



FRIENDS OF WOOSTER MEMORIAL PARK

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

SEPTEMBER 2014

AN EXCITING SUMMER SEASON OF TRAIL WORKDAYS, PARK RUNNING EVENTS, KENWOOD PARCEL IMPROVEMENTS & MORE



Enthusiastic group of College of Wooster 1st-year students during their WMP in-service on 8/23/14 (Chuck Armbruster).

As the summer weather fades, fall brings another great season to visit Wooster Memorial Park (WMP). The Friends of Wooster Memorial Park (FWMP), in cooperation with volunteers and the City, had very productive summer – an intense May workday to repair signposts, a big College of Wooster community service project, trail running events and a kids running camp, improvements to FWMP’s new Kenwood Parcel, and more.

Please read on to learn about the latest park updates, including our season finale public event on the geology of the Little Killbuck Creek. We hope that you can get out on the trails and enjoy the brilliant colors of fall in WMP.

SEASON FINALE PUBLIC EVENT – GEOLOGY OF THE LITTLE KILLBUCK CREEK – SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12TH AT 2:00 PM

Please join us on Sunday, October 12, for a chance to experience the beauty of fall in WMP and learn about the Little Killbuck Creek, which borders the northeast corner of the Park. Dr. Greg Wiles, Geology Professor, from the College of Wooster will lead this hike to the Strock Parcel and down to the Little Killbuck. This new FWMP-sponsored event featuring WMP’s Little Killbuck Creek area promises to provide lots of fascinating information and park views.

The event will begin at the Silver Road parking area. Registration is not required, but groups should contact the Community Center ahead of time (330-263-5207). We recommend that participants wear sturdy footwear, and bring water, insect repellent, and anything else needed for the event. Please be prepared to cross Rathburn Run. Children must be accompanied by an adult. No pets, please. Check the FWMP website for more information about the park and events (friendsofwmp.com).



Little Killbuck Creek (Jon Swank).

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Cathy Herms, 330-465-2725 ♦ Vice President: Shelley Schrier, 330-262-9307
Secretary: Edith Swank, 330-263-6766 ♦ Treasurer: John Parker, 330-345-7511
Directors-at-Large: John Abt, 330-464-7715, Dan Buehler, 330-465-7588; Greg Wiles, 330-464-1067

MOVING FORWARD WITH KENWOOD PARCEL IMPROVEMENTS

The FWMP Board has been busy this season with the new Kenwood Parcel. FWMP acquired the 49.2-acre Parcel in October 2013, with a vision to develop and restore the property to provide additional recreational, educational and natural resource opportunities for WMP users of all ages and abilities. The Board’s overall objectives are to:

- Establish a cover of native grasses, wildflowers and ultimately trees on the Parcel’s agricultural land, to prevent noxious weed invasion and expand the native habitats.
- Develop hiking trails that link to WMP’s existing trails to increase recreational opportunities.
- Create an alternate WMP entrance at the old homestead site to facilitate public access to the Kenwood Parcel and WMP (via the Parcel).
- Create ADA-accessible trails, parking lot and other amenities on the Parcel to accommodate WMP users of all ages and abilities.

Since last fall, the Board has made significant progress in acquiring private, state and federal funds, and in-kind donations, to pursue some of the highest-priority improvements:

Native Plant Cover – FWMP received a grant through the USDA NRCS EQIP Program (\$21,000) along with private donations that will help fund the planting of native grasses on the Parcel’s former 18-acre corn field in fall/winter 2014 and the planting of ~8,000 native tree saplings on 19 acres in spring 2015.

Hiking Opportunities – During a College of Wooster workday on August 23, 2014, FWMP installed the new Hartman and Kenwood Trails, which connect with WMP’s Trillium and Outer Trails, respectively. Sign posts were donated by the City of Wooster. These trails provide 3 additional miles of hiking potential for WMP users. This winter, scout Johnny Scott of Troop 66 plans to build an overlook along one of the trails for his Eagle Scout project.



Proposed Kenwood Parcel trails.

Alternate Entrance – The dilapidated house on the Parcel’s old homestead was removed in July 2014, taking the first big step to create an alternate WMP entrance along Silver Road. Thank you to Craig Garrett and the other Plain Township Trustees, who received a Moving Ohio Forward grant (\$10,900) on behalf of FWMP to help pay for the demolition.

The FWMP Board will continue their grant-seeking efforts. Two proposals were submitted in September 2014 for funds to install an informational kiosk and small gravel parking area at the future alternate park entrance. And the Board plans to submit a grant to the Clean Ohio Recreational Trail Fund in February 2015 to help fund the development of ADA-accessible trails, parking lot and possibly other facilities.



Left to right: Kenwood Parcel’s old farm house before, during (J. Parker) and after removal (C. Herms).



THE 14TH ANNUAL MEETING OF FWMP

The 14th Annual Meeting of FWMP was held at the Freedlander Park Chalet on Wednesday, April 9, 2014. FWMP members elected the 2014-15 Board of Directors, and were treated to a fascinating talk by guest speaker, Greg Wiles, Professor of Geology at the College of Wooster. In his talk, “**Is Wooster Memorial Park eroding at greater rates now than it has over the past several thousand years?**”, Greg presented some intriguing findings after years of studying the Rathburn Run streambed and its historic mill pond with his geology students.

WMP BENEFITS FROM COW’S ENTHUSIASTIC NEW STUDENTS ON AUGUST 23, 2014



Above & right: COW students in the Education Area (J. Abt).

In an amazing win-win for WMP and the local community, 100 first-year students from the College of Wooster volunteered 3 hours of service to the park on August 23, 2014, as part of COW’s New Student Orientation Program. Eight FWMP volunteers (John Abt, Chuck Armbruster, Dan Buehler, Bob Haugh, John Parker, Shelley Schrier, Edith Swank, and Greg Wiles), along with 4 volunteers from the Wooster Vertical Runners (Jill Forrest, Ashley Hoffman, Adrienne Steiner and Michael Yack), helped supervise numerous projects throughout WMP and the new Kenwood Parcel.

Most of the projects were in WMP, and included cutting down invasive catalpa trees in the old farm field, clearing fallen trees on the Saddleback Trail, rerouting a section of the Spangler Trail and building steps at a Run crossing, filling in gravel on steps to the Sassafras Trail bridge, and filling in the borders of the pavilion and asphalt driveway in the Education Area. On the Kenwood Parcel, volunteers installed new trails and trail signage, and cleaned up a small grove for a picnic area. Thank you to Dr. Carolyn Buxton from COW for thinking of WMP for the service project and to the volunteer supervisors for taking the time to help out, but most of all, to the 100 COW freshmen who worked so enthusiastically to help improve the park.



HUGE SUCCESS OF TRAIL RUNNING EVENTS IN WMP

Jason Burgett of the Wooster Sweaters Running Club and Brian Polen of Vertical Runner in downtown Wooster organized several very popular trail running programs in WMP this season. Similar to 2012 and 2013, Jason sponsored four weekly cross country races, dubbed the Wooster Unplugged Cross Country Series, through WMP’s farm field area in June, with each race averaging over 50 participants.

Brian Polen organized the second annual cross-country event in WMP on June 14 to raise funds to fight Lou Gehrig's disease, and had over 100 participants for a 15K run on July 19, as part of the three-site Trail Monster Mini-Series. Brian also repeated the popular Kids Running Camp for 5 to 12 year olds. Eighty kids signed up for the camp, which was almost twice as many as in 2013, and 77 of the young runners participated in Buehler’s Heart & Sole Community Walk/Run in August. All of these running events help to raise awareness about WMP, with no negative impacts on the park’s resources, and Jason and Brian generously donate the net proceeds back to support FWMP’s mission.

THANK YOU FOR MAPS, TRAIL CLEARING & TRAIL MARKING

Some things in WMP never change – the trail map supply runs out, park’s trees fall and blazes fade. Thank you to the City for funding the printing of more WMP trail maps. And thank you to trail monitors and trail maintenance volunteers (including FWMP’s John Abt, Chuck Armbruster, Josh and Linda Barnett, Gary Bickel, Dan Buehler, Jill Forrest, Marty Griffith, Paul Martin, Jay and Bryson Mosley, Don Noble, John Parker, Shelley Schrier and Duane Steiner, and COW’s Sarah Frederick, Meagan Pollack, Mary Reinthal, Russell Robinson and Kaitlin Starr), who spent over 60 hours this summer to reinstall vandalized sign posts, repaint trail blazes on trees, and keep the trails cleared of downed trees and overrun vegetation.



Harry Hoytink and dog Koby after a tree removal (J. Parker).



COW Biology Professor Lyn Loveless and her Conservation Biology class (J. Abt).

MANY WELL-ATTENDED PUBLIC PROGRAMS

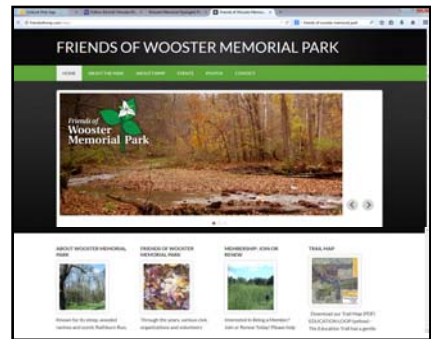
The Education & Public Awareness Committee offered exciting public programs this year, including a frog and toad walk (April), a spring wildflower walk (May), a hike on the new Kenwood Parcel (June), a walk *in* Rathburn Run (July), and a prairie flower walk (August).

In addition, John Abt lead a instructional hike on the Kenwood Parcel in April for Conservation Biology students at COW, and two special ‘members and friends only’ events were held in the Education Area, a moon watch/cookout in June and a Perseid meteor watch in August. One more event is scheduled for the fall, a geology walk in the Park’s Little Killbuck Creek area (see Page 1 for more details).

Thank you to our event leaders, John Abt, Fritz Schmitthenner, Shelley Schrier, and Marvin and Sandy Smith. And many thanks to Education & Public Awareness Committee members, Edith Swank and Marty Griffith (co-chairs), John Abt and Mary Hetrick, for their great work in planning these events.

FWMP’S UPGRADED WEBSITE & NEW FACEBOOK PAGE

FWMP’s redesigned website (www.friendsofwmp.com) is up and running, thanks largely to Jennifer Hugon’s generous donation of time and effort. The site can now be easily updated with public events information, new park photos, etc. FWMP also has a Facebook page (www.facebook.com/friendswmp) where you can view the Dave Taggart collection of 229 selected WMP photos. Any suggestions or comments concerning our website or Facebook page would be greatly appreciated! Please contact John Abt (johnjabt@gmail.com).



The FWMP website’s new homepage.

A FEW MORE TRAIL PROJECTS TO DO THIS FALL

There’s never an end to the potential projects in the park. Trail Committee co-chairs Shelley Schrier and Jay Mosley have identified a few more projects that they would like to complete before winter comes:

- Install sign posts on the new Hartman Trail, and finish clearing the new Kenwood Trail.
- Install rebar on the new steps on the Spangler Trail.
- Paint blazes on Kenwood, Hartman and Sassafras Trails.

Volunteers are always needed for these important projects. If you would like to help, please contact Shelley Schrier (330-262-9307; sschrier@sssnet.com).

GREAT PROGRESS MADE AGAINST PESKY PLANTS

Harry Hoitink, John Parker and WMP neighbor Gary Bickel spent 15 plus hours this summer controlling common burdock and multiflora rose along trail edges. Burdock's velcro-like seed heads and multiflora rose's thorny branches can snag hikers. This is their 9th season battling burdock and their efforts are paying off.

During the COW work day on August 23, FWMP and student crews cleared numerous fast-growing Northern catalpa saplings out of the old farm field. Catalpa is a large tree, with heart-shaped leaves, native to the southeastern U.S. It has become naturalized in many urban and rural locations in Ohio, including WMP.



COW students drag cut catalpa trees during the August 23 work day (E. Swank)..

THANK YOU TO DARYL DECKER FOR HIS DEDICATED SERVICE



As many of you probably know, Daryl Decker has moved on and is no longer working for the City of Wooster. Daryl became parks manager soon after FWMP was formed, and was our liaison with the City, as well as an ex-officio member on the FWMP Board.

Daryl was always helpful, cooperative, and cheerful, and went above and beyond the call of duty in promoting, defending, and maintaining Wooster Memorial Park. His positive attitude along with his practical advice helped the Board move forward with a variety of park projects, writing a conservation easement and a variety of grants. In addition to being a proponent for the Park, Daryl was also a strong representative for City interests.

We will miss Daryl as both a great park advocate and a trusted friend. Through his invaluable support over the years, Wooster Memorial Park has been considerably improved, and the FWMP will be forever grateful.



Above: Daryl helps during a COW work day in August 2007 (S. Schrier).

Left: Daryl speaks at FWMP's annual meeting in April 2007 (J. Swank).

Right: Daryl helps out during a stream survey on the Strock Parcel in 2005 (C. Herms).



ADDITIONAL THANK YOU'S

Many people have supported the park and/or FWMP this year through generous contributions of time, sweat, resources and/or other means, and we are very grateful. For any helpers inadvertently omitted from this list, our apologies and thanks.



FWMP Members:

John Abt
Chuck Armbruster
Josh & Linda Barnett
Dan Buehler
Roger Downer
Jeanne Durkalski
Jill Forrest
Marty Griffith
Bob Haugh
Kris Hawke
Cathy Herms
Harry Hoitink
Jennifer Hugon
Paul Martin
Jay & Bryson Mosley
Don Noble
John Parker
Erwin & Susan Riedner
Sandra & Randy Rowe
Bob Schang
Fritz & Alice Schmitthenner
Shelley Schrier
Marvin & Sandy Smith
Gerald Stair
Adrienne Steiner
Duane Steiner
Edith Swank
Greg Wiles

City of Wooster:

Daryl Decker (Manager, Wooster Public Properties)
Andrew Guidetti
Dan Yarnell
Other City crew

College of Wooster:

Carolyn Buxton
Sarah Frederick
Meagan Pollack
Russell Robinson
Kaitlin Starr

Vertical Runners, Wooster:

Brian Polen (owner)
Ashely Hoffman
Maria Ramos
Michael Yack

Others:

Gary Bickel
Jason Burgett (Wooster Sweaters Running Club)
Ron Holtman & Maryanna Biggio (Killbuck Watershed Land Trust)
The Noble Foundation
Plain Township Trustees