



FRIENDS OF WOOSTER MEMORIAL PARK

P.O. Box 1776, Wooster, OH 44691
www.friendsofwooster.com

DECEMBER 2016 SPECIAL YEAR-END & MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER

NEW CLEAN OHIO IMPROVEMENTS GRANT, LOTS OF PARK PROJECTS & MORE!

[Oops! We got a bit behind with the fall newsletter, so here's a special year-in-review edition.]



Enthusiastic first-year College of Wooster students clear water bars on the Spangler Trail hill during the COW Community Service Day. (Picture by Greg Wiles)

Wooster Memorial Park (WMP) was a **happening place** this year for hiking, running, picnicing, public walks and other nature fun. **Volunteers** contributed more than 730 work hours to improve the park. And FWMP was just awarded a **Clean Ohio improvements grant** for additional funds to install ADA trails and restore habitats on the Kenwood Acres! Because of all the cool stuff that happened in 2016, the newsletter is longer than usual. Please read on for more details.

Thank you for supporting FWMP and WMP. To help you to enjoy the park's winter wonders, we are offering 3 upcoming events. Happy 2017!

WINTER 2017 EVENTS IN WMP – PLEASE JOIN US

We are offering three hikes to help you enjoy the park in winter. All hikes begin at the Silver Road parking area and are open to everyone.

“LICHENS IN WINTER” HIKE, SUNDAY, JANUARY 15, 1:00PM – Join us as we learn about lichens, and enjoy a winter walk through the park. This hike will be led by Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist and FWMP member, John Abt.



“WINTER TREE ID” HIKE, SUNDAY, JANUARY 29, 1:00PM – Learn how to identify trees in the winter, while enjoying the winter wonders of the park. Our guide will be COW Geology's tree guru, Nick Wiesenberg. (Picture of the distinctive bark of yellow birch.)

WINTER HIKE, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1:00PM – Enjoy a winter romp in the park, led by FWMP Board member and park enthusiast, Dan Buehler. Even in the dormant season, you'll be amazed at what you'll find! (Fern picture by Jeanne Durkalski.)



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Cathy Herms, 330-465-2725 ♦ Vice President: Dan Buehler, 330-465-7588
Secretary: Edith Swank, 330-263-6766 ♦ Treasurer: John Parker, 330-345-7511
Directors-at-Large: Chuck Armbruster, 330-262-0188; Shelley Schrier, 330-262-9307; Greg Wiles, 330-464-1067

**** PLEASE RENEW YOUR FWMP MEMBERSHIP FOR 2017 ****

Your continued membership is essential to the success of FWMP and the park. Whether you are an active member or quiet supporter, your renewal helps us care for WMP and shows that you value this wonderful natural area. Please read on to learn how FWMP worked in 2016 to benefit the park. *For convenience, a renewal form is included, or go to www.friendsofwmp.com.*

NEW CLEAN OHIO GRANT FOR KENWOOD ACRES’ ADA TRAIL & HABITAT RESTORATION!

The timing couldn’t have been more perfect!

In August, FWMP found out that the Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation Program had added a new funding option – those receiving previous Clean Ohio funds to purchase property could apply for additional funds for recreational and habitat improvements on that property.

Less than a week before, it had become clear that some elements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) trail system that FWMP wanted to install on Kenwood Acres were going to cost more than budgeted in FWMP’s ODNR Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant awarded in the spring. Just as the Board began discussing which design elements would have to wait until a future funding phase... the new Clean Ohio opportunity came to light.



FWMP submitted a \$156,000 Clean Ohio proposal on November 15, and found out on December 15 that the grant was approved. This is the fourth Clean Ohio grant FWMP has facilitated for the park. These additional funds now allow for installation of a paved driveway in addition to a paved parking lot, a more ADA-friendly map kiosk, an additional ADA boardwalk and overlook providing dramatic ravine views, and more benches and interpretive signage along the ADA

trail. You may have seen the November 18th article in the Daily Record, “Group seeks funding for ADA-accessible trail at Wooster Memorial Park”, for FWMP’s request for a resolution of support from the Wayne County Commissioners for the grant.

In addition, some of the new funds will be used to continue habitat restoration on the 49-acre Kenwood, including invasive plant control and planting of more trees to enhance forest establishment in the former cropland. How awesome this is!

AT THE PARK

‘Cookie’ of Old Oak on Display at Silver Road Kiosk – When the City had to fell a huge red oak along the Spangler Trail in 2015, the College of Wooster (COW) Geology Department had a great idea: take a slice of the trunk back to the lab for tree ring analysis. The majestic oak was killed in 2002 by the invasive gypsy moth and was starting to break apart, posing a risk to hikers. COW Geology Professor Greg Wiles and Nick Wiesenbergs discovered from the slice that the tree was 185 years old! The oak ‘cookie’ and a poster about what its growth rings tell us are on display in the Silver Road kiosk.



Concrete Improvements to Pavilion & Kiosks – The City used some newly-discovered funds in a Wayne County Community Foundation account to make concrete improvements, literally, for the Silver Road pavilion and both of the park’s kiosks. The pavilion’s concrete base was cracking from soil erosion.



The City fixed the erosion issue and replaced the entire base. And while they were at it, they decided to pour concrete bases for the Silver Road and Education Area kiosks. In addition, the Silver Road

pavilion got a much-needed repainting in the summer by FWMP volunteers and first-year students from the COW Community Service Workday. Thank you to the City and volunteers for these ‘concrete’ improvements.

Spangler Trail Bridge Gets a Major Facelift – The bridge on the Spangler Trail formerly known as the ‘Bouncy Bridge’ got a critical facelift in September. The bridge spans a ravine stream that flows north into Rathburn Run. Erosion along the bank was washing away the soil that held the bridge’s west footers in place, making the bridge unstable and creating a gap between the bank and bridge.

Bob Haugh, an active FWMP volunteer, had a plan: jack the bridge up, shift it west several feet so the footers could be reinstalled into a more solid part of the bank, and then build an additional section of bridge on the east side. Sounds simple, right? Well, for Bob, his FWMP volunteers (John Abt, Paul Martin, John Parker, and Shelley Schrier) and the City’s Andy Pea and Rodney Hartzler, the project went just as planned and was completed in only 3 days. FWMP volunteers contributed 62 hours of labor, and City Staff contributed 29 hours. Awesome job to all!



Education Area & Old Field Mowing, Clean-up – Starting in 2015, the City established a 3-year rotational mowing schedule for the Education Area Prairie and Old Field to keep invasive woody plants from taking over. The Education Area is divided into 2 mowing sections, and the Old Field into 3, and each section is mowed once every 3 years. In addition, the decaying milk shed in the Old Field had to be removed this year for safety reasons, erasing one more piece of evidence of the Old Field’s agricultural past.

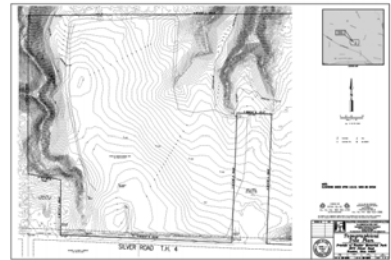
New Trees in the Education Area – After a 12-foot tall maple sapling that was planted during the Education Area repaving project was vandalized this summer, the FWMP Board and City felt that the tree should be replaced. In the process, several more spots were identified that could use a tree. On December 8, Davey Tree Nursery planted ten 6-foot tall trees around the Education Area driveway and parking lot, including 3 sweet gums, 3 red maples, 2 sugar maples, 1 red oak and 1 yellow buckeye. These trees should provide fantastic fall color and shade over time. Thank you to the City for funding the trees and Board member Dan Buehler for his work.



KENWOOD ACRES IMPROVEMENTS

Additional Funds from Clean Ohio for ADA Trail & Habitat Restoration– As mentioned on page 2, FWMP was incredibly fortunate to raise another \$156,000 for improvements on Kenwood Acres. The Clean Ohio funds will be used in combination with the ODNR RTP funds for installation of the ADA-accessible trail. There are also funds to continue site restoration on the Kenwood, including invasive plant removal and more tree planting.

Design Phase for ADA Park Entrance & Trails Underway – This summer, FWMP contracted with AECOM, an environmental engineering design firm in Cleveland, to design the ADA park entrance and trail on Kenwood Acres. The master plan will include suggested locations of potential future structures such as restrooms and a pavilion. A topographic survey (right) of the project site was done in August by Wooster’s Shaffer, Johnston, Lichtenwalter & Associates. AECOM used this survey to start their process. As of late November, the design was 50% done, and should be completed by March 2017. If all goes well, construction will start in May 2017.



Kenwood Trees & Prairie – The trees and prairie planted in spring 2015 are establishing very nicely. Average tree survival across the 18-acre planting is ~50%, which is quite good. Plus, many oaks and maples are establishing from seed, thanks to the previous seed collection and planting efforts of FWMP volunteers Harry Hoitink and Chris Hawke.

In April, 3 native spicebush shrubs and 12 putatively blight-resistant American chestnut seedlings were planted on the Kenwood, thanks to FWMP members John Abt, Jeanne Durkalski, Barb Moore, and Tim and Tony Mendiola.



Those visiting the park in July were welcomed by a solid mass of black-eyed Susan blooms across the entire 7-acre prairie. Interspersed were blooms of wild bergamot, tall coreopsis, lemon beebalm, and gaillardia. The mass of yellow even caught the attention of the Wooster Weekly, who published an article, “Black-eyed Susans ablaze at Kenwood Acres”, on July 18.

Invasive Plant Control – As with the rest of the park, one of the biggest challenges on the Kenwood is controlling invasive plants. From April to August, 13 FWMP volunteers spent 73 hours over 20 days pulling, hoeing, weed-whacking and/or spraying several invasive plant species in different areas of the Kenwood, including the perennial Canada thistle and annual cressleaf groundsel in the old corn field, and the vining Asian bittersweet, biennial garlic mustard and woody multiflora rose along forest edges and tree lines. Thank you!

Protecting Kenwood’s Tree Seedlings – The tree seedlings planted in 2015 have now had two summers to grow, and many are doing very well. FWMP members have invested considerable hours and dollars to establish these trees, and we are trying various avenues to ensure their success. We’ve placed tube-shaped tree protectors around some trees to prevent feeding damage by deer and other small mammals. Another method employed by park districts to reduce deer damage is a limited and restricted hunt. We have decided to pursue this and have obtained a Deer Damage Control Permit from the ODNR Division of Wildlife for December 19, 2016 to April 1, 2017. This will be a bow-only hunt (no guns), with a limit of three deer taken. When a hunt is in process, signs will be posted at the Kenwood grass parking area and the three trail entrances into the Kenwood from the main part of the park (Hartman and Kenwood Trails). We want to emphasize that this hunt is solely for the purpose of controlling damage to the trees.

Cleanup of Kenwood's Future Picnic Area – FWMP Board member, John Parker, continued his efforts in July to grade and level the small area of trees and boulders intended for a future picnic area at Kenwood's front entrance. Unfortunately, the ash trees in that area were dying from emerald ash borer, so FWMP member Gerald Stair and his three grandsons removed the ash in August before they could become a hazard.



Zion Lutheran Church Workday to Install Tree Guards – On May 14, 10 members of the Zion Lutheran Church and 4 FWMP volunteers installed over 100 tree guards on the 2015-planted tree seedlings. The group focused on the southern half of the old hay field, and volunteered a total of 42 hours during the chilly, wet Saturday morning workday. The black plastic mesh guards and bamboo poles were donated by the City and had been previously used at Oak Hill Park. The guards help to protect the young trees from deer rubbing and animal browse.

Acorn Planting on Kenwood's Old Hay Field – Harry Hoitink, FWMP's own 'Johnny Appleseed', continued his tree seed planting efforts on Kenwood Acres. Harry collected acorns from all over WMP in late September, separated out the wormy ones via water flotation, and then refrigerated the good acorns until planting time. On November 3, Harry broadcast over 1,000 acorns across the northern 3 acres of Kenwood's old hay field. That field was planted with bare root tree seedlings in spring 2015, but seedling survival in that part of the field is low. Harry's planting of acorns is a huge help in our reforestation efforts on the Kenwood.

REVAMPED FWMP WEBSITE & FUTURE MOVE TO WEPAY

FWMP member Jen Hugon (Hugon Art and Design) did a major revamp of the FWMP website this summer. The URL is still www.friendsofwmp.com, but now the site is on the WIX platform, which makes the website much easier to update by those of us who are not web experts.



The Board plans to switch from PayPal to an alternative online payment service, WePay, in the very near future. Unfortunately, the PayPal option to join or renew online is not working out like we had hoped. In the meantime, payments will have to be made the old-fashioned way via USPS. Stay tuned.

ANNUAL COW WORKDAY A SUCCESS

During COW's annual Community Service Workday on August 27, 17 FWMP volunteers and 64 COW first years donated a total of over 160 hours toward projects in WMP and on the Kenwood. WMP projects included repainting the pavilion and park sign at the Silver Road main entrance, mulching the trails around the Education Area, starting repairs for the steps to the Sassafras Trail bridge, and carrying lots of heavy materials and supplies down into the park in preparation for repair of the 'Bouncy Bridge'. On the Kenwood, volunteers spent 2 hours installing over 150 plastic mesh tree guards on the tree seedlings planted in the old cornfield.

MORE TRAIL PROJECTS IN THE PARK

FWMP's Trail Volunteers made a lot happen in the park this season. In addition to those discussed above, other projects included:

- Some projects from the COW workday had to be completed: volunteers spent another 17 hours repainting the Silver Road pavilion and another 40 hours mulching trails

- Clearing of tree falls on trails (22 hours), and spring and fall cleanup of the Silver Road pavilion and prairie gardens around the restrooms (3 hours)
- Rebuilding of the steps to the Sassafras Trail Bridge (28 hours)
- Trail stabilization and leveling (8 hours)
- Project planning (9 hours)
- Trailside vegetation management (16.5 hours)

Thank you to volunteers John Abt, Chuck Armbruster, Roger Baker, Tim Breiner, Dan Buehler, Jeanne Durkalski, Jeanne Fedyk, Mary Fulton, Bob Haugh, Cathy Herms, Harry Hoitink, Tyler Kraker, Paul Martin, Tim, Tony and Christy Mendiola, Barb Moore, John Parker, Shelley Schrier, Duane Steiner and Edith Swank

There will be plenty of new and important projects for 2017, and we always need volunteers. If you'd like to help, please contact Shelley Schrier (330-262-9307; ssschrier@sssnet.com). **REMINDER:** WMP is under a conservation easement, which states that projects can only be done with the consent of the Board, City and Killbuck Watershed Land Trust. If there are trail projects that you think need to be considered, please contact Shelley.

GREAT 2016 PUBLIC EVENTS

The Education and Public Awareness Committee (John Abt, Chair) planned another successful round of public programs from May to October. Event topics included Spring Flowers, Cicadas, Fungi & Trees, Trail Sampler, Kenwood Acres, Geology, and Salamanders. In appreciation of our FWMP members, the Committee hosted a Member Picnic on August 12. We had a great turnout and great food, but unfortunately it rained before we could do the



COW students learn about tree rings (G. Wiles).



Cedar apple rust fungus on juniper (J. Chatfield).

campfire and S'mores. So we had a follow-up event on October 14 to have our campfire and eat up all the S'mores!

Our April 13th Annual Meeting was a big hit. Thirty five attendees enjoyed great snacks, a new park photoshow, lots of park updates, and guest speaker Jim Chatfield. Jim, an Associate Professor of Plant Pathology and OSU Extension Specialist at the OARDC, gave an intriguing talk on the bizarre world of fungi.

'INVASIVE PLANT PATROL' TACKLES PESKY PLANTS



Jenni Adams, Amy Raudenbush, John Abt, Nancy Burkholder and Jeanne Durkalski (L-R) pull garlic mustard in the spring.

FWMP's Invasive Plant Patrol volunteers made great progress in controlling the various species of invasive plants that threaten WMP's native wildflowers and habitats. In April and May, 15 volunteers spent a collective 60 hours over 8 workdays pulling garlic mustard, one of the park's most nefarious invasives.

From April through November, volunteers John Abt, Jeanne Durkalski and Gary Bickel spent a collective 25 hours over 9 workdays grubbing out invasive shrubs. If you would like to be an Invasive Plant Patrol volunteer, please contact Cathy Herms (330-465-2725; herms.3@osu.edu).

TRAIL RUNNING EVENTS IN THE PARK

Brian Polen of Vertical Runner and his Wooster Running Club organized another full season of trail running events, with \$2,000 in proceeds going to benefit the park. The runners also help the park by becoming FWMP members and volunteering with trail projects.

The 5-week Summer Trail Series (started by Jason Burgett in 2012) from June 7 to July 5 brought in \$1000 for the park. The first week alone drew 60 participants. The 6-week Kids Running Camp (started in 2013) involved 135 children and 20 volunteer coaches. All the kids participated in the Wooster High School 5K fundraiser, the 5K Heart & Sole Race, and the OARDC Night Run. The Trail Monster Mini Series (started in 2014) finale event on August 27 had 72 participants for the 5K, 15K and children's 1-mile events. On September 10, the Trample ALS event (started in 2013) hosted 100 runners in a tethered race, raising over \$5,000 for the Northeast Ohio ALS Chapter. In addition, the Running Club held a free Thursday night trail run every week, which will continue throughout the winter.

All of these running events will be repeated in 2017. Plus, the Running Club is organizing a February or March event in the Education Area that will include 50K, 25K and 12.5K loops, a port-a-potty and campfire. For more information, please contact Brian Polen (www.verticalrunner.com).



Kids show how fun running can be! (Chad Thomas)



"D"-shaped exit holes made by EAB adults as they exit the ash tree.

SURVEYS ON-GOING FOR HAZARD ASH TREES KILLED BY EXOTIC BEETLE

The ash trees in the park are quickly dying due to infestation by the exotic wood-boring beetle, emerald ash borer (EAB). FWMP and COW volunteers surveyed about half of the trails for hazard ash trees over 7 workdays (51.5 hours) this summer and fall. Unfortunately, almost all the surveyed ash are dead, which means they will pose a hazard to hikers in the near future. The plan is to fell these ash trees over the next few years before they fall on their own. Volunteers are needed next summer to complete the surveys. No previous experience is necessary. If you are interested, please contact Cathy Herms (330-465-2725; herms.3@osu.edu).

WOOSTER SALAMANDER SQUAD'!

At the Annual Meeting in April, Rick Lehtinen, Biology Professor at COW, recruited an enthusiastic group of citizen scientists to assist him with field studies on salamanders at WMP. The Salamander Squad sampled the park plots twice this year. If you'd like to participate, contact Rick (rllehtinen@wooster.edu).



ROTARY TALK ON THE PARK & FWMP

On February 24, FWMP President Cathy Herms spoke to the Rotary Club of Wooster about the park and FWMP. She started with a brief park history, and then focused on the collaborative work that FWMP and the City have done since FWMP was founded in 1997. Cathy ended with details on the ADA trail planned for Kenwood Acres. Wooster Mayor Bob Breneman stood up afterwards, and congratulated and thanked FWMP for their amazing efforts.

SHOPPING ON AMAZONSMILE CAN HELP PARK

Do you shop on Amazon? If so, you can support FWMP by using AmazonSmile instead. You get the same products and pricing, but every purchase supports the park. Go to smile.amazon.com and select FWMP as your charity. It costs you nothing and is easy to do!



THANK YOU TO ALL OUR PARK SUPPORTERS – Many people have supported the park and/or FWMP this year through generous contributions of time, sweat, resources or other means. We are very grateful. For any helpers inadvertently omitted from this list, our apologies and thanks.

FWMP

John Abt
 Jenny Adams
 Chuck Armbruster
 Roger Baker
 Gary Bickel
 Tim Breiner
 Dan Buehler
 Nancy Burkholder
 Roger Downer
 Jeanne Durkalski
 Jeanne Fedyk
 Mary Fulton
 Marty Griffith
 Bob Haugh
 Cathy Herms
 Harry Hoitink
 Tyler Kraker
 Lyn Loveless
 Paul Martin
 Tim Mendiola
 Tony Mendiola
 Christy Mendiola
 Barb Moore

FWMP, cont'd

Jay Mosley
 John Parker
 Dawn Parker
 Ryan Pritt
 Ethan Pritt
 Darin Pritt
 Amy Raudenbush
 Shelley Schrier
 Gerald Stair
 Joel Stair
 Mark Stair
 Shea Stair
 Duane Steiner
 Bill Styer
 Edith Swank
 Sharon Wagner-Smith
 Nick Wiesenberg
 Greg Wiles
 Betty Wilkin

College of Wooster

64 COW First-Years
 6 COW Geology students

City of Wooster

Curt Denning
 Andrew Guidetti
 Rodney Hartzler
 Andy Pea

Zion Lutheran Church

Daniel Drager
 Leslie Drager
 Lucas Drager
 Maxwell Drager
 Martha Jenkins
 Kay McFadden
 Tom McFadden
 David Picking
 Jane Picking
 Judi Stock

OARDC

Louceline Fleuridor
 Andrea Leiva
 Alex Rinearson



PSST! IF THIS LINE IS HIGHLIGHTED, IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR FWMP MEMBERSHIP FOR 2017

PLEASE RENEW – Your membership is critical to FWMP. Renewal forms will be available at the Annual Meeting, and can also be found on our website (www.friendsofwmp.com).