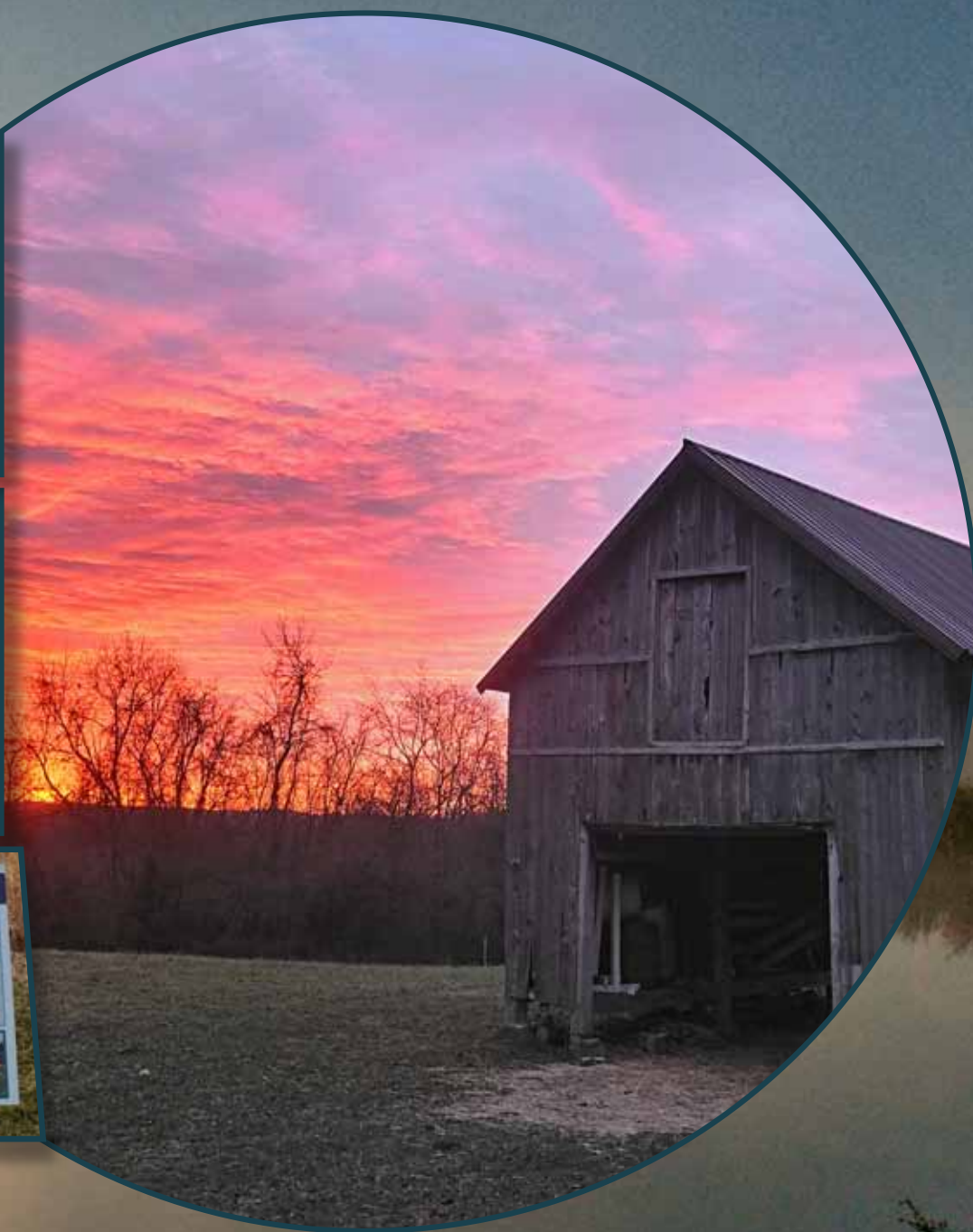




2021 Annual Report



Licking Park District

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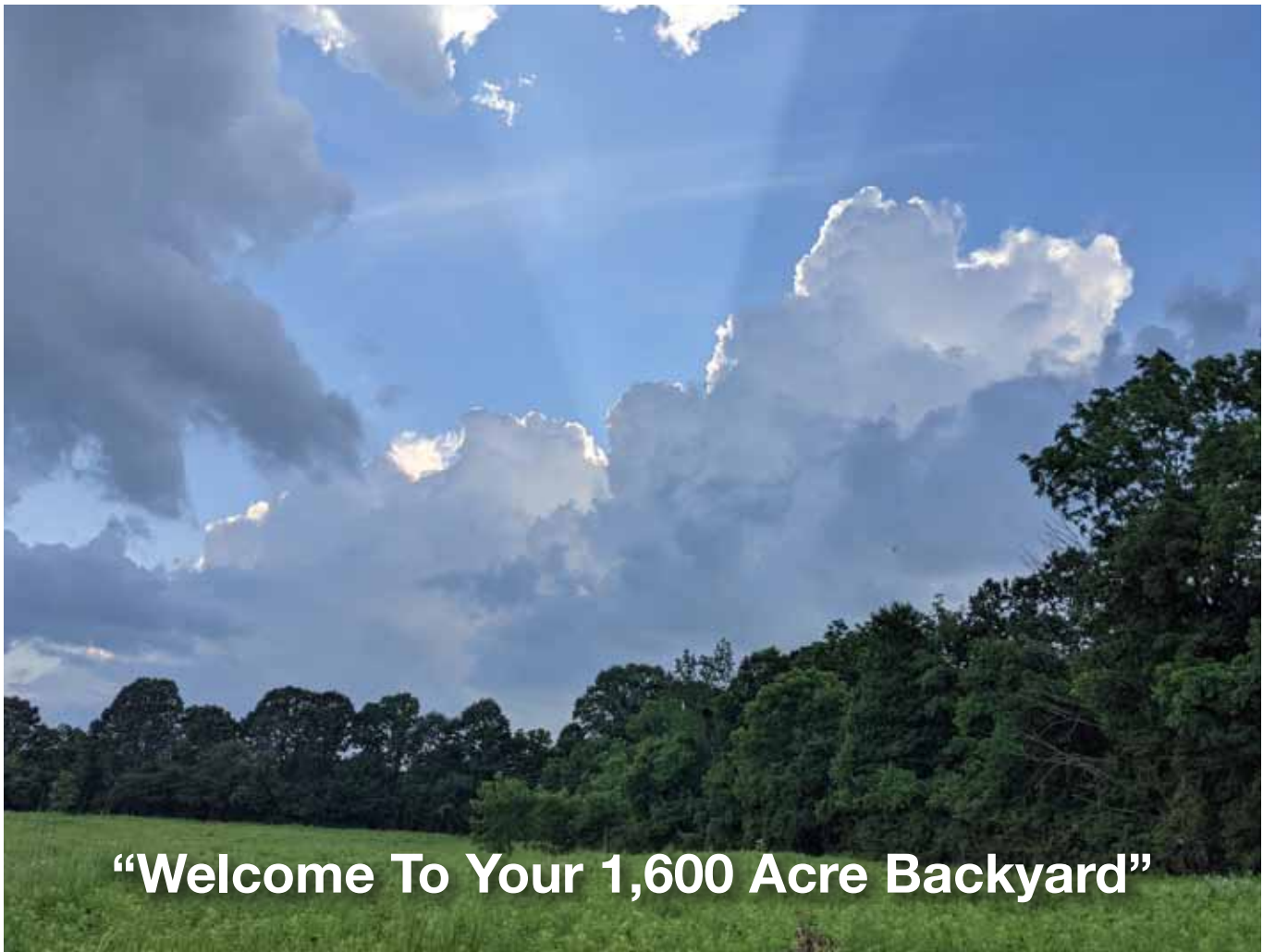
2021 – Annual Report

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Licking Park District is to acquire, manage, preserve, and conserve natural areas within Licking County, while protecting wildlife and local history in a manner that enriches our communities and provides access to diverse parks, educational opportunities and health and wellness activities.

Vision Statement

It is the vision of the Licking Park District to provide parks, paths, and trails of the highest quality to the residents of Licking County. Our goal is to maintain and improve existing facilities while pursuing opportunities for expansion. We provide passive recreational opportunities for the health, wellness, and education of our residents using resources that include public and private collaborations.



“Welcome To Your 1,600 Acre Backyard”



2021 – Programs and Events

Programs and Special Events 2021 by the Numbers

Total number of participants across all programs	11,323
Increase in participation from 2019*	12%
Total number of public programs and events offered	175
Attendance for Harvest Moon Festival and Rendezvous	1,800
Attendance for Howl-o-Ween	85
Attendance for Music at the Gazebo	415
Attendance for Pace at the Parks	114
Attendance for the Wildflower Fairy Trail	4,500
* Comparison to 2019 as last full program year due to COVID-19	

“Something for Everyone”

Our goal is to develop and implement a comprehensive environmental education and outdoor recreation program for the Licking Park District. Programs in environmental education, citizen science, adult continuing education, teacher workshops, outdoor skills, backyard ecology, recreation, the arts, family programming, pre-K, homeschool, teen, and school-age education reflect environmental education and recreation trends.





2021 – Programs and Events

2021 Program Snapshot

- The Wildflower Fairy Trail
- Music at the Gazebo
- Outdoor Adventures
- Family Adventures
- Licking County Adventure Passport
- Nature at Home
- Backyard Conservation
- Park Bingo Scavenger Hunt
- Saturday Morning Hikes
- Tai Chi
- Yoga
- Night Hikes
- The Hike, Bike, Paddle Challenge
- Saddle Up Challenge
- Zoom Paint the Parks
- Howl-o-Ween
- Birding Strolls
- STEM at the Parks with The Works
- Educator Workshops in partnership with The Dawes Arboretum and LSWCD: *Projects WET, WILD, Learning Tree and Citizen Science*
- Zoom DIY Natural Centerpieces
- Night Tree Family Story Night
- Paddlesports 'Try-Its'
- Art in the Parks
- Hartford Fair Natural Resources Area
- Falling For Our Parks Photo Contest



Photo credit: Brad Imhoff

The Licking Park District partnered on 48 programs with local organizations, including:

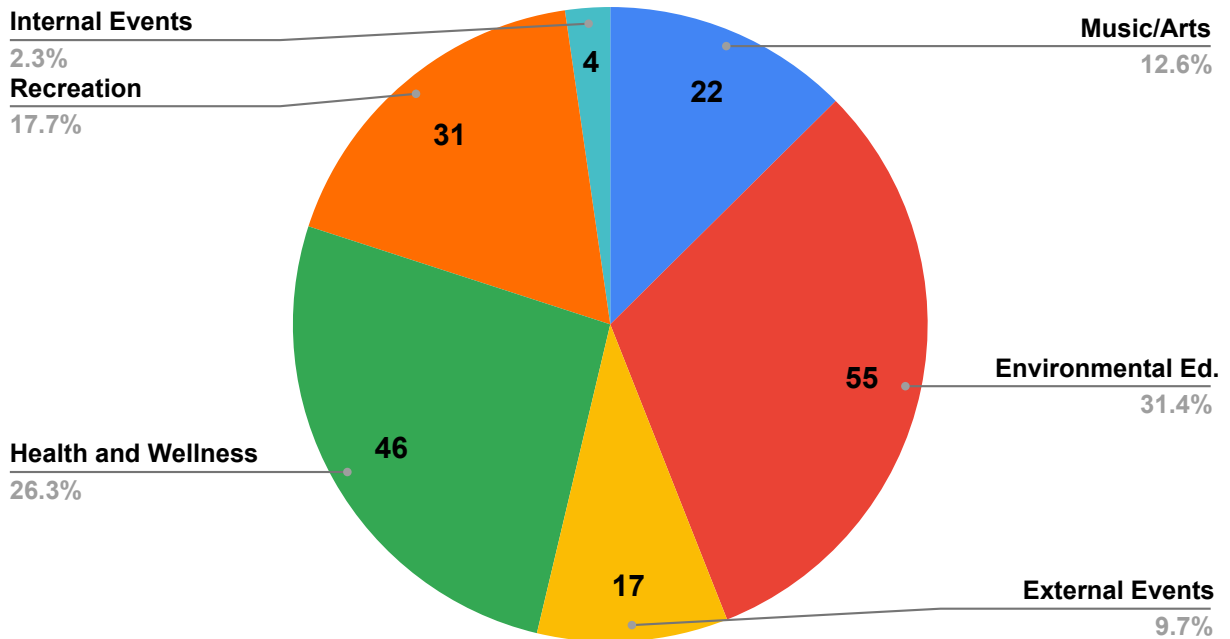
- Granville Library
- Licking County Community Center
- Licking County Land Trust
- Licking County Library
- The Works
- City of Newark
- The Dawes Arboretum
- Granville Recreation District
- Licking Soil and Water Conservation District
- Licking County River Round Up Committee
- Licking County Recycling
- Ohio History Connection
- Columbus Flyers
- Licking County Commissioners



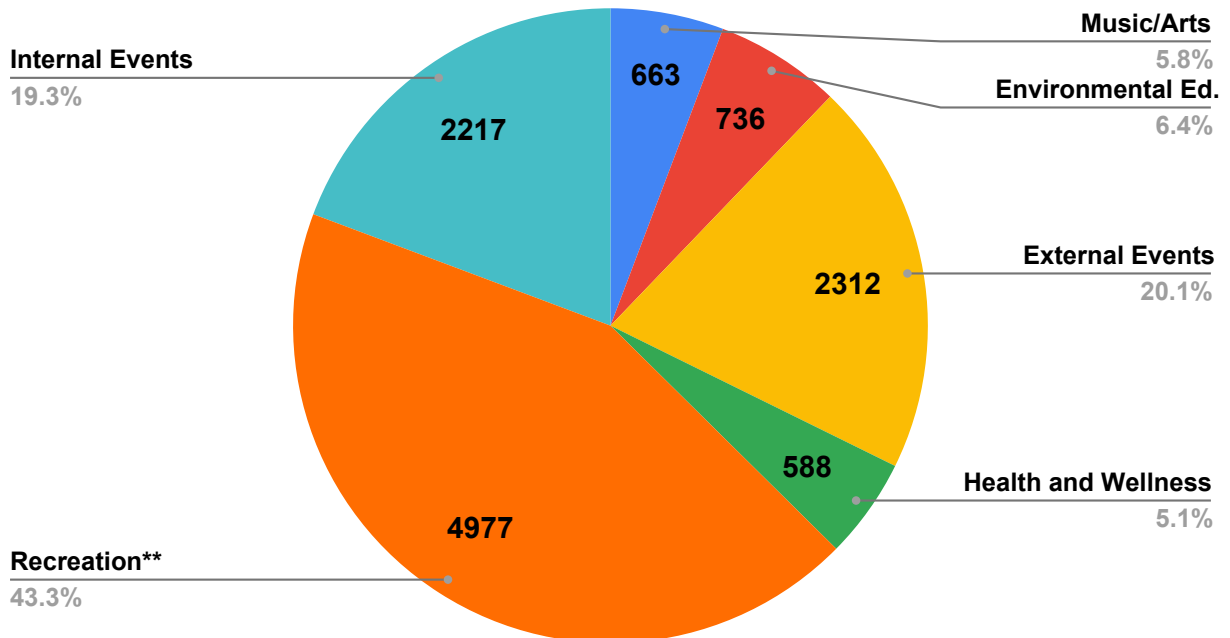


2021 – Programs and Events

Number of Programs According to Type Offered in 2021



Participation per Program Category



** Recreation category includes Fairy Trail visitation numbers (n = 4500)
Internal Event: Events organized by the LPD
External Event: Events run by outside organizations



2021 – Programs and Events

The Magic of the Fairy Trail Continues

2021 saw the return of Infirmity Mound Park's Wildflower Fairy Trail, which remained very popular in its fourth year. Due to the ongoing pandemic, take-home supply kits were provided to staff, volunteers, and community organizations to create fairy houses. Over 40 fairy houses were installed in late April, and the trail opening was announced on social media on May 1. Within just a few days, the Facebook post reached over 840,000 people. Multiple central Ohio family-oriented blogs highlighted the trail, and Spectrum TV did a feature story. A "Fairy Mail" station was set up to allow kids to write to the fairies and Licking Park District (LPD) volunteers wrote back either by email or snail mail. Fairy mail often reflected thank-you's and appreciation from adults, and joy and wonder from the kids. We received over 2,200 pieces of mail, which allowed us to estimate at least 4,500 visitors hit the trail from May through September. Visitors primarily came from central Ohio, but many came from other areas of the state and beyond.

Harvest Moon Festival

Each October, the Licking Park District offers a large fall festival at Infirmity Mound Park. The Harvest Moon Festival features activities and learning opportunities for the entire community, and 2021 proved to be the largest turnout in the event's history. Over 1,800 people enjoyed the food trucks, live bluegrass music, and Harvest Moon Rendezvous encampment. The Bugman was on-site with live bugs, the Ohio School of Falconry wowed the crowd with birds of prey, and farm animals stole hearts at the petting zoo. Visitors were able to try their hand at festival games, crafts, archery, rock-climbing, kite flying, and more!





2021 – Programs and Events

Music at the Gazebo

New in 2021! In partnership with the City of Newark and Licking County Commissioners, the Licking Park District offered a concert series at the Licking County Children's Home Memorial Park in Newark. Concerts were held once a month, June through September, featuring a live band and a food truck. Bands included Big Bad Stache, Barefoot McCoy, Open Highway, and the Drifter Kings.

People Took the Challenge

The Licking Park District Park Bingo Challenge was continued in 2021 to encourage people to get outside and visit the parks. Game players had to visit nine spots around the county parks and trails and take a "selfie" at each spot. In 2021, locations were more challenging than in 2020, with many sites requiring a 1–2 mile hike. Ten families completed the challenge.

The Hike, Bike, Paddle Challenge again asked people to hike, bike, or paddle for 30 minutes at either Infirmary Mound Park, Lobdell Reserve, Taft Reserve, Morris Woods Nature Preserve, TJ Evans Bike Trails, LPD park trails, Riverview Reserve, Staddens Landing, or Brownsville Road.

New in 2021, the Saddle Up Challenge asked equestrians to track their trail miles at Infirmary Mound Park, Lobdell Reserve, and Taft Reserve, and riders were recognized for completing 25 and 50 miles.





2021 – Programs and Events

Pace at the Park

A hunter pace is a competitive equestrian trail ride designed to closely match the excitement of a fox hunt. The Licking Park District has an active and committed equestrian community, and this event targets that audience. The trails were in exceptional condition and 113 participants navigated the 4.6-mile course, containing 34 jump features. The Rocky Fork Headley Hunt Club assists the Park District each year with the Pace, providing volunteers for event timing, registration, and trailer parking.



Virtual Programming and Nature at Home

Virtual programs continued into 2021 and provided an alternative to in-person gatherings for Licking County residents still cautious during the pandemic. Entirely virtual programs included Zoom Paint the Parks, Tuesday Talks with the Licking County Community Center, and Books and the Bees Nature Lovers Book Club. For other programs, a take-home kit option was provided. Kits for annual programs like the Thanksgiving DIY Centerpiece class and the Night Tree Family Story Night were popular, as were the Nature At Home Zoom and Take-Home Kit combo programs for ages 7–12.





2021 – Programs and Events

Educator Workshop Series in its Fifth Year

2021 was the fifth year for an Educator Workshop Series in partnership with the Licking Soil and Water Conservation District and The Dawes Arboretum. Workshops included Project WET, Project WILD, Project Learning Tree, Citizen Science, and Newark Infrastructure tours. The workshops correlated to state and national education standards and were offered in virtual and in-person formats. In total, 88 educators participated in 2021 and over 425 educators have taken a workshop over the past five years.

Licking County River Round Up

The Licking Park District continued to be a co-host for the annual Licking County River Round Up. This countywide waterway cleanup event involves multiple county organizations, local government agencies, and hundreds of volunteers. Larger group activities returned in 2021. The Park District had 42 participants conduct cleanups by canoe and kayak from Riverview Reserve in Newark to the Blackhand Gorge parking area along Brownsville Road. Countywide, the event involved 242 volunteers who picked up 335 tires, 16,400 pounds of trash, and 1,540 pounds of scrap metals.



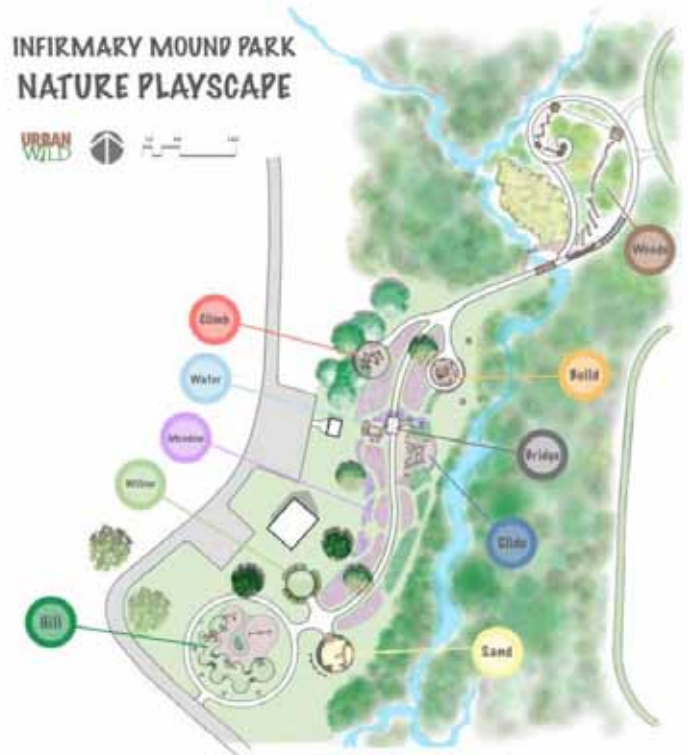


2021 – Programs and Events

Nature Playscape

In 2021, work began on a large Nature Playscape at Infirmary Mound Park, with Phase 1 completed in November. Natural playgrounds are a growing trend in the field of parks and recreation. These outdoor spaces are carefully created to facilitate unstructured play in a way that encourages creativity, exploration, and hands-on learning in nature. Research has found children play longer on natural playgrounds and engage in more diverse and complex play. They also show greatly improved physical fitness and social and cognitive benefits compared to traditional playgrounds. These benefits include increased concentration, mindfulness, confidence, critical thinking, self-discipline, observation skills, resilience, and wonder. Nature play also reduces symptoms of anxiety, ADHD/ADD, and behavioral disorders. In essence, kids are happier, healthier, and smarter when they have access to immersion and playtime in nature. Research has also shown that kids with experience being outside in nature show greater stewardship of our natural resources and better mental health as adults.

In establishing nature play areas, the Park District seeks to expand its role as a provider of recreational opportunities for children and families. The goal of the Nature Playscape is to provide children of all ages, abilities, and socioeconomic backgrounds with a safe, accessible area to interact with the natural world on their terms.

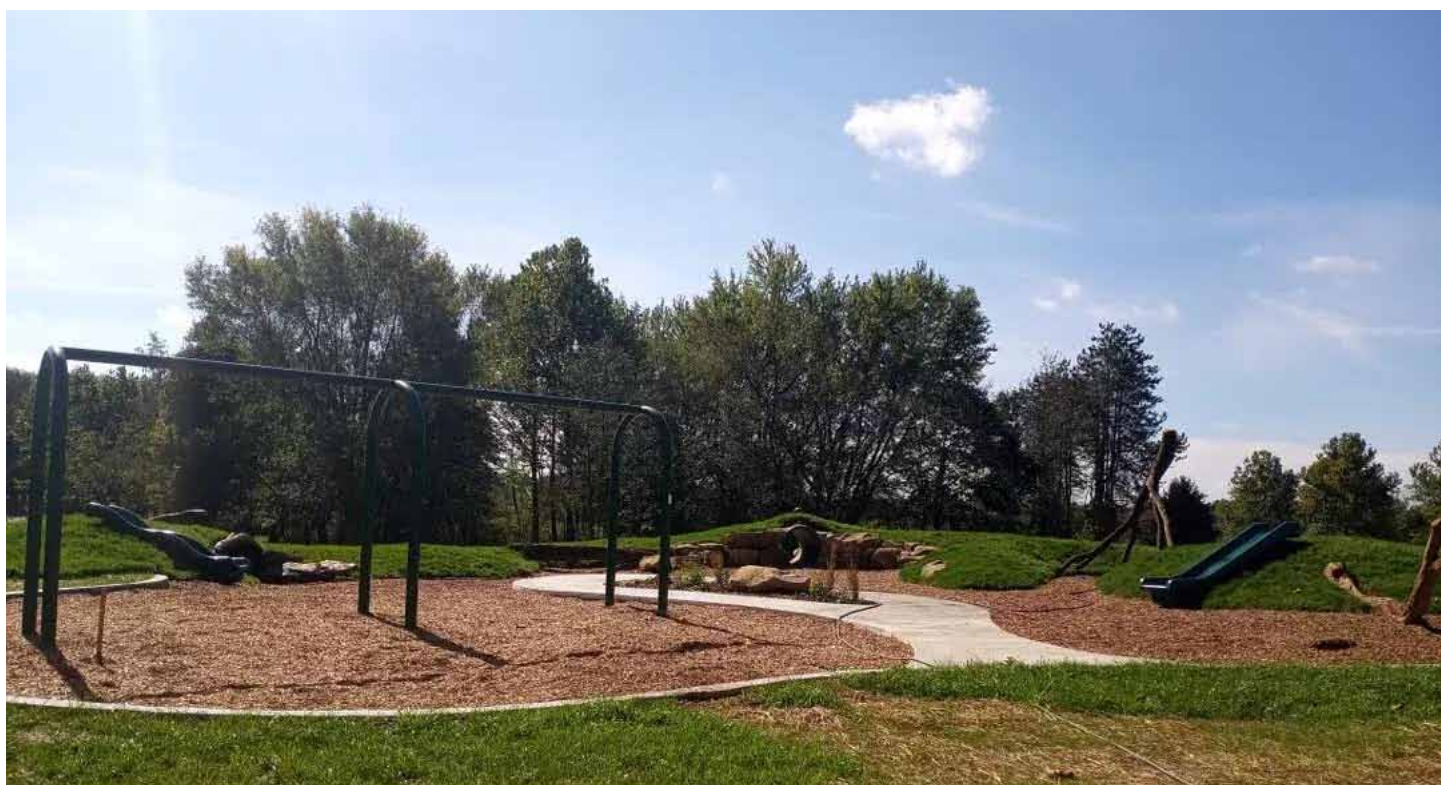




2021 – Programs and Events

An overall playscape design created by Urban Wild was approved in early 2021. We offered a public survey for feedback from the community. The responses (n=606) overwhelmingly supported the project, with over 93% indicating it would have high value for Licking County. The design will be completed in five phases and considers the site's natural features while honoring the unique cultural history of Licking County. Construction on the first phase of the Nature Playscape at Infirmity Mound Park began in early August 2021 and was completed in late fall. The design is aimed at ages 2–12; however, the features do not target specific age groups, but instead provide for varying degrees of ability. Each component includes elements that can appeal to younger and older children — even adults.

In May 2021, an ODNr Natureworks Grant application was submitted to partially fund Phase 2, which is scheduled to begin construction in the spring of 2022. In November, the Licking Park District was awarded the grant for \$42,750.





2021 – Programs and Events

Natural Resources

Prairie Creation Continues

2021 saw a continuation of the partnership started in 2019 between the Licking Park District (LPD) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (USFWS-PFW). In the winter of 2021, roughly 41 acres of new prairie habitat at Infirmity Mound Park was seeded with a mix of wildflower and native warm-season grass species. In addition, 33 acres at the Newell Recreation Preserve were planted with the same seed mix. The new prairies will provide critical habitat for pollinators, migratory grassland nesting birds, and other local wildlife species. They will also expand educational learning opportunities for the public.



Garlic Mustard Challenge

The LPD Garlic Mustard Challenge was created in April of 2020 to engage the public and prevent the further spread of the invasive garlic mustard (*Allaria petiolata*) plant. Volunteers participated by pulling garlic mustard anywhere managed by the LPD where garlic mustard is present. They kept track of how many bags of garlic mustard were pulled and reported using an online form. Thirty-two people participated in the challenge independently or as part of a park program, removing over 150 pounds of garlic mustard. Participation was primarily centered at Infirmity Mound Park.



External Events

Many organizations utilize the Park District facilities for special events. This type of usage brings a diverse range of event types to Licking County and introduces many new people to the various parks and trails of the Licking Park District.

- OhioLina Music Festival
- Learning Spectrum Alpaca Trot 5K
- 4-H Band
- Licking County Ohio Horseman's Council Horse Shows (2)
- Events on the bike trail
 - ▷ Taco Sports – marathons and half-marathons
 - ▷ USA Timing – 5k, 10k, marathons, and half-marathons
 - ▷ Marne United Methodist Church – Walk & 5k Run





2021 – Programs and Events

Infirmity Mound Park Lepidoptera (Butterfly) Monitoring

2021 was the third year of monitoring for the butterfly transect survey at Infirmity Mound Park. The survey is modeled after a long-term butterfly monitoring project hosted by the Ohio Lepidopterists, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, the Ohio Division of Wildlife, and the Ohio Biological Survey. The transect is a fixed walking route and was not altered from the previous year.

The goal is to collect long-term data that will help track trends in species diversity and abundance.

In 2021, volunteer monitoring occurred from April through October. In total, 40 species have been observed from 2019–2021. The year with the highest number of species ($n=30$) was 2019. Species numbers declined in 2020 ($n=27$) and 2021 ($n=20$). This largely may be a reflection of the prairie restoration work, as large areas were treated with herbicide and mowed, which reduced habitat available to moths and butterflies. As the prairie gets established, it is anticipated Lepidoptera species will increase.

IMP Species List: Lepidoptera

American lady*	Hackberry Emperor*	Spicebush Swallowtail*
American Snout	Least Skipper*	Spring/Summer Azure +
Black Swallowtail	Meadow Fritillary	Summer Azure +
Blue Azure +	Monarch	Tawny Emperor
Cabbage White	Northern Crescent	Tiger Swallowtail
Checkerspot	Northern Pearly Eye	Variegated Fritillary +
Clouded Sulphur	Orange Sulphur	Viceroy +
Common Buckeye	Painted Lady*	Zabulon Skipper
Dun Skipper*	Pearl Crescent	Zebra Swallowtail
Eastern Comma	Peck Skipper*	Species in 2019, NOT in 2020 (+)
Eastern Tiger	Pipeline Swallowtail +	New species in 2020 (*)
Swallowtail +	Question Mark	New Species in 2021 ^
Eastern Tail Blue	Red Admiral	
Giant Swallowtail ^	Red Spotted Purple +	
Gray Hair Streak	Silver Spotted Skipper	
Great Spangled Fritillary*	Silvery Checkerspot	





2021 – Volunteer Program

2021 Volunteer Program

“The pandemic drove me to keep up daily exercise in the sunshine and fresh air. The sun, the fresh air, and serving an increased number of park visitors are my motivation and goal.”

Vincent Alessi
Volunteer Trail Monitor for Infirmary Mound Park



Our Volunteers Get It

They saw people working hard to cope, adapt, and adjust to a new world filled with pandemic mitigation guidelines, restrictions, and isolation. They knew people needed respite and the opportunity to be outdoors in nature, breathe in the fresh air and rejuvenate. Our parks and trails became one of the only places where people in our community could safely spend time with their friends and families. People also began to reinvent how they conducted their daily lives. Our outdoor shelters and picnic tables became socially distanced classrooms and boardrooms. Our trails became hosts to “walk & talk” style meetings for community groups and businesses. **Our volunteers understood how the pandemic had intensified our need for connection to the outdoors and worked hard to ensure our facilities, parks, and trails were clean, clear, and open for all to enjoy.**

“It was important for me to continue volunteering in 2021 with all the COVID restrictions so I could escape from feelings of confinement. Some of the most enjoyable activities I experienced as volunteer of LPD is trail maintenance to cut back vines which have grown into the canopies of trees, preventing the trees’ exposure to direct sunlight.”

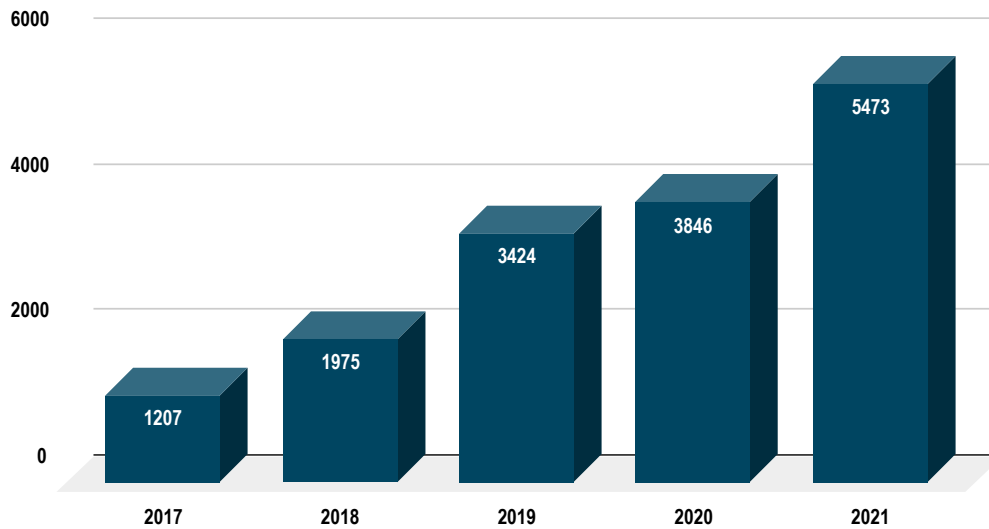
Jack Lyon
Volunteer Trail Maintenance



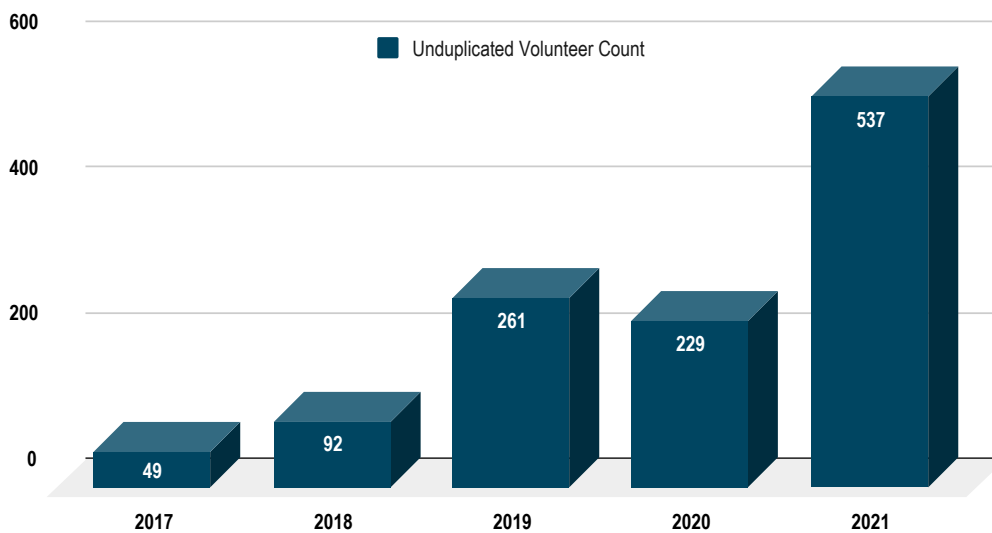


2021 – Volunteer Program

2017 - 2021 VOLUNTEER HOURS



2017 - 2021 VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION





2021 – Volunteer Program

Year of Growth

2021 marks another exceptional year of volunteerism with the Licking Park District. Our amazing volunteers contributed 5,473 hours of service in 2021 to benefit our parks and trails, a 42% increase from 2020! We also saw an increase in overall volunteer participation. In 2021, 537 volunteers signed up for assignments, representing a 134% increase from 2020!

According to the Independent Sector, the estimated value of an hour of volunteer service in Ohio is \$25.47. To further demonstrate their incredible impact in 2021, their 5,473 service hour contributions are valued at \$139,397.31! While that's impressive, it's impossible to quantify the enormous value volunteers generously provide. Our volunteers' dedication, and love for our parks, trails, and community are invaluable.

Volunteer Program Highlights

Our volunteers are dedicated, passionate about our parks and trails, and bring their time and talent to every task. We are proud to share their accomplishments and outstanding service in 2021.



"Trails help humans make sense of a world increasingly dominated by automobiles and pavement. They allow us to come more closely in touch with our natural surroundings, to soothe our psyches, to challenge our bodies, and to practice ancient skills."

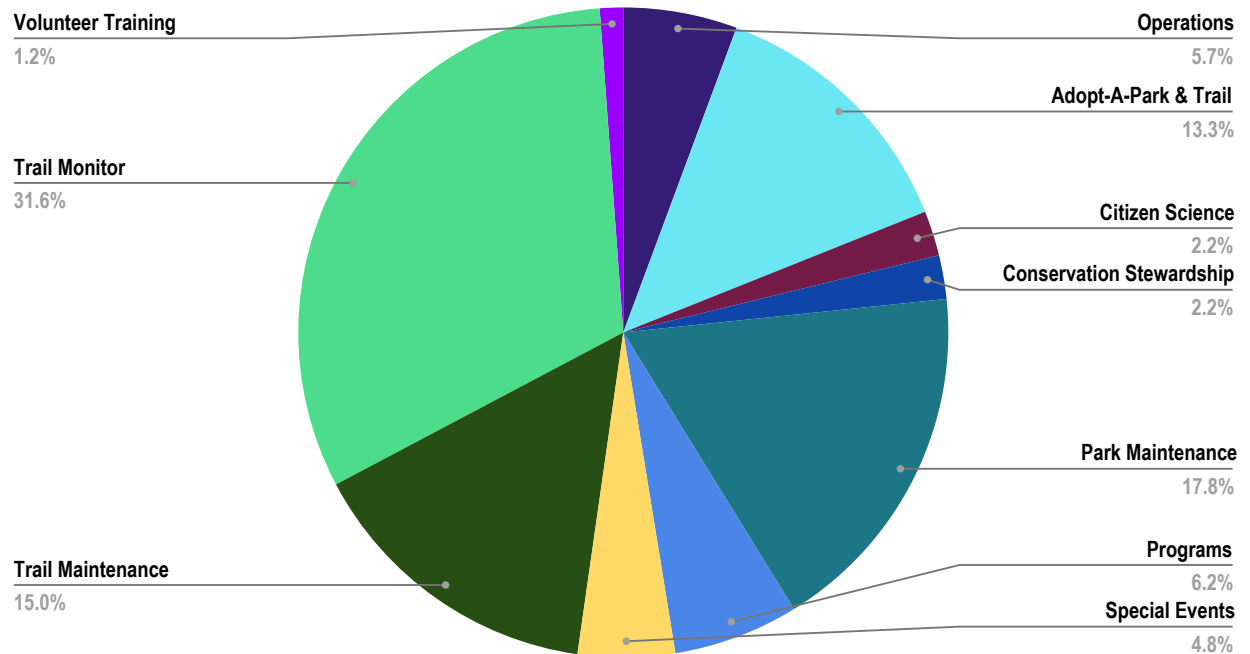
Woody Hesselbarth and Brian Vachowski
Trail Construction and Maintenance Notebook
U.S. Forest Service



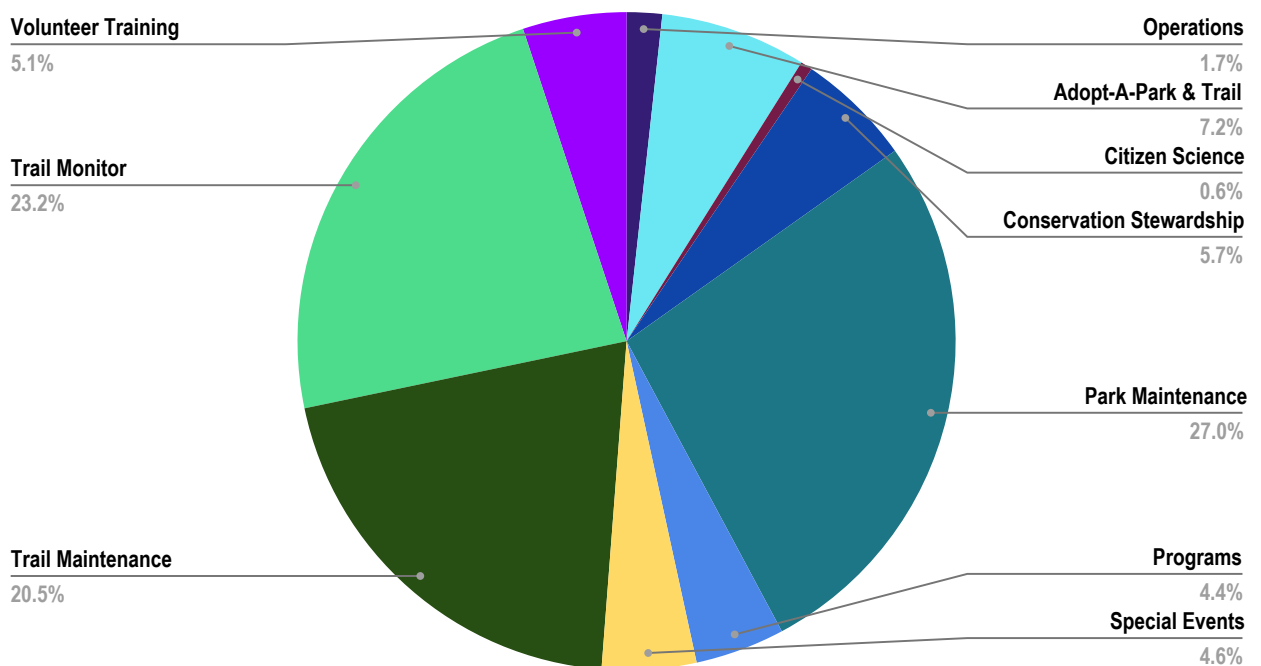


2021 – Volunteer Program

2021 Volunteer Service Hours by Assignment



2021 Volunteer Count by Assignment





2021 – Volunteer Program

Adopt-A-Trail/Park Program

Our Adopt-A-Trail/Park program allows the public to become active participants in preserving the natural beauty and recreational value of trails and parks within the Licking Park District. Volunteers assist staff with maintaining and improving safe and beautiful trails and parks for everyone in our community to enjoy. Individual or Group Adopters choose their segment of trail or park and commit to a monthly “sweep.” A trail/park sweep involves monitoring the length or area of your adopted trail or park and performing essential trail/park maintenance such as litter pick-up, clearing trip hazards, and cutting back encroaching vegetation.

Trail Monitors

We are fortunate to have Trail Monitors walking, running, biking, and even horseback riding on our trails to observe conditions every day. When Trail Monitors report hazards, such as a fallen tree blocking the bike trail, we can quickly clear to ensure trail users are not negatively impacted. Trail Monitors pick up litter and remove fallen limbs, branches, and trip hazards. Our Trail Monitor role is an independent, self-scheduled volunteer assignment. Volunteers choose to monitor any of our trails, on any day and time, from dawn to dusk.





2021 – Volunteer Program

Trail Maintenance - Vine Management

One of our trail maintenance priorities is to protect our trees within falling distance of our trails from wild grape and invasive Oriental Bittersweet vines. These vines grow rapidly and damage trees by twisting and bending the tree bole, girdling trees by cutting the flow of nutrients and water, and shading their leaves. These heavy vines and fruit add unsupported weight, break limbs, and uproot trees. When a tree has fallen over a trail, more often than not, it's covered in vines. Vines spread from tree to tree. When one tree falls, vine entangled neighboring trees will also be damaged or uprooted. Our volunteers diligently cut these vines along our trails to help protect and restore tree health.

Trail Improvement Projects

Our goal is to build and maintain beautiful, sustainable multi-use trails throughout our Park District. Volunteers are helping us improve and repair our existing trails and build new re-routes throughout our Park District.





2021 – Volunteer Program

Eagle Scout Projects

Once again, Eagle Scout candidates have stepped up to complete several Eagle Scout service projects for the Licking Park District. Three boardwalk projects were completed at Morris Woods State Nature Preserve which is under the management of the LPD. Between the three projects, Scouts added a total of 237 LnFt of boardwalk in 2021. Morris Woods trails have many chronically wet sections and boardwalk projects continue to improve access for visitors.

Eagle is the seventh and highest rank of Scouts. On average, only about 6% of Scouts attain this Scouting rank, which requires individuals to take on leadership roles within their troop and their community, research, organize, and complete a large community service project.





2021 – Volunteer Program

Park & Facility Maintenance Projects

There were many maintenance projects in 2021. Volunteers repaired our park benches and picnic tables, painted our buildings and trail markers, planted trees, and constructed a new roof for one of our outdoor restrooms, just to name a few.

Conservation Stewardship

Volunteers helped keep our parks, trails, and waterways clean and safe for park and trail users, wildlife, and the environment by picking up trash and litter. They assisted our Invasive Species Management program by helping to remove Garlic Mustard, Honeysuckle, and Japanese Knotweed.

Events

Our events would not be possible without the help and support of our volunteers. Volunteers are raising tents, welcoming festival-goers, directing event parking, managing registration tables, assisting with game, craft, and educational stations, and assisting people trying archery or a paddlesport for the first time. They come early to set up and stay late to clean up. They are the backbone of every event, and we couldn't have been as successful as we were in 2021 without their support.





2021 – Volunteer Program

Volunteer Recognition

In a year unlike any other, our volunteers' enduring strength and adaptability is a shining example of the spirit of community. 2021 was filled with extraordinary accomplishments during unprecedented times, and we'll never lose sight of the fact that our volunteers made it happen. Our successes are due to their dedication, time, and talents. We are humbled, inspired, and proud to celebrate them all!

Annual Volunteer Appreciation Event

In April 2021, the Park District held an open-house style event during National Volunteer Appreciation Week. Volunteers were invited to drop in at Infirmary Mound Park to pick up their Volunteer Appreciation Gift Bag. We were honored to celebrate their amazing year of service.

Volunteer of the Year

The Licking Park District established the Volunteer of the Year award in 2015 to acknowledge outstanding representatives of our dedicated volunteers. This award recognizes individuals who exhibit enthusiasm for the services they perform, leadership characteristics for the projects they lead, and their willingness to promote volunteerism in others. The Park District is proud to name Jack Long as our Volunteer of the Year for 2021!

Jack began volunteering in 2018 when he completed the Ohio Certified Naturalist program. Always going above and beyond, he participated in advanced training for his archery instructor certification and managed our archery trailer during events. Jack is a patient and fun instructor, always enthusiastic about helping kids develop proper techniques. He volunteers for every paddlesport opportunity and has engaged and inspired people of all ages to learn more about kayaking, canoeing, and stand-up paddleboarding. Jack contributed his carpentry skills to building shelves in the office; even this beautiful desk built from reclaimed wood that I'm currently writing on. He regularly volunteers for citizen science, special events, programs, conservation stewardship, and trail maintenance projects. We appreciate all of Jack's outstanding contributions to the LPD. Congratulations to our 2021 Volunteer of the Year!





2021 – Volunteer Program

Volunteer Program Services

Trail Maintenance

Park & Facility Maintenance

Trail & Park Monitor

Adopt-A-Trail

Special Events & Community Outreach

Programming

Conservation Stewardship

Citizen Science

Operations

Heritage Restoration Projects

Paws-2-Play Park Stewards

Photography



VOLUNTEERS

537

HOURS

5,473

VALUE

\$139,397.31



2021 – Volunteer Program

100+ HOURS OF SERVICE

Brenda Sams

Bill Fleitz

Columbus Flyers Disc Golf Club

Lobdell Reserve Disc Golf Course Adopters

Craig Washka

Dave Ryckman

Debbie Pound

Jeffrey Yohman

John Yohman

Kenneth Apacki

Montgomery Walk & Talk

Infirmity Mound Park Trail Adopters

Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland

Vincent Alessi

20+ HOURS OF SERVICE

Alex Zeyen, Eagle Scout Project - BSA Troop 169, Columbus

Barlow Family Morris Woods State Nature Preserve Park Adopters

Ben Moseley, Eagle Scout Project - BSA Troop 192, Westerville

Birgit Nazarian

BSA Scout Troop 33 - Newark

BSA Scout Troop 4601 - Granville

BSA Scout Troop 65 - Granville

BSA Scout Troop 7145 - Newark

BSA Scout Troop 8 - Newark

Darrell Justice

Dayle Huffman

Dixon Family Staddens Landing Park Adopters

Freedom Bicycle & Disc Golf Supply Bike Trail Adopters

Gabriel Jennings

Granville Rotary

Hannah Fleisher

Howard Family Lobdell Reserve Trail Adopters

Jack Long

James Bradley

Jim Kiracofe

Jude Hall

Karen McCabe

Kelly Pertee

Kiwanis Granville

Letitia Zurawick

Liz & Lisa Hedger

Mahalah Granados

Mandy Gee

Marc Monnin

Mark & Debbie Stevens

Mark & Jan Raymond

Mark & Joyce Witte

Mark Masters

Mary Ellen (Missy) & Scott Harris

Mike Wheatley

Nathan Gillenwater, Eagle Scout Project - BSA Troop 192, Westerville

Nathaniel Jennings

Ohio Horseman's Council of Licking County

Pat Maahs

Paul Christensen

Richard Moseley

Rockett Morgan Friends & Family

Rocky Fork Headley Hunt Club

Sam White

Scout Troup 4025 - Newark

Sharon Wallace

Sigrid Batten

Steven Parsons

Tadeusz Wielezynski

The Trail Troopers Lobdell Reserve Trail Adopters

Tim Gilbert

Vohs Friends & Family Group



2021 – Volunteer Program

“Who is your favorite person to volunteer with?”

Jack Long: *“My beautiful wife! Barb keeps me on the straight and narrow. We have a lot of fun together. We worked together for almost 40 years!”*

“Do you have any advice for anyone considering volunteering with the Licking Park District?”

Jack Long: *“If you like nature and natural resources, this is the place for you!”*



The Licking Park District would like to thank all volunteers who shared their time and talent in 2021!

Volunteers Make an Impact

We offer individual and group volunteer opportunities to help maintain our parks and trails, protect natural and cultural resources, and engage our local community to promote environmental stewardship. To become a volunteer, please visit our website.



“Being in nature feels like coming home to me, like belonging. I’m home when I am trail monitoring on my favorite trail in Lobdell Reserve or discovering the magic of new prairie wildflowers blooming in Infirmary Mound Park. I volunteer because I want all people to come home to our trails and parks and feel like they belong.”

Nathaniel Jennings
Volunteer Trail Monitor





2021 – Projects and Improvements

Bike Trail Improvements

TJ Evans Bike Trail

Maintenance work along the TJ Evans Bike Trail between Granville and Johnstown included fence post and wire fencing removal, two culverts replaced, and grapevine and invasive brush/scrub cleared from alongside the trail.

The Licking Park District paved a section of the TJ Evans Bike Trail from SR 16 to the Granville corporation limit near Maple Grove Cemetery. The Park District also paved a section from Raccoon Valley Rd. to Mounts Rd. in Alexandria.

The Park District continued collaboration with our municipal partners in Newark and Granville on paving projects. These projects included paving the entire trail from West Main Street in Newark to SR 16 and a section from the historic iron bridge behind the Cherry Valley Hotel to the Gib and Lou Reese bridge over SR 16. Also, two bank slips were repaired and a section of trail relocated by the historic iron bridge near Cherry Valley Rd.

Additionally, 3.5 miles of newly paved trail was bermed east of Granville, and 5.5 total miles of trails were paved in 2021.

Panhandle Trail

The Panhandle Bike Trail, which runs from Newark east to Felumlee Rd, received 7.75 miles of trail crack filled and sealed, chain link fence repair, and a significant amount of tree clearing.

Buckeye Scenic Trail

One bridge deck was replaced on the Buckeye Scenic Trail, and another bridge saw repair and replacement of the side rail system.





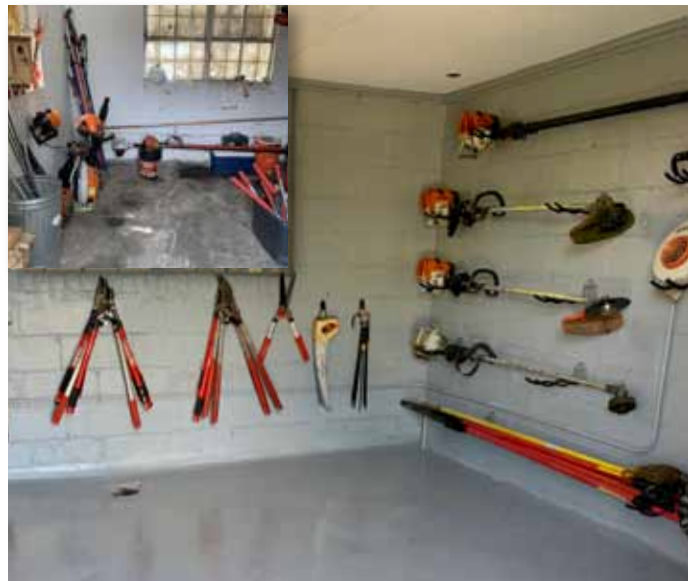
2021 – Projects and Improvements

Park District Improvements

Infirmary Mound Park

Park District staff, volunteers, and contractors undertook many projects at Infirmary Mound Park in 2021.

- Shelter 3 project to correct driveway drainage issues
- Memorial Tree Garden - tree limb elevation & memorial plaques reinstalled
- Mirror Lake - Bluegill & catfish stocking from ODNR Fish Hatchery
- Cleared Bradley Woods -the old ‘tree nursery’ near shelter 4 parking lot, to provide a new, shaded picnic area
- Began rotational cutting of early successional forest land to provide varied habitat
- Natural Playscape – Phase One completed
- Large brush pile clean up/removal
- Maintenance workshop clean up and organization
- Extensive culvert/drainage/re-route work on trails, continuing to strive for a more all-season condition
 - Major drainage project north of marker #5
 - Several drainage trenches and culverts were added throughout the park
 - Licking County Ohio Horseman’s Council assisted with trenching and clearing out existing drainage features
 - New connector trail, with culvert, added near marker #17





2021 – Projects and Improvements

Lobdell Reserve

The Lobdell Disc Golf Course received all new baskets, with materials and labor donated by the Columbus Flyers Disc Golf Club. The club also assists with maintaining the course. Trail work continued at Lobdell with a reroute at marker #7 in the northwest portion of the park, and a reroute and new connector trail near Lobdell Creek on the west side of the park.

Taft Reserve

Several projects were initiated at Taft Reserve in 2021, including:

- Taft South storage barn cleared out and organized
- Taft North toilet structure repaired by volunteers
- Taft South: A total of 31,000 LnFt of trail edges mowed/opened up with aggressive brush cutting for ease of future maintenance, with the primary goal of reducing manual labor by maintenance personnel
- Tippet Mound in Taft South: Clearing began for public access and interpretive signage

Riverview Reserve

Invasive plant removal continued at Riverview Reserve, along with maintenance of the canoe/kayak ramp to keep the ramp clear for recreational and emergency use.





2021 – Projects and Improvements

Newell Recreation Preserve

At the Newell Recreation Preserve a new entrance sign was installed, and the parking lot construction was completed. In partnership with the US Fish and Wildlife Services, 33 acres of pollinator flowers and prairie grasses were seeded. A joint ODNR Clean Ohio Trails Fund grant was awarded for the Ohio to Erie Trail connection between Knox and Delaware counties. This trail connection is scheduled for completion in 2022. The Ohio to Erie Trail stretches 326 miles from Cincinnati to Cleveland.

Boyd Wilkin Reserve

The beautiful 160-acre Boyd Wilkin Reserve is located in northeast Licking County. Drainage and weed control projects were performed around the historic dairy barn and other buildings in 2021.

Reese Wildlife Sanctuary

Trail construction was initiated at the Reese Wildlife Sanctuary in preparation for eventual opening to the public for hiking and nature observation.

Brown Reserve

The Brown Reserve received several updates in 2021, including the beginnings of a hiking trail system, brush clearing, and the redecking of a small bridge to provide maintenance access from Linnville Rd.

Palmer Road Swamp Preserve

The beginnings of a trail system was cut in at the Palmer Road Swamp Preserve, a wetland mitigation project, and negotiations began with Etna Twp trustees to extend Freeway Drive to provide access to a planned parking lot.





2021 – Projects and Improvements

Equipment Purchases & Replacements

The Park District replaced two pieces of aging equipment by purchasing a batwing deck mower and Ford F150 pick-up truck, added an air compressor to the workshop, a heater to a small workshop area, and obtained a Diamond brand, rotary brush cutter. The rotary cutter will assist maintenance staff with the large-scale clearing of invasive species underbrush and maintaining natural surface trails.

1500 Trees for Life Participation

Infirmity Mound Park received 13 tree plantings made possible by donations from the 1500 Trees for Life Organization, organized by the First Presbyterian Church of Granville. As a certified Earthcare Congregation, they are committed to protecting and restoring the earth to be sustainable for all life and future generations.

Online Facilities Reservation System

To better accommodate reservation requests for facilities at Infirmity Mound Park and the gazebo at the Licking County Children's Home Memorial Park in Newark, the Park District has added an online reservation request system designed by the talented staff of MyRec. This new site allows the public to view the reservation calendar in real-time for rental availability and submit reservations requests. Program calendar and registration are coming in 2022.





2021 – Projects and Improvements

Collaboration with Public Partners

- Cost-share agreements created/renewed with public partners
- Pataskala: Assisted with funding of walking path at Foundation Park
- Johnstown: Assisted with funding of dog park - Jersey Street trailhead
- Granville: TJ Evans Bike Trail paving and berming
- Newark: Assisted with funding of TJ Evans Bike Trail - paving and berming, slip repairs and a trail relocation, and Horns Hill Downhill Mountain Bike Trail
- Knox Co Park District: Collaborated on design work for Ohio to Erie Trail connection at the Newell Recreation Preserve. Trail completion is scheduled for 2022. Obtained funding assistance from two sources plus a joint COTF grant award from ODNR
- US Fish and Wildlife Service: Pollinator plants and prairie grasses seeded 33 acres at Newell Recreation Preserve and 41 acres at Infirmary Mound Park

Partner Appreciation Open House

In October 2021, the Park District hosted an open house for the many partners we work with throughout the year. Collaboration with public and private partners allows Licking Park District to initiate major bike trail maintenance projects and offer programming and events that would not be possible on our own. We value our strong relationships with these partners.





2021 – Financial Facts, Governance, and Staff

Financial Facts, Governance, and Staff

Levy Passage

The residents of Licking County again supported the Licking Park District by passing a replacement levy in November 2021. The additional funds, expected in 2023, will be used to maintain our parks, paths, and trails. We are thankful for the community's continued support.

Our Levy Committee worked hard to show residents how important it was to pass a replacement levy to maintain and improve the Park District. The additional levy dollars will help our Licking Park District fulfill our Vision Statement to maintain our infrastructure and facilities at the highest level possible. The Park District has also committed funding for our municipal partners and dedicated a fund for major bike trail repairs.

Thank you to our levy committee, the residents of Licking County, and so many others for their support.

Govdeals Public Auction Sales

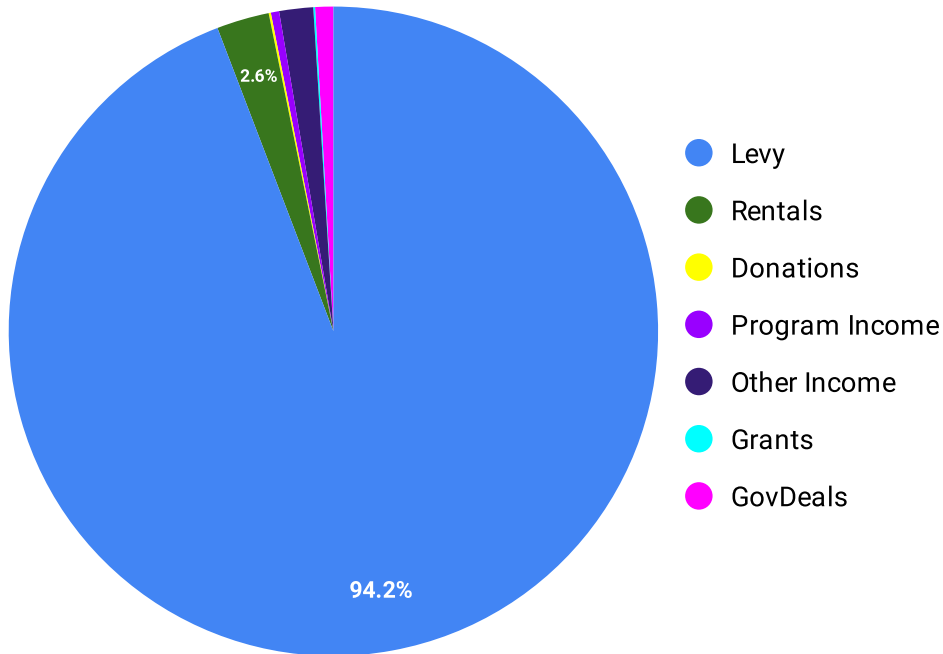
Through the use of an online government surplus auction site, the Park District sold many outdated, broken, or unneeded items at public auction. The Park District recouped \$10,261.44 in 2021 to supplement the operational budget.



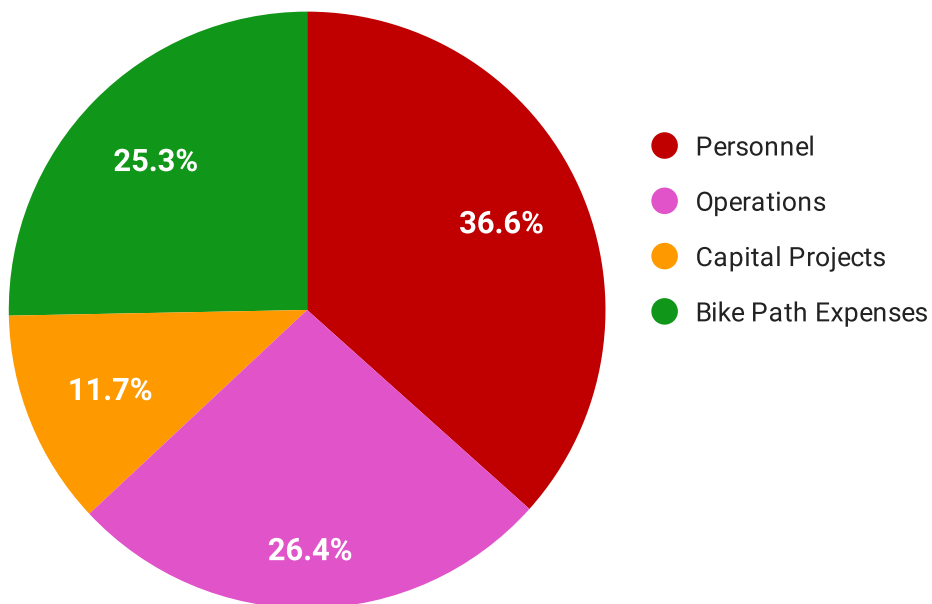


2021 – Financial Facts, Governance, and Staff

2021 Licking Park District Revenue



2021 Licking Park District Expenses





2021 – Financial Facts, Governance, and Staff

AmeriCorps

In August of 2021, the Licking Park District began hosting an AmeriCorps Service Member, Emily Fouts, as part of the Appalachian Ohio Restore Corps (AORC) program. The mission of AmeriCorps is to strengthen communities and develop leaders through direct, team-based national and community service. AmeriCorps members serve a total of 1,700 hours over the course of one year, giving them an opportunity to use their talents to serve their community, build connections, gain job skills, and learn and grow as individuals in a position that fits their field of interests. Appalachian Ohio Restore Corps values conservation and creating healthy environments for communities to engage with and enjoy, which goes hand in hand with the mission of the Park District.

During her service so far, Emily has had opportunities for many diverse experiences, including assisting with programming for both children and adults, volunteer events, citizen science, special events and festivals, and working with the maintenance crew. She has gained skills in land management, equipment use, environmental education, professional writing, leadership development and event planning, and has also expanded her knowledge of local wildlife and plant species that inhabit the parks.



Maintenance Worker Denny Lane Retires

We extend our appreciation and best wishes to Denny Lane!

Retired on April 2, 2021, Denny was an integral part of our Licking Park District family since coming onboard in 2014. He completed three years in a seasonal capacity and returned in 2018 to fill a newly created full-time maintenance position.

Denny's contributions, hard work, commitment, and dedication will always be valued and remembered.





2021 – Financial Facts, Governance, and Staff

Governance

The Licking Park District is formed under ORC 1545. We are governed by a five-person Board of Park Commissioners. The Board meets the third Wednesday of every month at Infirmary Mound Park. The public is invited to attend.

Jim Kiracofe, Chair

Sam White, Vice Chair

James Bradley

Richard Moseley

Brenda Sams

Staff

The Licking Park District has eight full-time employees. We manage 12 sites, over 1,600 acres, 46 miles of paved bike trails, and 30 miles of natural surface trails.

Richard Waugh, Director

Tami McAdams, Operations Administrator

Kris Lohrman, Office Administrator

Anne Balogh, Program Coordinator

Karen Jennings, Volunteer Coordinator

Mike Evans, Maintenance Worker

Charles Brookover, Maintenance Worker

Emily Fouts, AmeriCorps Service Member

Thank You

The Staff and Park Board of the Licking Park District would like to thank our committed volunteers and supporters, who help us make these projects and programs available to the community. Your ongoing support allows us to enhance the life of all of our residents.

Board of Park Commissioners



Jim Kiracofe



Sam White



James Bradley



Dick Moseley



Brenda Sams

Licking Park District Staff



Richard Waugh



Tami McAdams



Kris Lohrman



Anne Balogh



Karen Jennings



Mike Evans



Charles Brookover



Emily Fouts



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Sunrise at Infirmary Mound Park
Harvest Moon Rendezvous
October 2021