

2024 Review for Wayne County Park District/Wayne County Parks

Per: ORC: 1545.08 Yearly Report

NARRATIVE: Most of the year's meetings were spent on planning and gearing up for an operational levy campaign. Unfortunately, the levy failed at the November ballot. The Board will now have to decide the future course of action to secure operating monies. A new logo was created that better identified the future of the Park District.

The good news this year was the finalizing of the design and working out the details of the two grants for the wetland restoration and fishing pond. The project incurred numerous permitting issues. The two grants, Ohio Public Works and Capital Improvements, along with the county's help with the required match monies, resulted in the project being secured financially. The project will start in January 2025. The project addresses the restoration of a wetland area/stream and the creation of a fishing pond that will give people of all physical abilities an opportunity to observe aquatic nature and recreational fishing. It will include the catch-and-release fishing pond, named Broda's Pond, a boardwalk, and trail around the pond.

The Barnes Preserve was busy all summer and fall as observed from parking lots being full. We have become a destination for dog walking! Reservations for the pavilion were down from last year with the majority of the reservations being for graduation parties and family reunions. However, we had several weddings, two memorials, a *Blessing of the Animals* ceremony, a Solar Eclipse Watch, craft show, and the annual ASPO Trick or Treat event. Several middle schools used the Barnes Preserve for their outdoor education classes again hosted by Wayne County Soil and Water and other OCVN volunteers and the Greater Mohican Audubon Society had several bird walks.

A local company, Rayco, used their state of the art equipment to clear a portion of the Meadow that was overgrown with invasive species. The goal is to keep the Meadow separate from the woods to provide habitat for pollinators and species of birds.

Six more benches were donated this year and were placed around the trails. Some of them will be moved to the new pond area when it is completed.

NOTEWORTHY:

- Craig Sanders from Wooster Kiwanis was honored as Volunteer of the Year for his work in organizing the Club's members in building the sections of boardwalk throughout the east woods.
- 20 volunteers helped with the Wayne County Fair booth. Pictures, brochures, stickers were distributed to bring awareness of Wayne County Parks and the upcoming levy.
- The Friends of Wayne County Parks created a membership form for future members.
- The Board approved the use of Google Workspace for archiving communications and efficiency and ease of sharing documents, etc.
- Park District and Friends group participated in parade for the 100th anniversary of the Wayne County Fair and the Orrville July 4th parade to bring more awareness of the Parks.

INFO and STATISTICS

Total Revenue: \$ 9,398.52

Total Expenses: \$ 6,158.58

State Audit done- No discrepancies

Pavilion Reservations: 18 Donations to Friends group - \$ 541.00

Average number of active volunteers: 25

Number of hours of volunteer labor documented: 800+ hours

PARKS:

Barnes Preserve: 76 acres at Barnes Preserve

Includes: .9 miles of ADA paved trails through woods and meadow
 1 mile of dirt/mulched/boardwalk trails
 Large pavilion with picnic tables and grill
 Electric available at pavilion
 Seasonal port-a-john
 2 parking lots (one paved and one gravel)
 23 park benches throughout the park

Parmenter Nature Preserve: 82 acres at Parmenter Preserve (not developed)