Heritage Preserve (FoCH)
- 🌿 Oviatt House Inc.

HIKES

- 🌿 Ephemeral Hike - BWU
- 🌿 Hydrology Hike - BWU
- 🌿 Bug Discovery Walks (4) - BWU
- 🌿 Full Moon Hike - Medina County Parks
- 🌿 Monthly Hikes with David Green
- 🌿 Prehistory Hike - FoCH
- 🌿 Spring Bird Hike - FoCH
- 🌿 Wildflower Hike - FoCH
- 🌿 History Hike - FoCH
- 🌿 History Hike: Architecture of RHP - FoCH
- 🌿 Virtual Wildflower Hike - FoCH

BAT ACOUSTIC STUDIES & OBSERVATION PROGRAM

- 🌿 Summit MetroParks

