

FRIENDS OF WOOSTER MEMORIAL PARK

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

DECEMBER 2015 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NEWSLETTER

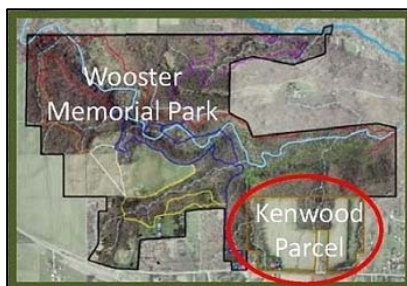
GRANT FOR ADA TRAILS & PARK ENTRANCE ON KENWOOD ACRES IS FUNDED

The Friends of Wooster Memorial Park (FWMP) Board is excited to announce the funding of FWMP's Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant for Kenwood Acres! The project will create an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant park entrance and a 1.1-mile ADA interpretive nature trail on Kenwood Acres in the southeast corner of Wooster Memorial Park (WMP). The project also involves the development of a professional master site plan for Kenwood Acres. The new ADA entrance will be located on Silver Road a short distance east of WMP's main entrance, and serve as an alternate parking area and trailhead for WMP. The ADA trail will loop through Kenwood Acres' newly planted forest and prairie, and afford dramatic views of two wooded ravines.



Proposed ADA trail (black dotted) & parking area on Kenwood Acres.

FEDERAL & LOCAL FUNDING – Of the \$203,000 needed for the project, \$150,000 will come from the RTP, which is funded through the Federal Highway Administration and administered by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Office of Real Estate. The other \$53,000 represents FWMP's required match and will come from a variety of local sources. David Noble of the Donald & Alice Noble Foundation generously committed \$20,000 to the project. The Noble Foundation has been a consistent supporter of WMP improvements over the years. Another \$4,500 will come from the Wayne County Community Foundation, \$5,000 from the Laura B. Frick Charitable Trust, and \$2,000 from the Wooster Runners. The remaining match will take the form of in-kind donations from the City of Wooster, Boy Scouts of America and other organizations and volunteers.



PROJECT TIMEFRAME – The Board hopes to sign the grant contract in late winter or early spring 2016, and will then hire an environmental engineering design firm to develop the master plan. The plan will include designs for the ADA parking lot and 1.1-mile trail loop outlined in the RTP grant, along with recommended locations for possible future structures like an ADA restroom and picnic pavilion. Construction is predicted to start in summer 2016. Stay tuned!

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: John Abt, 330-464-7715, Greg Wiles, 330-464-1067, Shelley Schrier, 330-262-9307

**** PLEASE RENEW YOUR FWMP MEMBERSHIP FOR 2016 ****

Your continued membership is essential to the success of FWMP. Whether you are an active member or quiet supporter, your renewal will help us care for WMP and show that you value this wonderful natural area. Please read on to learn of some of the ways FWMP worked in 2015 to benefit the park. *For convenience, a renewal form is included, or go to www.friendsofwmp.com.*

AMAZING VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION & EFFORT IN 2015

Over 100 volunteers helped FWMP and the City complete dozens of projects in WMP and Kenwood Acres this year, contributing more than 765 work hours. We are humbled and grateful for the collective support and generosity of the local community.

LATE-FALL REROUTE OF THE OUTER TRAIL

In November, an extensive portion of the east Outer Trail was rerouted by FWMP volunteers. The Outer Trail skirts the north ridge of the Rathburn Run valley, and is known for its dramatic views and steep drop-offs. One section of trail on the east side of the park was becoming treacherous to pass, even for the experienced hiker. The reroute provides a safer hike, while still offering scenic views of the Run valley.

AN OCTOBER FUNGAL FORAY IN THE PARK

On a rainy Saturday morning in early October, 40 fungi aficionados from the Ohio Mushroom Society and the OSU Columbus campus headed out onto the trails of WMP in search of mushrooms for their Fall Foray. Over 40 species of fungi were identified from the morning's hunt.



Fungal Foray participants (left) identify the many species of mushrooms (right) that were found. J. Abt.

OTHER 2015 HIGHLIGHTS

- **FWMP WELCOMED A NEW CITY REP FOR WMP** – Andrew Guidetti, Public Properties Maintenance Division supervisor, became the new City representative for WMP, replacing FWMP's previous park liaison, Daryl Decker. Though new to the task, Andrew did an amazing job of partnering with FWMP to get a huge amount done this past year.
- **15TH ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING OF FWMP** – The 15th Annual Meeting was held on April 8 at the Freedlander Park Chalet. The Board celebrated the group's notable 15-year landmark with a cake frosted with a map of the park. Members elected the 2015-16 Board of Directors, and were treated to "Elder trees, poets & mystics of the forest: What wisdom do the trees of the forest have to give to us humans?" by guest speaker John Holliger, a local nature photographer and retired Episcopal priest who has been hiking in WMP for years.

MANY WELL-ATTENDED PUBLIC PROGRAMS – The Education & Public Awareness Committee (Edith Swank, chair) hosted eight popular public programs, which included three spring events (an Education Ravine Walk, a Wildflower Walk and a Birding Walk), three summer events (a Walk on the New Kenwood Property, a Walk (in) Rathburn Run and a Perseid Meteor Watch), and two fall events (Salamanders of WMP and a Fall Foliage Walk). In total, over 80 visitors participated in the events.



Kids look at spotted salamanders. E. Swank.

- **ANOTHER GREAT YEAR OF TRAIL RUNNING EVENTS AT WMP** – Brian Polen of Vertical Runner and Jason Burgett of the Wooster Sweaters Running Club organized another full season of trail running events at WMP, with \$1,000 in proceeds going to benefit the park:

- Together We'll Trample ALS Trail Run, June 13 (to benefit the NE Ohio ALS Chapter)
- Run Unplugged 5k Trail Series, July (4-week trail series to benefit WMP)
- “Running is Fun” Kids Running Camp, July/Aug (6-wk training camp for ages 5-12)
- Trail Monster Mini Series Season Finale, August 8 (to benefit WMP)
- Vertical Runner Trail Running Festival, August 29 (free event)
- Thursday Night Trails! (free informal trail run every Thursday)

- **INVASIVE PLANT WARRIORS HELP PROTECT THE PARK’S NATURAL INTEGRITY** – The Invasive Plant Warriors were back to pull garlic mustard this spring, and control Canada thistle, common burdock, and multiflora rose this summer. Cress-leaf groundsel and Chinese



Dan Yarnell mows invasive shrubs. J. Abt.

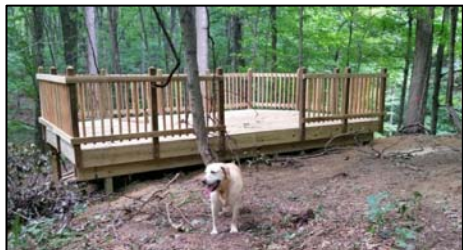
yam, two new invasives, were spotted on Kenwood Acres and swiftly controlled, thanks to FWMP volunteers. In November, Dan Yarnell with the City spent several hours mowing the invasive shrubs growing around the edge of the Education Area and Kenwood Acres, with guidance from John Abt. All these collective efforts protect the natural integrity of the park.

- **THE PARK BENEFITS FROM COW & ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH WORKDAYS** – WMP and Kenwood Acres were fortunate to be sites for two community workdays. On June 6, 26 Zion Lutheran Church volunteers donated 3 hours of service to celebrate their 175th anniversary. On August 29, 88 College of Wooster first-year students volunteered 2 hours as part of the New Student Orientation Program. Projects were led by FWMP volunteers and included rerouting trails, removing invasive plants, painting blazes, installing tree guards, painting the Education Area pavilion, installing switchbacks, picking up glass and clearing water bars.
- **OTHER WMP IMPROVEMENTS** – Due to erosion, FWMP had to re-route two different trail sections this summer, one on the upper Trillium Trail and one along the bank of the Rathburn Run on the east Outer Trail. In addition, the Education Area pavilion got a fresh coat of paint, and FWMP and the City developed an annual mowing regime for the farm field, Monitor Bank Parcel, and Education Area prairie to prevent trees and shrubs from taking over.
- **CLEAN-UP OF KENWOOD ACRES’ FUTURE PARK ENTRANCE** – This summer, FWMP hired Nieman Excavating to fill the old dug well, and haul away remnant concrete and debris from the farmhouse demolition. COW students raked up smaller debris and planted grass seed.

- **KENWOOD ACRES TREES & PRAIRIE**– This spring, Twinsberry Tree Farm and 25 FWMP volunteers planted 7,500 tree saplings on 18 acres of the Kenwood. Another 7 acres were planted to a mixed short-grass prairie by Ohio Prairie Nursery. Funds for these projects came from the USDA NRCS EQIP and the Wayne County Community Foundation.



Volunteers unpack and prepare trees for planting.



Buddy shows off the overlook. J. Parker.

- **SCENIC OVERLOOK ON KENWOOD ACRES** – In August, Johnny Scott of BSA Troop 66 built a wooden overlook in the central woods of Kenwood Acres for his Eagle Scout project. Measuring 20 feet wide and 11 feet deep, the overlook provides spectacular views of two side-ravines as they converge and flow north across the Trillium Trail toward Rathburn Run.
- **GENEROUS DONATIONS OF PAINT & SUPPLIES** – Thank you to Sherwin Williams in Wooster for providing paint for trail blazes at a substantial discount, and to Wooster Brush for supplying paint brushes and pans to repaint the Education Area pavilion.
- **FWMP’S WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK PAGE** – Website designer and FWMP member, Jennifer Hugon, spent many volunteer hours updating FWMP’s website (www.friendsofswmp.com), and John Abt helped keep the website up-to-date. FWMP also established a Facebook page (www.facebook.com/friendswmp), where members can provide comments and view photos.
- **OUR TRAIL MONITORS** – Throughout the season, FWMP trail monitors John Parker and Shelley Schrier kept the City informed about downed trees and trail problems, and kept the map box filled. In addition, FWMP volunteer Gary Bickel opened and closed the Education Area gate each weekend, providing access to additional parking for WMP users.
- **THANK YOU TO THE CITY** – The FWMP Board would like to thank Andrew Guidetti and the City of Wooster for their continuing cooperation and support. FWMP accomplished a huge amount of work this summer, which would not have been possible without the help of the City. Andrew and crew supplied tooling, paint and other project supplies. Andrew also printed a fresh supply of trails maps, and got an updated aluminum park map to hang in the kiosk at Silver Road. WMP is in great shape because of this teamwork!
- **FINALLY, THE FWMP BOARD IS WORKING...** to keep this organization strong, so that we can continue to work with the City as an advocate for Wooster Memorial Park.

“Together, we can achieve our purpose and benefit this beautiful park.”

YOUR MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT MATTERS. PLEASE RENEW.

*Thank you & happy holidays,
FWMP Board of Directors*